

SUPPORTING DACA-MENTED AND UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

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The Department of Education has a resource guide for supporting DACA and undocumented youth, which was published in October 2015 and can be found [here](#). This resource provides the following tips Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs).

1 Create Open and Welcoming Environments

Build a supportive and welcoming institutional environment for undocumented students. Many undocumented youth are first-generation college students. Research has shown that, for these students, positive climates and culturally competent faculty may be important in facilitating persistence and college completion. Education personnel and IHEs should consider ways that they can make their support of undocumented students clear and help alleviate fears about students' status.

Examples:

- Host an undocumented immigrant awareness day and consider partnering with community and stakeholder groups to amplify the event.
- Publicly demonstrate support for undocumented students.
- Educate all students about the challenges and strengths of undocumented students, such as by hosting an Undocumented Week. Each day, highlight an issue faced by undocumented students or celebrate an accomplishment of the undocumented immigrant community.
- Ensure that youth are engaged and provided with a leading role in planning and executing any awareness events.

2 Provide Services and Resources to Help Guide Undocumented Students

Develop services and resources that specifically support undocumented students. Case studies of undocumented youth in higher education have highlighted lingering feelings of stigma and fear related to their status, as well as instances of discrimination on campuses. Creating safe spaces that clearly affirm and support undocumented students can help youth feel welcomed into the institutional community and connect them to resources that will meet additional needs, such as legal services and healthcare.

Examples:

- Create a safe place for undocumented students to connect and receive staff and peer support, as well as key information.

- Train all staff on the unique needs of undocumented students to help them provide additional supports and show sensitivity to youths’ concerns.

2.1 Share information about DACA with students, families, and the community

It may be particularly helpful for undocumented youth both at institutions of higher education and in the broader community to receive information about the DACA policy. As reputable institutions, colleges and universities can serve as important conduits of information on DACA.

Examples:

- Create a specific webpage on the institution’s Web site that contains updates on the DACA policy and other relevant policies and resources.
- Convene community taskforces or meetings with community-based organizations, LEAs, schools, and other stakeholders to create a cohesive plan for sharing and dissemination information about DACA.

2.2 Be transparent by openly and proactively advertising the ways in which your institution supports undocumented students

Undocumented youth and their families may be new to the U.S. higher education system, so it is important to make institutional policies and resources clear and ensure that this information is available in accessible formats.

Examples:

- Post resources for undocumented students clearly and prominently on the main campus or institutional Web site.
- Develop an undocumented student resource guide or brochure to help these students navigate the new institution and feel welcomed.
- Post FAQs and links to federal, State, and community resources on the institutional Web site and highlight on the institution’s social media outlets.

3 Communicate and Demonstrate Support for Undocumented Youth

Message publicly that your institution supports undocumented students and their rights to a high-quality education. By taking a public stand, IHEs can help to inspire more undocumented youth to pursue postsecondary education and to promote positive change that will increase college access for these youth.

Examples:

- Issue an institutional statement that clearly articulates its support of undocumented students.

- Include undocumented students in public forums. Encourage youth to share their stories and to request consideration for DACA or DACA renewal. Showcase their stories in any media outreach campaigns and press releases.
- Explore ways that an institution or university system can play an active role in expanding access for undocumented students, especially in States with exclusionary or less inclusive policies.

4 Provide Peer-to-Peer Support and Relationship-Building Opportunities

Create opportunities for undocumented youth empowerment through peer groups and other tools. Many undocumented youth, having overcome significant challenges to continue their studies, have great potential for leadership and activism, as demonstrated by the number of youth-led stakeholder groups and organizing and advocacy campaigns across campuses and cities. Create an environment that provides undocumented youth with the opportunity to organize and lead their peers at an institution or in the community.

Examples:

- Instill agency in youth by creating a safe community where undocumented students can speak openly.
- Start an undocumented student support group or club.
- Offer connections between student clubs and local stakeholder groups and community-based organizations to create additional support and more opportunities for youth to engage.

5 Build Staff Capacity and Knowledge of Relevant Issues

Provide high-quality training for all staff who engage directly with students so they are equipped to support undocumented youth. With ever-changing State, local, and institutional policies, undocumented students often need help accessing clear and accurate information related to college access and institutional supports. As in secondary schools, educators and other personnel often do not receive specific training on how to support undocumented students. Institutions should invest in growing their staff capacity by developing increased knowledge of the needs of undocumented students, financial aid policies, and the DACA policy, among other topics.

Examples:

- Train all key front-line staff offices (e.g., admissions, registrar, financial aid, and counseling) to build understanding about the DACA policy so that they know how to respond to student requests for transcripts and other documentation.
- Raise the awareness of advisors and other personnel of the unique needs of undocumented students and how to best serve them.

- Designate key staff as DACA “specialists” so that eligible undocumented youth have a go-to individual for accurate information and guidance.
- Train financial aid counselors so they are able to discuss issues that undocumented students encounter and create specific Web sites or webpages on financial aid for undocumented students
- Partner with community-based organizations and youth groups to hold annual trainings for all personnel about relevant State and local policies
- Partner with secondary schools to ensure counselors and educators have access to relevant information for undocumented students

6 Other Resources

As educators, we have a responsibility to help our students fulfill their academic potential and at this moment our Dreamers need our help and our advocacy. I urge you to find ways that your campus and community could help these students. Here are other ways you can help:

- Help your college/university become a sanctuary campus. Here is a [link](#) to a list of current sanctuary campuses nationwide.
- Sign petitions for the continuation of the executive order Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Such a petition can be found [here](#).

