Improving Education & Income Generation Outcomes for Undocumented Youth

State & Local Solutions

RASHAUN BENNETT, THOMAS SHOWALTER, & LAURA TATUM

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Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality

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We would like to sincerely thank the wide variety of experts who participated in our convening in Stockton, California, in the fall of 2018 to uncover emerging practices for serving undocumented youth. The convening brought together 23 different organizations, including local government agencies, educational institutions, think tanks, advocacy organizations, and direct service organizations.

We are also grateful to Katharine Gin at Immigrants Rising who reviewed this report in draft.

Any errors of fact or interpretation remain the authors’.
Acronyms, Abbreviations, & Initialization

**CTE**—Career Technical Education

**DACA**—Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

**ELL**—English Language Learners

**IRCA**—The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act

**IRS**—Internal Revenue Service

**ITIN**—Individual Taxpayer Identification Number

**SSN**—Social Security Number

**USCIS**—U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History &amp; Legislative Context</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving Education Outcomes for Undocumented Youth</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ensure Undocumented Students' Safety &amp; Privacy</em></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Prepare Undocumented High School Students for College &amp; Career</em></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Boost Postsecondary Access &amp; Affordability for Undocumented Students</em></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Offer Supports to Facilitate Undocumented Students’ Success</em></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving Income Generation Outcomes for Undocumented Youth</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Maximize Opportunities for Undocumented Immigrants to Earn Income, Including Through Entrepreneurship, Freelance Work, &amp; Fellowships</em></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Make Professional Licenses Accessible to Undocumented Immigrants</em></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Map Local Programs &amp; Supports Available to Undocumented Youth</em></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Support Vigorous State &amp; Private Protection of Workers’ Rights</em></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond Education &amp; Income Generation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Expand Legal &amp; Financial Resources for Immigration Remedies &amp; DACA Renewals</em></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Support Undocumented Youth Leadership</em></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Protect Immigrants’ Access to Services</em></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix: Recommendations to Improve Education &amp; Income Generation Outcomes for Undocumented Youth</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Despite low current unemployment rates for the United States population overall, youth unemployment (ages 16-24) remains double the current jobless rate and much higher among certain demographic groups.¹ Undocumented youth are one such group facing particular education and employment-related challenges that hurt them, their families, their communities, and the U.S. economy.² Improving education and income generation opportunities and outcomes for undocumented youth would not only improve their lives and enable them to reach their full potential—it would also help fill state labor shortages and bring the economic benefits of increased income, spending, and tax revenues from better-paying jobs.

Undocumented young people, a diverse group of immigrants from around the world who live in the U.S. without legal status, face a variety of intersecting challenges.³ Youth-serving systems and organizations often exclude undocumented young people. Undocumented people face discrimination, barriers to accessing services, and other obstacles described throughout this report.

The largest number of undocumented immigrants reside in California; the state is also a center of innovation for improving opportunities for undocumented youth.⁴ Therefore, in the fall of 2018, the Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality (GCPI) and National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC) hosted a convening in Stockton, California, to uncover emerging practices for serving undocumented young adults, catalyze a community of practitioners and leaders serving this population, and produce this report documenting findings and providing recommendations. NYEC is a membership association that improves the effectiveness of the organizations, and the systems, that serve young people who are out of school and out of work; undocumented youth have been a focus of the organization. The convening brought together 23 different organizations, including local government agencies, educational institutions, think tanks, advocacy organizations, and direct service organizations.

This convening and research are a part of GCPI’s broader promotion of a Youth Opportunity Guarantee,⁵ a framework to ensure access to education and employment for all young people in the U.S. ages 16 to 24. It builds on our existing obligation to ensure access to primary and secondary education for all children in the country, including undocumented youth. The Guarantee exemplifies GCPI’s work to alleviate poverty and inequality in the U.S. by developing and advancing proven and promising ideas, working with policymakers, researchers, practitioners, advocates, and people with lived experience to advance policy and programmatic recommendations.

Focusing on State, Local, & Institutional Level Solutions to Education & Income Generation Challenges

Though federal immigration reform is desperately needed, this report focuses on solutions at state, local, and institutional levels, which often receive less attention. State and local policy and programmatic changes can enhance the educational attainment and earning power of undocumented young people; this report outlines various steps that do not require federal policy change. Elected
officials, policymakers, advocates, nonprofits, foundations, and education leaders can advance these solutions across the U.S.

