

TASFA CHECK LIST

TASFA (submit to financial aid office for each university you apply to)

The ID# you use should be your college or university ID#. When you apply to HCCS, you receive your ID# when you submit the application. Universities mail to you after you have applied—generally two weeks. Remember, you can always call the university if you have not received your ID#.

TASFA can be printable from www.collegefortexans.org after January 1.

TAX Transcript (parents and yours if you filed your own taxes)

Once your parents have submitted their income taxes, you'll need to request a tax transcript for them from the IRS. Generally, you need to wait 2-3 weeks to request the tax transcript if you parents filed electronically. If they mailed in their tax transcript, you'll probably have to wait 4-6 weeks before you can request it. Follow these steps . . .

- Log onto www.irs.gov
- Look under tools & [click](#) (*order a return or account tax transcript*).
- Look under Go Get Your Tax Transcript & [click](#) (*order a transcript*)
- Fill out information (street address—the exact way you spelled it on Address Line 1 on your 1040.
- Type of Transcript = Return/ Select 2014 year – takes 10 business days.
 - electronic filing = 2 -3 weeks before you can order transcript
 - Mail in 1040's = 4 - 6 weeks before you can order transcript

If you encounter problems, go to the IRS office on 8701 S. Gessner or on 12941 145 N, Houston, TX . They are very helpful/bilingual.

Selective Service Card (males only) – 18 or older

Fill out the card in black ink and capitalize all letters. Your address must contain the street number and the name of the street. If you live in an apartment, print the letters APT and write the number. For example, 1531 WESTBURY STREET APT 45.

- Make a copy of the application card. Submit a copy for each TASFA you send out.
- In 4 to 6 week, you will receive a letter from the Selective Service with your selective service number. You will submit a copy of this letter to the financial aid office.
- If you are not 18, you should send the card the day your turn 18.
- If you do not receive your card in 6 week, call: 847-688-6888 or toll-free: 1-888-655-1825

Verification Worksheet (dependent and independent)

College and Universities require TASFA students to complete what is called a verification worksheet. The worksheet asks basically the same questions as the TASFA. If your parents completed an income tax, you will most like put zero for most answers.

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Since each college creates their own verification worksheets, you will need to visit the college's financial aid webpage. Look for section called FINANCIAL AID FORMS. Below are links to local Houston colleges financial aid forms pages.

- HCCS: <http://www.hccs.edu/hccs/future-students/financial-aid-at-hcc>
- UHD: <http://www.uhd.edu/financial/forms.html>
- UH: <http://www.uh.edu/financial/undergraduate/forms/>
- TSU: <http://em.tsu.edu/financialaid/>

Generally colleges load these forms in late February and early March.

ADMISSIONS (Spring Checklist)

Submit your 7th semester transcript to the office of admission.

Make sure your transcript has your GPA and rank on it. Also, make sure your graduation plan says recommended. This is important since the Texas Grant requires that you graduate under the recommended plan.

Affidavit (submit to admission office/ if already submitted check to see if received)

You must send each school you apply to an affidavit. You don't have to wait to be accepted to submit your affidavit.

If you have already submitted, check with the admission office to make sure it has been processed. If you are just now submitting, check with admission office 2 to 4 weeks after submitting.

The affidavit certifies that you are a Texas Resident for instate tuition and eligibility for Texas financial aid. Without the affidavit, you pay triple tuition and are not eligible for the Texas Grant!!!

Fee Waiver (only for universities)

Contact Admissions Offices (usually two weeks after submitting all documents) to see if they have received the above documents.

Always check your tuition bill to make sure you are paying in state tuition!

- HCCS (in state = 208.00 a class) verses (out of state = 473.00 a class)
- UHD (in state = 689.00 a class) verses (out of state = 1775.00 a class)

Frequently Asked Questions (TASFA):

I have my TASFA completed, my parents' income tax, and a copy of my selective service card, but my college has NOT loaded the 2015-2016 verification worksheet. What should I do?

Go ahead and submit your TASFA application with parents' income tax and copy of selective service card if a male. Keep checking the financial aid websites of the colleges you applied through for the 2015-2016 verification sheet. Once you see it's been uploaded, copy it, complete, and immediately turn in.

I've turned in my TASFA and all supporting documents, now what?

Give your college about two weeks to start processing your application. Log into your student account, and check your financial aid status. Your student account is your one-stop-shopping for a college student. Generally, you'll register for classes, communicate via campus email, receive financial aid status updates, and pay for your classes through your student account. So, you'll need to take an afternoon, and get familiar with it.

