

TOOLKIT FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

NAVIGATING GRAD SCHOOL FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

PREPARED BY
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MSW Student



CREATED BY AN UNDOCUMENTED STUDENT




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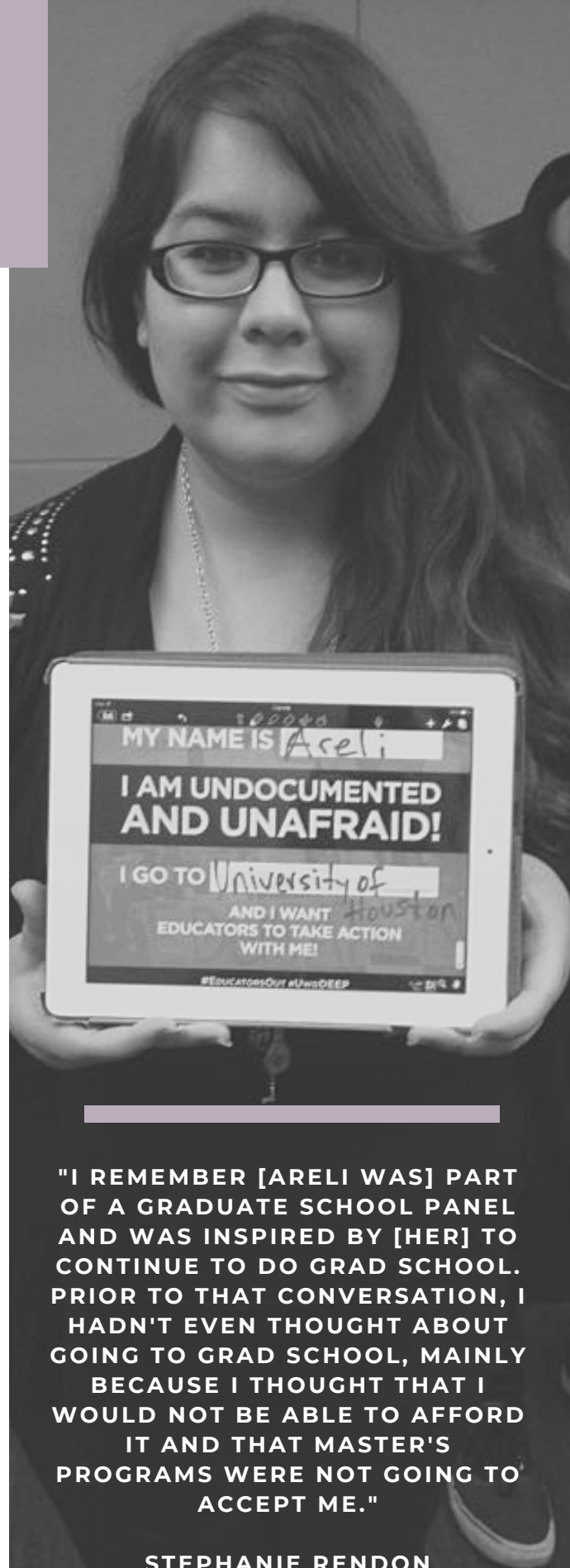
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ABOUT

This guide was created with knowledge and experience gained as a graduate student at the University of Houston. The idea behind this guide is to assist undocumented students navigate the complexity of the system and pinpoint items that may come across during the application process and beyond. Please be aware that each university is different and may require additional steps and knowledge.

Goals:

- **Assist undocumented students that aspire to attain a graduate degree:** At the University of Houston, undocumented students are a small population of students in graduate programs. Since there is limited information of the application process and financial aid, this guide includes tips and resources available to undocumented students.
- **Provide educators with a basic overview on how to assist undocumented graduate students:** This guide will allow educators to have an understanding on ways they can advocate and support undocumented students interested in pursuing a graduate degree.



"I REMEMBER [ARELI WAS] PART OF A GRADUATE SCHOOL PANEL AND WAS INSPIRED BY [HER] TO CONTINUE TO DO GRAD SCHOOL. PRIOR TO THAT CONVERSATION, I HADN'T EVEN THOUGHT ABOUT GOING TO GRAD SCHOOL, MAINLY BECAUSE I THOUGHT THAT I WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO AFFORD IT AND THAT MASTER'S PROGRAMS WERE NOT GOING TO ACCEPT ME."

