

***My dream is to go to college, but I've encountered some roadblocks...
What can I do?***



El Pueblo, Inc.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COLLEGE PREPARATION PROCESS

Preparing for College during High School

- **Q. –What do I need to do during high school to meet the minimum entrance requirements of institutions of higher education?**
 - A.** First, make sure you tell your guidance counselor right away that you want to go to college and make sure they put you on the four-year university prep track during high school. Even if you are planning to go to a community college first or your guidance counselor tells you another track would be better for you, tell them you want to be on the four-year university prep track anyway just in case you change your mind during senior year and decide to apply to a four-year university.

Next, check to see what the minimum entrance requirements are for NC public universities. You can find them on the Web at http://www.cfnc.org/static/pdf/home/sc/pdf/min_course_requirements.pdf. Private schools and public schools in other states have their own requirements, which you can find on their admissions websites.

Make sure you fulfill those requirements during your four years, get involved in extracurricular activities, and during your junior and senior years of high school, take the standardized tests (the SAT or ACT) that are required in order to apply to most colleges and universities.
- **Q. – I would like to go to college, but I just realized I have not completed the minimum requirements to be able to enter a four-year institution. What should I do?**
 - A.** Don't give up yet! There may still be time to make up for it. Also, many schools are flexible with those requirements and it only takes some time of talking to their admissions representatives to find out alternative ways to meet those requirements.

Standardized Tests

- **Q. – I am trying to register for the ACT/SAT online, but I am undocumented. What do I fill out when it asks for my citizenship status and social security number?**
 - A.** NEVER provide invalid information about your citizenship status or use someone else's SSN on any application. Simply mark "non-U.S. citizen" or "citizen of another country". Leave the part that asks for your social security number blank or enter all zeros. The test administrators should not give you any trouble for this, but if there is a problem, feel free to contact us at El Pueblo at (919) 835-1525, and we will try to help or refer you to someone else who can.

➤ **Q. – I would like to prepare for the SAT or ACT, but I do not have the money to pay for prep classes or online practice tests that charge. Are there any free resources I can use to help prepare for the test?**

A. You should first talk to your guidance counselor to see if your high school offers any free materials to help you prepare. Many colleges in this region prefer that you take the SATs, but it can't hurt to take the ACTs as well. Just remember that if you do take the ACTs, we recommend that you take the test with the optional writing section. Without the writing section, many schools will not accept the scores. Here are some helpful sites which offer information and practice for taking the tests:

College Board (SAT)

www.sat.collegeboard.com/practice

Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions (SAT and ACT)

www.kaptest.com/College/Getting-into-College/free-practice-tests-workshops.html

Peterson's StudentEdge (SAT and ACT)

www.petersons.com/college-search/test-prep.aspx

TestPrepReview.com (SAT and ACT)

www.testprepreview.com/

Number2.com (SAT and ACT)

www.number2.com

The Princeton Review (SAT and ACT)

www.princetonreview.com/college-education.aspx

Additionally, the College Foundation of North Carolina (CFNC)¹ offers helpful test prep information including courses, tips, and practice sessions on their website, www.cfnc.org. If you do not already have a free CFNC account, you will need to create one.

College Applications

➤ **Q. – I would like to apply to some colleges, but I do not have the money to pay for the application fees. Is there any way to have the fees waived?**

A. It depends, but many times there is a way! If you are part of the free or reduced lunch program at most NC High Schools, you can talk to your guidance counselor to see if you can have the application fee waived for up to four colleges you are applying to. If you are not a part of that program, you can always talk to your guidance counselor as well as the admissions counselors at the schools you want to apply to, explain your financial situation to them, and see if they would be willing to waive the fee for you. Many times, they are more than willing to help.

➤ **Q. – I am an undocumented student. Can I go to college?**

A. Yes! Currently, you can attend any of the 16 public universities in North Carolina if you have completed their admission requirements. (See the Preparing for College During High School section above.) However, they *will* consider you an out-of-state student, meaning you will have to pay the out-of-state tuition rate.

North Carolina Community Colleges also admit undocumented students for degree programs, with some restrictions. For example, undocumented students applying for curriculum courses must have graduated from a US high school and may not displace a lawfully present student if classes are at capacity. These restrictions do not affect non-curriculum courses such as ESL and GED.

Each private college and university decides their own individual policy. Most (but not all) will admit undocumented students. It is best to contact (or have a teacher or your guidance counselor call) the admissions office of the colleges you are interested in and ask a representative about that school's policy.

➤ **Q. – I am applying to college, but I am undocumented and don't have a social security number. What do I fill out when the application asks for my citizenship status and social security number?**

A. If possible, fill out a paper application that will allow you to leave certain parts blank. When a form asks for your social security number just leave that line blank or if you apply on-line and the page requires a response, you can type in zeros for that part. NEVER provide an invalid (or someone else's) SSN. When an application asks for your citizenship status, mark the box that says non-U.S. citizen. You may choose to leave it blank, but never mark that you are a U.S. citizen if you are not.