If you see no activity on your financial aid account, you should contact directly the financial aid office. Be polite. Ask if they have received your TASFA and if they have any questions. Then ask when you can expect to be awarded. Don't be surprised if they tell you late summer.

The trick is to call every few weeks with some kind of question. Stop by the office as well. Get to know the person who is in charge of the Texas Grant by name. Tell them your story—why you need the funds, your dream to attend college, and ask them questions. Processing a TASFA requires a little more of their attention than a FAFSA, so if you have them thinking "Hey, this kid really wants to attend college," they are more likely to remember this when they pull your TASFA from a large stack.

Also, document in a notebook every time you make a call or visit. What did you do, what was promised you, and what follow up steps will be needed? Personally, I've had kids march into a financial aid office in October with long email trails and copious notes about all of their visits to financial aid. These guys get results.

Why does it take so long for a college to award me the Texas Grant?

First, the State of Texas does not award Texas Grant funds to colleges until mid-summer. Since colleges are never sure how much Texas Grant funding they will receive until so close to the start of a school year, they are hesitant to tell you that you'll receive the Texas Grant unless they know they have funds to give you.

Second, a large university or community college will process thousands of FAFSA & TASFA's over the summer. They have small staffs, and they often struggle to award the FAFSA students by the time class starts. Unfortunately, TASFA students often have to wait until funding has arrived, which is right when financial aid is generally busiest. The key words are Patience and Persistence.

So, you have to have a backup plan. UH allows for you to take an emergency loan. HCCS allows you to set up a payment plan. You'll want to investigate in the summer what are your options for holding classes if you're Texas Grant doesn't arrive until late August or early September.

Remember that the Project GRAD Houston scholarship comes in the mid-summer! This can serve as your down payment on classes, meaning it can buy you a little time while you wait for the Texas Grant to arrive in your account!

I did not graduate under the Recommended Plan.

You will not qualify for the Texas Grant, but you can still receive the Texas Public Education Grant. This is a smaller grant and it is very limited. You'll need to ask your financial aid officer about this grant. It's there but you have to be aggressive about going after it.

I applied to several universities. I'm still waiting to see if I've been accepted. Should I wait to submit my TASFA?

If you have applied to a university, they have a record of your application on file. If you submit your TASFA, they will not be able to process it until you have been accepted, but they can stamp the date it arrived in their office. You might write a cover letter, and let the university financial aid office know that you are waiting for your acceptance letter but you wanted to get your TASFA in early since you want to meet the school's priority deadline.

After you have been accepted, make sure to check back with the financial aid office. Let them know you have been accepted and ask when you can expect your TASFA to be processed and your financial aid awarded.

My parents do not want to complete an income tax?

Again, ask the financial aid officer at your college what to do in this situation. Often they will tell you to get a letter from your parents' employer stating how much they were paid. Some employers don't have a problem with this. It's a simple statement saying that they paid your mother or father X dollars each month last year for Y work. However, some employers feel uncomfortable doing this. At that point, you'll need to talk with your parents again about filing an income tax as an independent contractor.

My parents live overseas and they do not complete an income tax.

Always ask the financial aid office first what they suggest. Most likely they will give you one of the below solutions.

Have your parents submit a letter stating that in their country they do not file an income tax. They can email this to you and you can translate it. The school may require that you submit a letter from your counselor or a relative. But

If you have no contact with your parents or very limited contact with them for the last 2 years, you can apply for what is called a dependency override. You must provide the college a very compelling reason for not giving the college any information about your parents' income. Generally, you will need to supply three letters explaining your situation. Often, a high school counselor, a teacher, and a relative are good folks to ask for this.

My uncle puts me on his income tax. Can I use that instead of my parents' tax?

No. You must supply income information about your parents. See above for details about supplying parent income information. The State of Texas is very strict about its requirement that students supply INCOME information about their parents. If your parents are not supporting you, then asks your parents to write a letter or send an email to you stating this. Your uncle or aunt can also write a letter stating that he or she is supporting you. Again, let the college financial aid office tell you how to do this. Don't try to do it on your own. Often financial aid officers have a slightly different way of wanting this information. Since they will be the ones reviewing your documentation, it BEST to start with them first!

If you get frustrated, and feel the financial aid officer is asking something impossible from you, politely let her know that and ask (again, politely) what else you could bring in. It's okay to say, "Well, can my counselor write a letter stating this. My counselor has known me for four years. We're very close."