We focus primarily on income generation rather than employment because this report is about solutions at the state, local, and institutional levels. Some undocumented young people have gained temporary employment authorization through Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and some undocumented youth are employed without work authorization, but broadly ensuring full employment opportunity for undocumented youth would require federal immigration reform. Therefore, this report highlights income generation opportunities—such as entrepreneurship and fellowships—that do not require employment authorization.

This report draws on the Stockton convening to highlight challenges and solutions that would improve education and income generation outcomes for undocumented youth. Throughout the report, recommendations are underlined; all recommendations are collected in the Appendix.
Findings & Discussion

Findings and accompanying discussion are presented below.

History & Legislative Context

An estimated 11.3 million undocumented people live in the U.S.; about 1.7 million are between the ages of 16-24. Estimating an accurate employment rate for the undocumented population is difficult due to data limitations. The Migration Policy Institute estimates that 67 percent of undocumented people in the U.S. ages 16 and older are employed. Educational attainment for undocumented adults remains low; only 28 percent have any postsecondary education. The top five industries of formal employment for undocumented people include (1) Accommodation, Food Services and Entertainment; (2) Construction; (3) Professional and Administrative Services; (4) Manufacturing; and (5) Retail Trade.

Federal statutes related to undocumented young people have not changed in many years. Recent relevant legislation regarding immigration and work includes:

- The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), which established sanctions for employers who knowingly hire undocumented workers.
- The Immigration Act of 1990, which capped temporary work authorizations for highly skilled foreign workers (often called H-1B visas), created different visa categories, initiated the Temporary Protected Status program for asylees and refugees facing danger in their countries of origin, and granted a temporary residency and work authorization to immediate relatives of people granted legalization through IRCA.

Recently, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program has provided work authorization and temporary safety from deportation for 800,000 undocumented young people. The DACA program offers limited protections to some undocumented young people who immigrated to the U.S. as children. In 2012, former President Obama created the program through executive order, providing administrative relief from deportation for a period of two years, subject to renewal. Only a portion of undocumented young people are eligible for DACA, due to stringent eligibility criteria. The Trump Administration attempted to repeal DACA in 2017, but ongoing litigation has kept protections in place for those who participated in the DACA program before the repeal attempt. The future of the program is uncertain.
Improving Education Outcomes for Undocumented Youth

Recommendations for maximizing education outcomes for undocumented youth, discussed below, include: ensure undocumented students’ safety and privacy; prepare undocumented high school students for college and career; boost postsecondary access and affordability for undocumented students; and offer supports to facilitate undocumented students’ success.

ENSURE UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS’ SAFETY & PRIVACY

The Trump Administration has escalated immigration enforcement, spreading fear in immigrant communities. In 2018, the number of deportations in the U.S. reached a record high at 287,741. This approach has prompted some states, localities, and school districts to protect data and privacy for students and their families. The Los Angeles School Board passed a resolution stating the district would protect the data and identities of any student, family member, or school employee from federal misuse. States can also strengthen laws to protect student data. Districts are taking actions such as training administrators, teachers, and counselors to (1) exercise sensitivity to documentation status and (2) to teach immigrant students and families about their rights, including the right to keep data confidential.

PREPARE UNDOCUMENTED HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE & CAREER

The U.S. guarantees access to public elementary and secondary education to all children, regardless of citizenship or residency status. The 1982 Supreme Court case Plyer v. Doe protects this guarantee. However, immigrant youth may face challenges and barriers—such as limited English language proficiency and gaps in academic preparation—to a high school experience that prepares them for college and career.

States, cities, school districts, and community-based organizations can address barriers and ensure that high school sets up immigrant and undocumented students for college and career success, such as by offering programs to expand educational and internship opportunities. For example, the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families provides competitive grants to community-based organizations, identifying undocumented youth as a priority population and offering subsidized youth employment and internship programs. Since English Language Learners (ELL) may not have time during the regular school day to participate in career technical education (CTE), some programs have expanded outside the school day. San Francisco’s Tech 21 program offers afterschool courses and internships in architecture, engineering, and other industries, making the program more accessible to ELL students. Elsewhere in California, school districts provide ELL students with summer school courses, an expanded school day, or other options to help address the time crunch caused by learning English while completing the requirements of high school.
**BOOST POSTSECONDARY ACCESS & AFFORDABILITY FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS**

Cost presents a major barrier for undocumented students seeking to pursue postsecondary education. Undocumented students, including DACA participants, are not eligible to receive federal student financial aid. As college costs increase, lack of access to financial aid damages students’ postsecondary prospects more than ever.

