Introduction

Our main focus is to research the disadvantages of undocumented students in New York City who are trying to achieve a higher education. These components include the change of laws after 9/11, in-state-resident tuition policies (IRST), responsiveness of college staff members in assisting the undocumented Latino youth, and the legal challenges undocumented Latinos face while going through the college application process.

Changed Policies After 9/11

After 9/11, the City University of New York (CUNY) changed its policies and began charging undocumented students non-resident tuition. For undocumented students to qualify for in-state tuition, they must have attended a New York State high school for two years and enroll in a state college or university within five years of graduation. However, if a student is eligible for in-state tuition, then they overwhelmingly choose to attend a community college rather than a four-year college.

Financial Barriers

Economically, there is a barrier for undocumented students to attend post-secondary education in New York City. Although it is guaranteed for undocumented students to complete K-12 public education, there is no parallel federal policy that establishes pathways for undocumented students’ access to higher education. Currently, 17 states (including California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, and Kansas) have IRST policies that permit certain undocumented students to pay this reduced tuition (Institute for Higher Education Law and Governance, 2013). Lack of financial aid and federal loans continue to make it a rough path for undocumented students to attend higher education.

Residency for Undocumented Latinos

Residency has been a debatable issue, as well, questioning whether they should pay as a resident if they have been living here or if they should not because they aren’t documented. 40% of undocumented students live in poverty, meaning that they cannot afford college. The debate of residency makes it even harder for them to continue their education because they might have to pay out of state tuition without any financial aid.

Conclusion

Some main factors that deter an undocumented immigrant from attending a higher education include: tuition, discretionary policy application, responsiveness of college staff, access to financial aid, and fear of disclosure. In addition, the college application process burdens undocumented immigrants by asking them for residency verification, pursuing one-on-one counseling, and mandating attendance to workshops for undocumented students regarding their eligibility for IRST.

References