STEPHANIE RENDON
DACA RECIPIENT

FAQS

A SET OF QUESTIONS THAT MAY COME UP FOR STUDENTS WHEN INTERESTED IN GRAD SCHOOL

OVER 450,000 UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS ATTEND HIGHER EDUCATION, BUT LESS PURSUE GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL DEGREES DUE TO SYSTEMIC ROADBLOCKS (PRESIDENTS' ALLIANCE, 2020)

CAN I GO TO GRAD SCHOOL EVEN THOUGH I'M UNDOCUMENTED?

Yes. Public universities allow undocumented students to pursue a graduate degree. Private universities may also be an option (see page 4). [Navigating Graduate School: Resource Guide for Undocumented Students](#)

CAN I APPLY FOR TASFA WHILE IN GRAD SCHOOL?

Yes, TASFA (Texas financial aid) applicants have been receiving funds for graduate programs.

CAN I GO TO AN OUT OF STATE UNIVERSITY?

Each state has different laws for undocumented students. [Here are the laws per state.](#)

CAN I STILL APPLY FOR DACA?

Only current beneficiaries can reapply for DACA. [Click here for the USCIS website for updates.](#)



UNDERSTANDING UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

Defining Undocumented Immigrants

According to the Bipartisan Policy Center, "Unauthorized immigrants are foreign-born persons in the United States who entered illegally or who were lawfully admitted but overstayed their period of admission." Undocumented immigrants are not legally allowed to work in this country, and "Aside from certain relief exceptions, they are also ineligible for visas and considered inadmissible for violating immigration law."

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

DACA is an executive order that allows qualified individuals attain a social security number, employment authorization, state driver's license or identification, and protection from deportation for a certain time period. Due to constant changes in DACA policy, only those that already are DACA recipients can apply for renewal and they must renew every year.

Stay up to date with DACA updates on the [USCIS website](#).

UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS IN TEXAS QUALIFY FOR IN-STATE TUITION

House Bill 1403 was passed in 2001 in Texas by bipartisan support; this bill grants undocumented students in-state tuition and state financial aid (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2008). In 2005, the Texas government passed Senate Bill 1528 that amended HB 1403 to include requirements such as a student must live in Texas up to 3 years before graduating from a Texas high school, must reside in Texas up to 3 years before enrolling at a higher education institution, and sign an affidavit "indicating an intent to apply for Permanent Resident status as soon as able to do so" (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2008)

[Click here for a direct overview of Residency & In-State Tuition](#)
*See page 5 for Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA) resources



"I'VE LEARNED THAT FEAR AND OBSTACLES CAN LIMIT YOUR DREAMS AND DEFINE YOUR PATH. IT BLINDS YOUR VISION AND LEAVES YOU BELIEVING THAT YOU HAVE MADE IT AS FAR AS YOU CAN. GOING THROUGH THIS JOURNEY IT IS INDISPENSABLE TO BELIEVE IN YOURSELF, TO BE EMPOWERED, TO GO BEYOND THE LIMITS YOU SEE."

BERENICE HERNANDEZ-BECERRA, LMSW
FORMER DACA RECIPIENT
GCSW ALUMNI '16

Important Tips:

- Ask admission coordinators or educators you trust if fee waivers are available for application and exam fees
- Reach out to faculty, students, and alumni when possible to get insights if this program is right for you

Important Links:

[UndocuGrads Workshop: Learn How to Apply & Navigate Graduate School as an Undocumented Student](#)

[The College Guide for Advising Undocumented Students](#)

[Access to Postsecondary Education Toolkit](#)

[Tuition Benefits for Immigrants per State](#)

[Private Colleges that Accept Undocumented Students as Domestic Students 2](#)

Healthcare Career Links:

[Pre-Health Dreamers \(PHD\)](#)

[2020 Guidance for Residency Programs on Considering Applicants with DACA](#)

SEARCHING FOR FUNDING

Local Information

TASFA Resources

[AIE TASFA Instructions](#)

[College for all Texans](#)

[TASFA.Net](#)

[Cafe College Houston](#)

[Texas AFL-CIO](#)

UH Resources

[Cougar Promise](#)

[Graduate School Fund](#)

Alternative Financial Options

Loans

Undocumented students may not be eligible for Student Loans unless they have a citizen co-signer. In this case, students may search for alternative loan options.