Twenty-four states have taken action—through legislation, their Board of Regents, or another executive department—to offer in-state tuition to undocumented immigrants. Eight states have passed legislation to offer state financial aid to undocumented students. Conversely, six states explicitly prohibit in-state tuition for undocumented immigrants.

In California, a series of laws has improved undocumented students’ access to affordable postsecondary education. Assembly Bill 540 (AB540) in 2001 and Senate Bill 68 (SB68) in 2017 established and expanded, respectively, opportunities for certain undocumented students to access in-state tuition at public colleges and universities. The California Dream Act in 2011 allows qualifying AB540 students to receive state financial aid and aid from private sources through California colleges and universities.

Below, Figure 1 lists the 24 states that allow in-state tuition for undocumented students.
**FIGURE 1.** Almost half of states allow in-state tuition for undocumented students

List of states

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE/DISTRICT</th>
<th>YEAR ADOPTED</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Upheld by California Supreme Court in 2010(^{29})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Banned previously in 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District of Columbia</td>
<td>2017(^{30})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>2014(^{31})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Approved through Board of Regents(^{32})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>2004(^{33})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Upheld by U.S. Court of Appeals in 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education allows select colleges to offer in-state tuition(^{34})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Limited to community colleges only(^{35})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Department of Higher Education approved for DACA participants(^{36})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Approved through Board of Regents(^{37})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>2013(^{38})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>2013(^{39})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>2005(^{40})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Approved through Board of Regents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>2011(^{41})</td>
<td>Approved through Board of Regents decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>2001(^{42})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>2014(^{43})</td>
<td>Only extends to students who are covered by Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and based on Attorney General's advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>2004(^{44})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality and National Youth Employment Coalition, 2019.
OFFER SUPPORTS TO FACILITATE UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS’ SUCCESS

During college, undocumented students may face a range of challenges complicated by national and state laws, institutional policies, and varying levels of campus support. Funders, colleges, nonprofits, and others can provide supports to facilitate student success. Many public two- and four-year colleges and universities in California have created centers for undocumented students that offer a welcoming environment with culturally competent staff, build community amongst undocumented students and allies, and provide resources from advising to financial aid assistance to referrals for legal services. The centers empower students in leadership roles; the University of California, Davis created a student-led UndocuPRIDE Speakers Bureau, and Fullerton College and Fresno City College have undocumented student peer mentorship programs. The new California Campus Catalyst Fund provides grants to dozens of public colleges and universities across the state to provide undocumented students and their families with a variety of services, such as expanded legal aid, mental health services, career guidance, and civics classes.

Improving Income Generation Outcomes for Undocumented Youth

Ensuring full employment opportunities for undocumented youth would require federal immigration reform. However, a variety of state, local, and institutional solutions can improve income generation opportunities for undocumented youth, even without federal reforms. Recommendations for such solutions include: provide education and support to maximize opportunities for undocumented immigrants to earn income, including through entrepreneurship, freelance work, and fellowships; make professional licenses accessible to undocumented immigrants; map local programs and supports available to undocumented youth; and support vigorous state and private protection of workers’ rights, including workers’ rights training.

MAXIMIZE OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNDOCUMENTED YOUTH TO EARN INCOME, INCLUDING THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP, FREELANCE WORK, & FELLOWSHIPS

Undocumented young people face limited work opportunities in the U.S. However, all immigrants, regardless of immigration status, can earn income as freelancers or entrepreneurs using an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). ITINs are issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regardless of immigration status. Options for business structures range from a sole proprietorship to a worker cooperative.