Colleges should not inquire further about your legal status unless it is related to financial aid. If you do experience trouble with the schools you are trying to apply to, feel free to contact us at El Pueblo at (919) 835-1525, and we will try to help or refer you to someone who can.

➤ **Q. – I have lived in North Carolina for a few years but am undocumented. Will I be able to pay in-state tuition at a North Carolina community college or public university?**

A. No. Unfortunately, in North Carolina, you have to be a U.S. Citizen or Legal Permanent Resident (LPR) to qualify for in-state tuition. Instead, they will consider you an out-of-state student, meaning you will have to pay the out-of-state tuition rate. However, do not get discouraged! There are many private scholarships that do not request information about immigration status. (See Financial Aid / Scholarships section below.)

Financial Aid / Scholarships

➤ **Q. – What types of financial aid are available for me as a Latino student?**

A. There are thousands of private scholarships out there for Latino students, *including many that do not ask information about immigration status*. You can find them by conducting internet searches online. El Pueblo, Inc. also has a list of scholarship and financial aid resources for Latino students, including extensive scholarship lists and scholarship search engines online.

Look into the schools you are considering attending to see if they offer scholarships you qualify for. If so, contact the schools' financial aid offices to find out how to apply for them. Many schools have a financial aid application for their institution that you should fill out and get in well before the deadline in order to try to receive institutional aid before it is all distributed.

Finally, if you are a U.S. citizen or Legal Permanent Resident (LPR), you qualify for federal financial aid and should go to www.fasfa.ed.gov to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). To receive federal financial aid for each year that you plan to attend a college or university, you should fill out the FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1st of every year well before the start of the school year. (The deadline for the FAFSA is the 15th of February each year.) You have to wait until January 1st because you need to be able to report income information taken from your and your parents' W-2 forms.

➤ **Q. – I am a U.S. Citizen applying for federal student aid, but my parents are undocumented. What do I put on the FAFSA when it asks for my parents' information?**

A. We recommend you put 000-00-0000 for your parents' social security numbers. When the FAFSA asks whether or not your parents will or have already filed their taxes for the year, answer truthfully. If your parents are not going to file taxes, then mark WILL NOT FILE. We do encourage your parents to use their ITIN taxpayer identification numbers to file and pay their taxes as required by the federal government. For reporting your parents' income, if they do not file their taxes and lack information about their total income for the year, just do the best you can to estimate your parents' total income, being as truthful as possible.

Other Questions

- **Q.** – I am about to graduate from school with a professional degree, and I would like to obtain the required license for my profession. However, I am undocumented and the board exam registration requires a social security number. I have worked so hard and done very well in my classes. Is there anything I can do to become licensed?

A. Unfortunately, unless you have a social security number, you will not be able to take the exam to get your license. Sadly, there is just no way around it for now, at least in North Carolina. We are all hoping that the federal government will finally commit to seeing comprehensive immigration reform take place. We continue to call on our legislators to address these issues and are hoping to see laws passed in the future that will allow you and others like you to obtain the licenses you have worked so hard for.

If you have more questions about legislative or legal matters, feel free to contact the Immigration Legal Assistance Project at the NC Justice Center at (888) 251-2776 (toll free) or (919) 856-2159. (They have Spanish-speaking representatives if needed.)

For more information on the DREAM Act, please contact our Advocacy Initiative at (919) 835-1525.

- **Q.** – What should I do if I encounter problems during the process of preparing for or applying to college?

A. You can contact El Pueblo, Inc. or another of the following Adelante Education Coalition members for individualized help:

- NC Justice Center² - Seonaid Rijo, Litigation Paralegal, 919-861-1466, seonaid@ncjustice.org
- NC Society of Hispanic Professionals - Teresa Cerrato, Director of Programs, 919-467-8424 or mailbox@thencshp.org

- **Q.** – How can I help to promote change to higher education policies in North Carolina that would increase access to higher education for undocumented students?

A. If you want to get involved in these efforts, please contact El Pueblo's Advocacy Initiative at (919) 835-1525 or email elpueblo@elpueblo.org. The Adelante Education Coalition of NC³ also has updates and actions to support Latino and migrant students on their website: www.adelantenc.org.

- **Q.** – What if I have more questions?

A. You can ask teachers, school guidance counselors, and organizations such as El Pueblo, Inc., the North Carolina Society of Hispanic Professionals⁴, and the Adelante Education Coalition of NC.

We are committed to seeing you achieve your dreams of pursuing higher education and are ready to help you along the way!

¹ College Foundation of North Carolina is a free service that helps students plan, apply, and pay for college. www.cfnc.org

²North Carolina Justice Center, the state's leading progressive advocacy and research organization, works to ensure that every household has access to the resources, services and fair treatment it needs to achieve economic security. www.ncjustice.org

³Adelante Education Coalition of North Carolina focuses on education issues affecting Latino and migrant students and their families in NC.

⁴NC Society of Hispanic Professionals promote the education of Hispanic students at all scholastic levels. www.thencshp.org