Limitations

Internships or fellowships that are government sponsored may require students to have legal status unless stated otherwise. Similarly, conference fees stipends that are offered may not be available to undocumented students and students will have to pay for room & board for conferences.

NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP LISTS

- [Dream.US Scholarship](#)
- [Hispanic Scholarship Fund](#)
- [Hispanic Scholarship Consortium](#)
- [La Unidad Latina Foundation \(LULF\)](#)
- [Golden Door Scholars](#)
- [United States Hispanic Leadership Institute](#)
- [MALDEF](#)
- [Migrant Network Coalition](#) (under education initiatives)
- [Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowships](#)
- [Immigrant Rising: Undergraduate Scholarship List](#)
- [Immigrant Rising: Graduate Scholarship List](#)
- [My Undocumented Life - Grad School Funding](#)
- [My Undocumented Life - College Scholarships](#)
- [Scholarships A-Z](#)

NEW EXPERIENCE & MAKING CONNECTIONS



UH Campus Resources

[Youth Empowerment Alliance at UH](#) - info@uhyea.org

[Coogs Cupboard](#)

[Counseling and Psychological Services](#)

[Urban Experience Program \(UEP\)](#)

Mental Health

[Immigrants Rising's Mental Health Connector](#)

[Immigrants Rising's Virtual Wellness Gatherings for Undocumented Young People](#)

[Mental Health Resources For DACA Recipients and Undocumented Families in Houston](#)

Physical Health

[Harris County Gold Card](#)

[Houston Food Bank](#)

[Houston Case Managers](#)

Important Tips:

- Staying involved and making connections with students can help create a welcoming space.
- Don't forget to take care of yourself, not just healthwise but having a proper social network is critical for the success of graduate students.
- Finding at least one mentor will allow students to thrive in their education and career path.

FOR EDUCATORS

STUDENTS WANT EDUCATORS TO KNOW...

- Students often seek educators that can advocate on their part or opportunities to connect
 - Acknowledge and understand undocumented students, and know that not all students have DACA nor a pathway to citizenship
 - Build networks for students for support and mentorship opportunities, e.g. [Las Comadres](#)
- Additional Support Needed:**
- Undocumented students may be labeled as international students even if they are Texas Residents.
 - Students may not be considered for the UH Graduate School Fund because they fill out TASFA. This will require advisors to contact the Graduate School.

IMPORTANT GUIDES FOR EDUCATORS

[Resource Guide: Supporting Undocumented Youth](#)

[Removing Barriers to Higher Education for Undocumented Students](#)

[In the Shadows of the Ivory Tower: Undocumented Undergraduates and the Liminal State of Immigration Reform](#)

[DACA Guide for Educators](#)

[Immschools Educator & School Guide: Supporting Undocumented Families during COVID-19](#)

Important Note: Most of these guides were created between 2012-2015, please note that laws may have changed since then.



"WHILE I WAS A STUDENT I WAS OFTEN ASKED, WHY I WOULD PURSUE A DEGREE IF I WAS UNABLE TO WORK LEGALLY. IT WAS A HARD QUESTION AS I OFTEN ASKED MYSELF THE SAME THING, YET IT ALWAYS CAME AS A REALIZATION THAT ANY EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, OR TRAINING I RECEIVED FROM THIS EDUCATION JOURNEY WOULD BE MINE FOREVER AND NO ONE COULD TAKE THAT AWAY. I WOULD BE READY TO FACE THE INCOMING FUTURE."

MIRLA LOPEZ
DACA RECIPIENT

Institutions often limit undocumented students by labeling them as international students or not providing information on funding.

Don't be afraid to advocate for yourself.