Generally, young adults face a variety of barriers to starting businesses. They often have smaller professional networks, hampering access to expertise needed to start a business and the pool of customers needed to grow it. They are less likely to have financial resources, including savings and established credit, needed to access commercial loans or to weather a failed business. Business development programs designed to help start or grow a business predominantly serve adults ages 35 and over. To support income generation, communities need more freelance and entrepreneurship programs serving undocumented youth.
Immigrants Rising, a nonprofit based in San Francisco, offers training and resources to undocumented youth freelancers and entrepreneurs. These materials include webinars and guides on a variety of topics such as choosing a business structure, accessing capital, and developing a business plan. Immigrants Rising’s Entrepreneurship Fund provides grants to undocumented entrepreneurs who are working to create positive social change. Grantees also receive coaching and mentorship. While Immigrants Rising’s online tools are available to undocumented youth across the country, more communities—especially communities with significant undocumented populations—need access to higher-intensity services and grants.

Fellowship programs, which do not require a Social Security number or work authorization, offer another income generation pathway for undocumented young people. Various nonprofits, universities, cities, and other entities operate fellowship programs. Immigrants Rising offers a variety of fellowships to young people at different stages of education and regardless of immigration status; their Creating Fellowship Programs guide and Overview of Grants to Individuals guide explain how various entities can structure inclusive programs. Education is needed to inform organizations—as well as immigrants themselves—about fellowship opportunities. Following a commitment to a fellowship model, technical assistance may be necessary to create fellowship opportunities as alternatives to internships or employment. More fellowship programs and associated supportive services are needed.

MAKE PROFESSIONAL LICENSES ACCESSIBLE TO UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

A majority of states bar undocumented people from receiving professional and occupational licenses. However, 11 states have recently passed legislation that allows some or all immigrant populations access to such licenses, either broadly or for certain occupations (see Figure 2). In California, state law permits undocumented immigrants to receive any professional license, provided they have fulfilled all other requirements. More states must pass laws that allow undocumented young people access to all professional licenses.

Below, Figure 2 summarizes the laws in 11 states providing some or all immigrants with access to one or more professional licenses. The state policies vary, as noted in the table.
## FIGURE 2. 11 states provide immigrants some access to professional licenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>BILL</th>
<th>EFFECTIVE DATE</th>
<th>SUMMARY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>S.1159</td>
<td>1/01/15</td>
<td>All individuals seeking a professional license can now provide either a federal Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) or Social Security number (SSN). Any individual lawfully or unlawfully present in the U.S. can apply for and receive a professional license, provided they have fulfilled all other requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>H.755</td>
<td>7/1/14</td>
<td>This law authorizes the Florida Supreme Court to admit an applicant to the state bar who is an unauthorized immigrant if they meet all the requirements. The person applying for a license had to arrive as a minor to the U.S., be present for more than 10 years, have employment authorization from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), have a Social Security number (not an ITIN) and, if male, have registered for Selective Service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>S.23</td>
<td>1/01/16</td>
<td>The law allows DACA participants who have work authorization from the USCIS and who have fulfilled all other requirements to receive a license to practice law in the state of Illinois.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>S.1340</td>
<td>5/10/14</td>
<td>The Minnesota Legislature authorized a Foreign-Trained Physician Task Force in 2014 to develop strategies to integrate immigrant physicians to address barriers and alleviate shortages. The Legislature also established the international medical graduates’ assistance program to assist with integration into the Minnesota health care delivery system, with the goal of increasing access to primary care in rural and underserved areas of the state. The law establishes $500,000 in 2016 and in 2017 for the health care access fund and requires an annual report on progress and recommendations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>S.1458</td>
<td>7/01/15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>LB.947</td>
<td>4/20/16</td>
<td>Nebraska allows immigrants who are lawfully present in the U.S. and who have employment authorization from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to obtain a professional or commercial license. This only applies to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATE</td>
<td>BILL</td>
<td>EFFECTIVE DATE</td>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
</tr>
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<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Nevada**    | A.276      | 5/23/15        | Nevada allows the state superintendent to license immigrants with work authorization if a teacher shortage exists. In 2015, Nevada amended the law to allow school districts to license a person possessing the skills, experience, or abilities that address an area of concern for the school district. The provisions of this bill apply to public and charter schools. In 2019, Nevada also allowed people regardless of their citizenship or immigration status to apply for state occupational licenses using an ITIN.  
60                                                                 |
|               | AB.275     | 7/1/19         |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| **New York**  | N/A        | 2016           | The New York State Education Department Board of Regents allows DACA participants to apply for their teaching certificates and other professional licenses from their department.  
61                                                                 |
| **South Dakota** | H.1045    | 2/6/15         | Any foreign-trained or other graduate from a dental program not accredited by the American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation may apply for a license to practice as a dentist or dental hygienist. The State Board of Dentistry must establish requirements to ensure that an applicant’s training and education are sufficient for licensure. |
| **Utah**      | H.194, S.131 | 3/31/15       | Utah may issue a license to an occupational therapist or therapy assistant applicant who meets the requirements of receiving a license, and who has been licensed in a state, district, U.S. territory, or foreign country where the education, experience or examination requirements are not substantially equal to Utah’s requirements, if the applicant passes an examination. |
| **West Virginia** | H.205     | 6/12/15        | West Virginia issues teaching certificates only to U.S. citizens who meet the qualifications. However, a permit to teach in the public schools may be granted to “an exchange teacher from a foreign country or an alien person who meets the requirements to teach” (H2005, 2015). |
| **Wyoming**   | H.214      | 7/01/15        | Wyoming repealed language requiring a bar applicant to be U.S. citizen. Noncitizens seeking entry into the Wyoming state bar are allowed to do so if they meet all requirements. |