Let’s continue fighting for all of our students and for the opportunities they need to reach their full potential. Together we can shape academia into an environment that promotes the success of all of our students, but this fight starts with us!

Lastly, I leave you with a list of other organizations that provide information on how to support DACA-mented and undocumented youth.

Resource name	Link	Description
Guide for Teachers Helping Dreamers	http://unitedwedream.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/guide4teachers_daca.pdf	This guide was created for teachers and service providers who teach, mentor, and help undocumented youth. Intended to be a brief, easy-to-read guide on how to help undocumented youth and where they can get support.
The Case for Undocumented Students in Higher Education	http://www.e4fc.org/images/E4FC_TheCase.pdf	This report encourages scholarship providers and other funders to consider the merits of hardworking, high-achieving undocumented students and increase financial support to enable them to more fully contribute to U.S. society.
Top 10 Ways to Support Undocumented Students	http://www.e4fc.org/images/E4FC_EducatorTop10.pdf	A list of 10 powerful ways educators can support undocumented students.
Supporting Undocumented Youth through Community Engagement	http://www.idra.org/IDRA_Newsletter/June_July_2015_Accountability_and_Civic_Engagement/Supporting_Undocumented_Youth_through_Community_Engagement/	A synthesis of relevant research and a list of recommendations for how schools can support undocumented youth.
DREAMING BIG: What Community Colleges Can Do to Help Undocumented Immigrant Youth Achieve Their Potential	Report: http://www.cccie.org/images/stories/DREAMING_BIG_CCCIE_Report_9-2012.pdf Promising Practices Site: https://goo.gl/XUWDuF	This report provides community colleges promising practices to serve undocumented students in five areas: increasing college access, making college affordable, supporting college readiness and success, offering alternatives for adult learners, and improving college retention and completion.
Removing Barriers to Higher Education for Undocumented Students	https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/UndocHigherEd-report2.pdf	This report provides an overview of the labyrinth of policies from federal, State, and postsecondary institutions that undocumented students must navigate to earn a degree. Lists recommendations for policymakers to help ensure that undocumented young people and the economy prosper by removing these barriers.
Social Justice Collaboration in Schools: A Model for Working with Undocumented Latino Students	http://www.psyr.org/jsacp/Storlie-v4n2-12_99-116.pdf	This article describes the challenges encountered by undocumented Latino students and introduces a model that promotes social action within a K-16 system. Implementation may generate insights into how to educate professionals on realistic and empowering methods to give opportunities for undocumented Latino students.
The DREAM Educational Empowerment Program Web site	http://unitedwedream.org/about/projects/education-deep/	The DREAM Educational Empowerment Program (DEEP) is a catalyst for educational justice and empowerment for immigrant students. DEEP educates, connects, and empowers immigrant students, parents and educators to close the opportunity gap and engage in local efforts to improve educational equity.

TheDream.US Resource Page	http://www.thedream.us/resources/	A list of links, toolkits, guides, and other information to help undocumented youth successfully complete a college education.
Toolkit on Access to Postsecondary Education	https://www.nilc.org/eduaccesstoolkit.html	This toolkit provides resources on State campaigns for tuition equity and a listing of scholarships and financial aid.
Information on DACA	https://www.nilc.org/dreamdeferred.html	This document provides information on applying for or renewing DACA. It also provides information for DACA recipients on how to get a driver's license, access to health care, how to file taxes with a Social Security.
UndocuPeers: Liberating Campus Climate Curriculum	https://goo.gl/y7AuwH	This toolkit is made by and for undocumented students to engage educators on how to create a more inclusive school environment.
National Educators Coming Out Day	http://unitedwedream.org/educatorsout	Toolkit and pledge for educators on how to better support undocumented students.
National Institutions Coming Out Day	https://goo.gl/jya7rb	Toolkit for high schools, colleges, and universities that provides concrete steps to create a welcoming environment for all students regardless of immigration status.
The Educators Conference Toolkit	https://www.dropbox.com/s/yfb62ng3zd3ccje/Educator_Conferences_Materials-2015-07-09.zip?dl=0	A toolkit and list of examples for how educators or institutions can hold conferences to discuss the issues faced by non-citizen students.
I have DACA and I can fill out the FAFSA? Say What!	Guide: http://unitedwedream.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/DACASTepsforFAFSA2014_Final.pdf Webinar: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHfOu_I9fWw	A guide for how DACA recipients can use FAFSA and recommendations on what they should and should not do. A webinar is included for further reference.
Educators' Back to School Toolkit	https://cliniclegal.org/educators-back-school-toolkit	CLINIC's resources for educators provide an overview of DACA and DAPA, including their benefits and risks, and information about the application process and about seeking qualified legal assistance.
Helping Your Immigrant Students and School Community: Updates on Deferred Action Programs for Undocumented	Webinar: https://goo.gl/S6RTao Powerpoint: https://cliniclegal.org/sites/default/files/daca_dapa_for_educators_webinar_slides_5_5_15.pdf	CLINIC's webinar for educators, counselors, and others working in schools and adult education programs who want to learn more about immigration relief for undocumented students and their families.