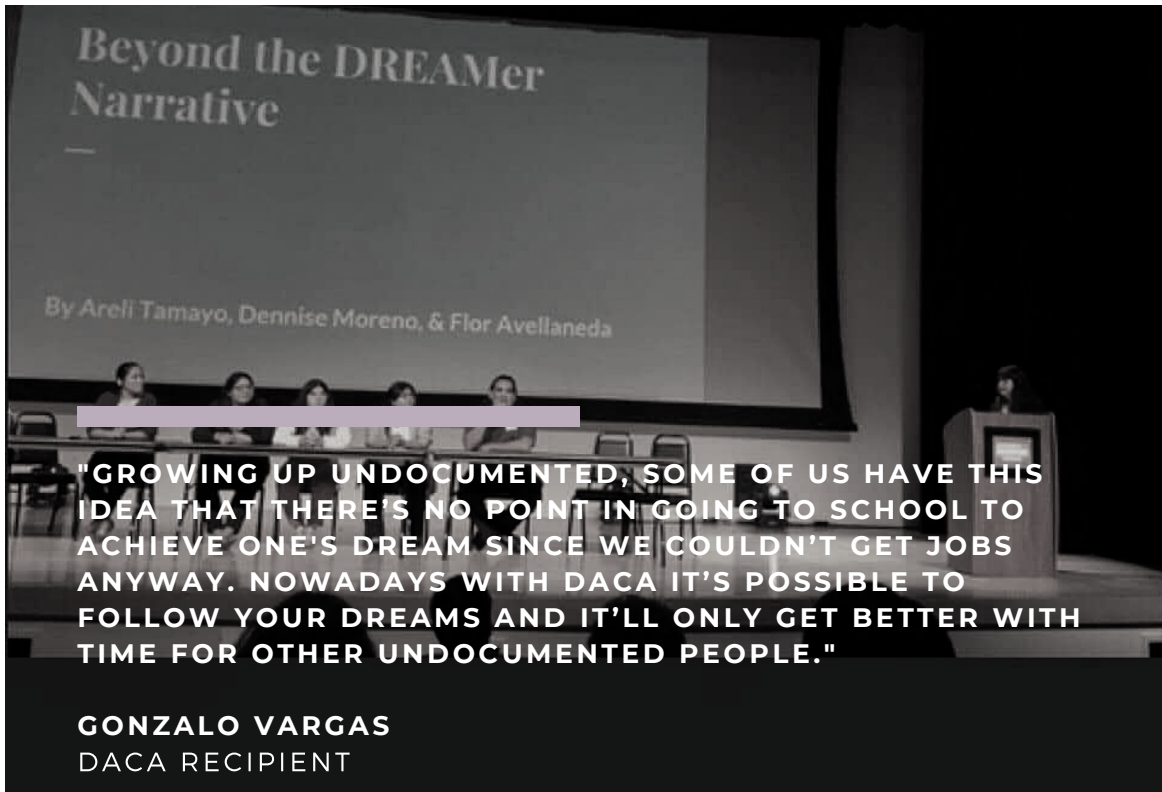
Don't give up when doors close, you may find a solution when you keep pushing forward.

Alternative funding may come from non-student loans that do not require us to have social security numbers.

Having friends in school and outside of school will allow you to continue pursuing your education and they are part of self-care during tough times.

Finding mentors in educators, alumni, students, and people in the career field you're interested in is helpful when guidance is needed or to understand situations we encounter.

ALTERNATIVE CAREER OPTIONS



Helpful Links:

[Basic Facts About Entrepreneurship](#)

[UndocuHustle](#)

[Life After College: A Guide for Undocumented Students](#)