MAP LOCAL PROGRAMS & SUPPORTS AVAILABLE TO UNDOCUMENTED YOUTH

In some communities, there are various income generation programs and supports available to undocumented youth, but many are short-term, and it may be unclear how they fit together. Mapping can illustrate the existing programs and supports, including information about program location, duration, start and end dates, and eligibility requirements. At the convening in Stockton, one participant from a youth-serving nonprofit created a map visualizing how programs fit together in their community. Various entities, including nonprofits and funders, can play an important role in coordinating resource mapping. These maps are useful to undocumented youth seeking to identify their next step. Such maps also help to identify and address gaps in programming and supports, to leverage resources and maximize their efficient use, and to uncover new opportunities for partnership and organizing.

SUPPORT VIGOROUS STATE & PRIVATE PROTECTION OF WORKERS’ RIGHTS

Undocumented workers are more vulnerable to employer exploitation and abuse because of fears or threats that their employer could retaliate by reporting them to immigration enforcement authorities. However, with a few exceptions, undocumented workers generally have the same rights and remedies provided to workers under federal law—including wage and hour, health and safety, and anti-discrimination laws. The exceptions to this general rule pertain to collecting unemployment insurance and to remedies for a worker if the employer violates their right to engage in union activity.

States can pass and vigorously enforce additional legislation to protect immigrant workers’ rights. Between 2013 and 2017, California passed seven additional laws protecting immigrant workers from retaliation, wage theft, and other workplace abuses related to their immigration status. For example, California’s SB 666 expanded potential penalties (including the loss of a business license) for employers who retaliate against workers for exercising their rights. SB 666 also makes it easier for a worker in this situation to sue their employer for damages. Beyond state enforcement, private support is needed—including workers’ rights training and resources through trusted community-based organizations—to ensure full realization of these protections.

Beyond Education & Income Generation

Recommendations in areas beyond education and income generation include: expand legal and financial resources for immigration remedies and DACA renewals; support undocumented youth leadership; and protect immigrants’ access to services.

EXPAND LEGAL & FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR IMMIGRATION REMEDIES & DACA RENEWALS

Existing immigration remedies could help some undocumented youth gain legal status in the U.S. and employment authorization. A report by Immigrants Rising and Curran & Berger LLP discusses several legal remedies most commonly accessible to undocumented youth, based on in-depth legal consultations. These remedies include asylum, temporary working visas, and U-Visas for victims of crime who assist law enforcement. Additional legal resources and proactive outreach, particularly
combined with financial assistance, would enable more undocumented immigrants to utilize these remedies.

Financial resources would also enable more youth with DACA to renew, as required every two years. Undocumented youth may struggle to afford the $495 fee for the DACA renewal application. This is not surprising, as 4 in 10 adults in the U.S. would have difficulty covering an unexpected $400 expense.68 Some nonprofits and universities cover these fees for undocumented youth, but more DACA fee assistance is needed.

