

NEW REPORT FINDING 100K UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANT STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL ANNUALLY UNDERSCORES URGENCY FOR LEGISLATION TO PROTECT DREAMERS AND EXPAND ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

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Today, the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, TheDream.US, the National Association for College Admission Counseling, the Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education, and United We Dream released the following statement on the Migration Policy Institute's (MPI) [new report](#) on the number of undocumented students graduating from high school annually. The report was commissioned by the Presidents' Alliance. The new data and accompanying fact sheet may be found at the [Presidents' Alliance website](#) and [MPI's website](#).

The MPI study has the following key findings:

- MPI estimates that 98,000 undocumented students, ages 15 to 19, graduate from high school every year, a dramatic increase from the commonly used estimate of 65,000 students per year.
- MPI provides state-level estimates for the top 15 states, including California, which accounts for approximately 27,000 of the 98,000 graduating each year, Texas (17,000), Florida (5,000), New York (4,000), New Jersey (4,000), Illinois (4,000), Georgia (3,000), North Carolina (3,000), Virginia (2,000), Arizona (2,000), Maryland (2,000), Washington (2,000), Colorado (1,000), Nevada (1,000), and Massachusetts (1,000).
- Close to 20% (18,000) of all undocumented high school graduates live in other states.
- The new estimates also reflect the growing diversity of immigrant students with the share from Mexico declining, and those from Central America, Asia, and Africa increasing.
- Both the expansion of in-state tuition through legislation or other action in over 20 states, as well as the DACA program, with its educational and work authorization provisions, represent important drivers in the increased high school graduation rates for immigrant youth.
- The estimates suggest that 100k per year number has the potential to grow even larger in the future if high school graduation rates for immigrant students increase.

Nancy Cantor, Chancellor, Rutgers University-Newark and Co-Chair, Presidents' Alliance Steering Committee, stated, "Every day, our campus, administrators, faculty, and students strive to establish as welcoming of an environment for immigrant students and continue to build the pipeline from secondary education through postsecondary education and beyond. These new findings serve as a validation of the welcoming policies instituted by campuses and university and college presidents across the nation to attract, retain, and develop immigrant youth. More importantly, these findings are concrete proof that institutions, presidents, and campuses must do more to expand higher educational opportunities to a growing student constituency."

Miriam Feldblum, Executive Director of Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, stated, "The fact that nearly 100,000 undocumented students graduate from high school and are poised to enter a higher education institution is a resounding mandate to state and federal lawmakers to pass policies that expand access to education. At both the state and federal level, these policies should include expanded opportunity for in-state tuition, scholarships, and financial aid. Our nation continues to invest in immigrant students through their K-12 education but for many students, especially those in states without tuition equity laws, continued investment through higher education remains out of reach."

Don Graham, Co-founder of TheDream.US, stated, "For us, this number represents a greater challenge than we had originally envisioned—our donors and partner colleges are working hard to help as many high school seniors achieve their dream of getting a college education. To date, we've helped over 4,000 DREAMers reach that goal, and we hope to help many more obtain higher education and build their futures. However, we can't do this alone. This number presents a challenge worth an immediate federal fix. We can't allow a generation of driven and motivated young people, who want to go to college and contribute to the country and communities they consider home, to stay at a standstill. Our country needs them."

Teresita B. Wisell, Executive Director, Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education, and Vice President for Workforce Development and Community Education, Westchester Community College, stated, "Now we know that nearly 100,000 undocumented students graduate each year from high school. Let's ensure that these young people, who have grown up in our neighborhoods and attended schools in our communities, have every chance possible to continue their education and prepare for careers that will benefit our country and our economy. We call upon legislators at the federal and state levels to enact policies *now* that will provide permanent protections for Dreamers, a pathway to citizenship, and increased access to higher education through expansion of in-state tuition, scholarships, and financial aid."

David Hawkins, Executive Director for Educational Content and Policy for the National Association for College Admission Counseling, stated, "These numbers are further confirmation that Congress urgently needs to pass legislation that would provide stability to the tens of thousands of students whose lives are in limbo. These students work hard, are in good standing, and their communities benefit from them. We should continue to allow them to thrive by passing legislation that would give them legal status to pursue their dreams and achieve their academic goals."

Deyanira Aldana, Education Justice Coordinator of United We Dream stated, "This new report is much needed because we've known that more and more undocumented students struggle every year with finding and accessing higher educational opportunities. These 100,000 students, their parents, and educators must be empowered to close the opportunity gap and engage in efforts to improve

educational equity. We also need local, state, and federal leaders to step up and support policies like the Dream and Promise Act, which would provide thousands of undocumented students with a pathway citizenship, provide access to financial support for college, and open doors to the future.”

About Our Organizations

The non-partisan [Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration](#) brings together college and university leaders dedicated to increasing public understanding of how immigration policies and practices impact our students, campuses and communities, and supporting policies that create a welcoming environment for undocumented, immigrant, and international students. The Alliance is comprised of over 420 presidents and chancellors of public and private colleges and universities, serving over four million students in 41 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico.

[TheDream.US](#) is the nation's largest college access and success program for DREAMers, having provided 4,000 scholarships to students with DACA and TPS at more than 75 partner colleges in 15 states and Washington, D.C. We believe that all young people, regardless of where they were born, should have the opportunity to fulfill their potential, gain an education, and fully participate in the country that they call home.

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), founded in 1937, is an organization of more than 15,000 professionals from around the world dedicated to serving students as they make choices about pursuing postsecondary education. NACAC is committed to maintaining high standards that foster ethical and social responsibility among those involved in the transition process, as outlined in the association's [Code of Ethics and Professional Practices](#).

The [Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education](#) (CCCIE) is a national network of community colleges and other professional organizations committed to increasing educational and career opportunities for immigrant and refugee students. CCCIE builds the capacity of community colleges to accelerate immigrant and refugee success and raises awareness of the essential role these colleges play in advancing immigrant integration through education. CCCIE’s work is guided by a Blue Ribbon Panel of community college leaders, representing over 50 colleges serving an estimated 1.2 million students.

[United We Dream](#) (UWD) is the largest immigrant youth-led organization in the nation, a powerful network made up of over 500,000 members, five branches with over 100 affiliate organizations across 28 states. UWD’s vision is to build a multi-racial, multi-ethnic movement of young people who organize and advocate at the local and national levels for the dignity and justice of immigrants and communities of color in the United States. You can find more about UWD online at [unitedwedream.org](#).

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