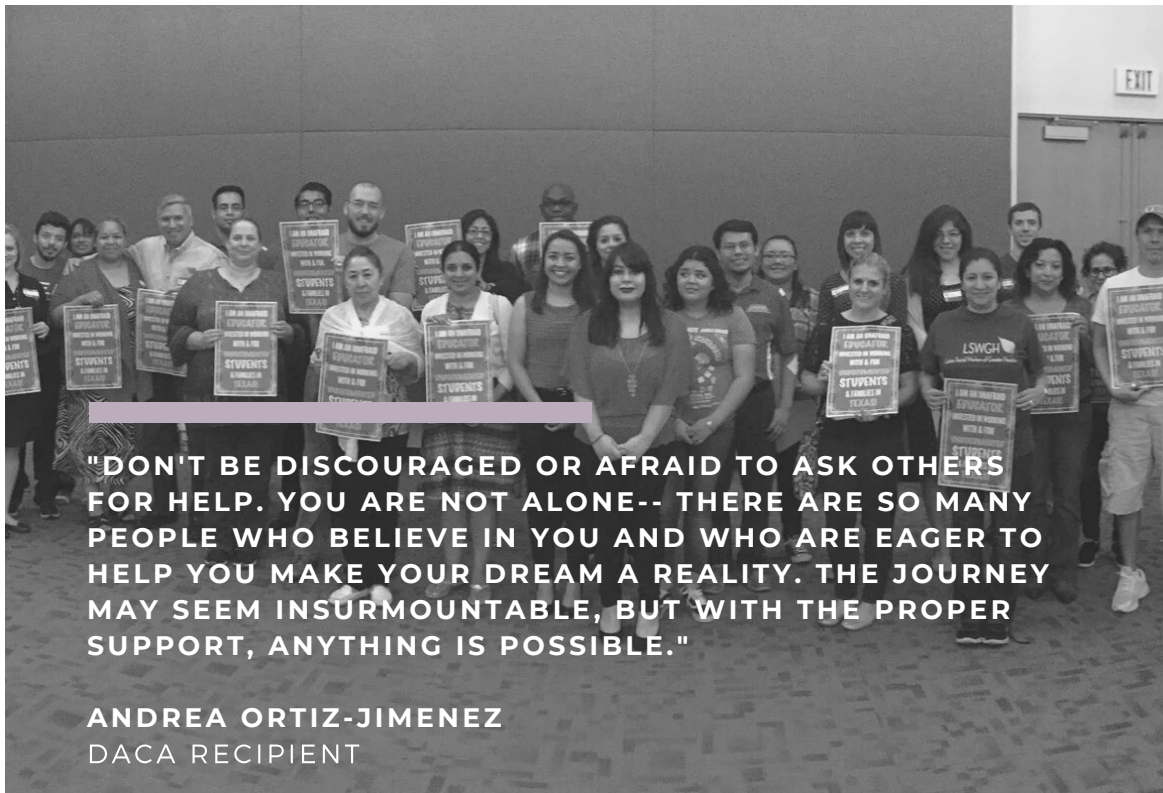
[SER Jobs Houston](#)

[BakerRipley Entrepreneur Connection](#)

Higher education is not for everyone, some of the resources on this page focus on business start ups, starting an LLC, and learning a trade

Some employment options may not be available for everyone, so it is better to research career paths before deciding. For example, undocumented people with and without DACA cannot work at refinery plants due to the lack of immigration status.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



"DON'T BE DISCOURAGED OR AFRAID TO ASK OTHERS FOR HELP. YOU ARE NOT ALONE-- THERE ARE SO MANY PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN YOU AND WHO ARE EAGER TO HELP YOU MAKE YOUR DREAM A REALITY. THE JOURNEY MAY SEEM INSURMOUNTABLE, BUT WITH THE PROPER SUPPORT, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE."

ANDREA ORTIZ-JIMENEZ
DACA RECIPIENT

Important Links:

[Immigrants Rising](#)

[My Undocumented Life](#)

[How to Support College-Bound Undocumented Students: Advice for Parents](#)

[ImmSchools](#)

[UndocuScholars](#)

[Catholic Charities](#)

[Lone Star Legal Aid](#)

Legal Assistance:

[BakerRipley Citizenship and Immigration Services](#)

[Houston Immigration Legal Collaborative \(HILSC\)](#)

[Justice for Our Neighbors](#)

[American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\)](#)

[Raices](#)

[Immigrant Rights Hotline: 1-833-468-4664](#)

[Immigrant Legal Resource Center](#)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PEOPLE BEHIND THE SCENES



ARELI TAMAYO



STEPHANIE
RENDON



JUDITH CORRAL



GUADALUPE
OROZCO



MIRLA LOPEZ

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<https://www.presidentsalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2020-04-16-NAE-PA-Report-Undocumented-Students-in-Higher-Education.pdf>
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<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/DocID/PDF/1528.PDF>



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QUESTIONS?

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