SUPPORT UNDOCUMENTED YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Foundations, nonprofits, colleges, local and state governments, and other entities should support undocumented youth leadership. Undocumented youth leadership is critical for a variety of reasons; for one, the expertise developed through lived experience is invaluable in designing solutions. Undocumented youth lead in a myriad of ways—including mentoring peers in university programs; creating resources, such as the in-depth Life After College69 guide for undocumented students; and organizing to win victories, such as the creation of the DACA program in 2012.70, 71

It is important to keep in mind that undocumented youth may have varying levels of comfort with public or media attention. Some undocumented youth understandably choose to keep a low profile, but others do not. Youth with DACA and formerly undocumented youth may be more comfortable with public or media attention than undocumented youth without DACA.

PROTECT IMMIGRANTS’ ACCESS TO SERVICES

Undocumented people often face barriers to accessing critical foundational services—from driver’s licenses to health care to mental health services. These barriers can limit educational and income generation opportunities, among others. In California, a series of laws has sought to address these challenges. For example, a 2013 law ensures access to driver’s licenses regardless of immigration status, providing undocumented drivers the ability to drive legally and acquire insurance coverage.72

California also has taken steps to expand access to health care for undocumented immigrants. In 2016, California expanded Medi-Cal (California’s Medicaid program) eligibility to all low-income children, including undocumented children, using state funds.73 In June 2019, California extended health insurance benefits via Medicaid to undocumented immigrants between the ages of 19 and 25.74 Despite significant health care expansion in California, further action is needed. Undocumented adults remain largely left out of California’s health insurance system, and 90 percent of low-income undocumented California adults are uninsured.75 Undocumented immigrants are at high risk for mental health challenges but struggle to access mental health care; more resources, outreach to immigrant communities, training of providers, and multilingual services are needed to ensure access to quality care.76
Conclusion

Undocumented youth face particular challenges—including challenges related to education and income generation—that hurt them, their families, their communities, and the U.S. economy. Improving education and income generation opportunities and outcomes for undocumented youth would not only improve their lives and enable them to reach their full potential, but would also help fill labor shortages and bring the economic benefits of increased income, spending, and tax revenues from better-paying jobs. This report highlights a range of solutions implemented in California at the state, local, and institutional level. Even in the absence of federal action, policymakers, advocates, nonprofits, foundations, education leaders, and others can advance these solutions across the U.S.
Appendix: Recommendations to Improve Education & Income Generation Outcomes for Undocumented Youth

Below is a summary of recommendations outlined in the report.

Improving Education Outcomes

- States should strengthen laws to protect student data.
- School districts should train administrators, teachers, and counselors to (1) exercise sensitivity to documentation status and (2) to teach immigrant students and families about their rights, including the right to keep data confidential.
- States, cities, school districts, and community-based organizations can address barriers and ensure that high school sets up immigrant and undocumented students for college and career success, such as by offering expanded educational opportunities and internships.
- States should offer in-state tuition and financial aid to undocumented immigrants.
- Colleges, universities, and postsecondary systems should create centers for undocumented students that offer a welcoming environment with culturally competent staff. States and public university systems should provide undocumented students and their families with a variety of services, such as expanded legal aid, mental health services, career guidance, and civics classes.

Improving Income Generation Outcomes

- Nonprofits and foundations should create and support freelance and entrepreneurship programs serving undocumented youth.
- Educational institutions, nonprofits, foundations, and local governments should create and fund fellowship programs and offer associated supportive services.
- States should pass laws that allow undocumented people access to all professional licenses.
- Nonprofits and foundations should map programs and supports available to undocumented youth.
- States should pass and vigorously enforce legislation to protect immigrant workers’ rights.
Beyond Education & Income Generation

- Foundations, nonprofits, and others should expand legal and financial resources for immigration remedies and DACA renewals.
- Foundations, nonprofits, colleges, local and state governments, and other entities should support undocumented youth leadership.
- States should pass laws to ensure access to driver’s licenses regardless of immigration status.
- States should ensure access to health care, including mental health services, regardless of immigration status.
3 We use the definition of “undocumented” provided by Immigrants Rising, including individuals who: entered without inspection, entered with legal status but overstayed, have or previously had DACA, are in the process of legalizing, and/or are vulnerable immigrants “whose immigration status is in ‘limbo’ or puts them ‘at-risk’ for being targeted by immigration enforcement”. Park, Samuel. “Defining Undocumented.” Immigrants Rising, retrieved July 2019. Available at https://immigrantsrising.org/wp-content/uploads/Immigrants-Rising_Defining-Undocumented.pdf.