How do I receive my Texas Grant funds?

The college will deposit the funds into your student account. If you receive funds over what your classes and books cost, you can use the extra funds for living expenses or to pay a little towards a computer.

How many classes do I need to take?

For the Texas Grant, you MUST BE A FULL TIME STUDENT. That means you must register for 4 to 5 classes a semester. Less than 3 classes and you'll be ¾ time and will not qualify for the Texas Grant. There is a way to take 3 classes in the fall and 3 in the spring and 2 in the summer (8 total), but you must clear this first with financial aid.

What about my second year in college?

First, you'll need to submit your TASFA again. But this time it will be easier since you'll know the drill.

Second, it's easier to get money your second year! If you receive money the first year, you're first in line to get money the second year. If you didn't receive funds, you're TASFA will generally take top preference since you'll be submitting it early and as already having graduated from high school.

I'm attending Houston Community College. Any special instructions for me?

Yes. HCCS financial aid office requires that you submit a final transcript to them. They can be very strict about this, so make sure you ask them directly about this requirement.

Can I take out a loan?

Yes, if you have a relative who has a social security number. For more information, go to www.collegeforalltxans.com

IMMIGRANT STUDENTS CAN GO TO COLLEGE

If you are an immigrant student, or know someone who is, you can go to college regardless of your immigration status. A new set of laws (HB 1403 from 2001 in addition to SB 1528 from 2005) enable immigrant students, including *undocumented*, to qualify as residents and receive in-state tuition. To qualify a student must meet the following three provisions:

- (1) Have graduated from a public or private high school or received a GED in TX
- (2) Have resided in TX for at least 3 years before the person graduated from high school or received GED
- (3) Provide the institution an affidavit stating that he/she will file an application to become a permanent resident as soon as he/she is eligible to do so.

☞ Immigrant students who do not meet the 3-year requirement but who have started a process with the INS whose **I-130** (family petition) or **I-140** (work petition) applications have been approved are also eligible to receive in-state tuition if they have been here for at least 12 months.

☞ People holding work visas (H1-B) and their dependents (H-4) can now also receive in-state tuition at state universities. The same rule applies for NACARA and TPS applicants among others.

☞ Students who are classified as residents under the new law, also qualify for state financial aid. If they have completed the recommended high school program they can receive the Texas Grant. To apply they need to fill out the new **Texas Application for State Financial Aid** even if they *do not have a social security number*.

☞ Lastly, all universities in Texas offer academic scholarships under which immigrant students, regardless of their immigration status, can apply. If you are awarded one these scholarships you will be charged in-state tuition. An example is those scholarships offered by **Prairie View A&M** or the **University of Houston Downtown**.

☞ If you are in the top 10% of your graduating class, in some universities you automatically qualify for extra funds. At **Stephen F. Austin State University** in Nacogdoches, you can receive up to \$2,000.

For more information please contact

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ESTUDIANTES INMIGRANTES PUEDEN IR A LA UNIVERSIDAD

Si usted es un estudiante inmigrante, o sabe de alguien que lo es, puede ir a la universidad estatal o al colegio comunitario sin importar su estado migratorio. A partir del otoño del 2001, la ley "HB 1403" en conjunción con la ley SB 1528 del 2005, permite a los estudiantes inmigrantes, entre ellos los *indocumentados*, calificar para el pago de la matrícula o la colegiatura como residentes del estado. Para calificar necesita:

- (1) Haberse graduado de una escuela pública o privada, o haber recibido un GED
- (2) Haber residido en Texas por lo menos 3 años antes de que se haya graduado o haya recibido su GED
- (3) Proporcionar a la universidad una declaración jurada al efecto de que usted solicitará la residencia permanente tan pronto como reúna los requisitos. Este procedimiento es independiente de cualquier trámite migratorio.

☞ Los estudiantes inmigrantes que no reúnan los requisitos indicados arriba pero que hayan empezado trámites migratorios y a quienes se les haya aprobado la solicitud I-130 (petición familiar) o I-140 (petición laboral) también podrán pagar la matrícula como residente si han estado en el estado por lo menos 12 meses.

☞ Las personas que tengan visas de trabajo (H1-B) y quienes dependan de ellos (H-4) también pueden pagar la matrícula como residente. La misma regla aplica para los favorecidos de NACARA o TPS, entre otros.

§ Los estudiantes clasificados por la nueva ley como residentes también pueden recibir ayuda financiera estatal. Si han cumplido el programa de estudios recomendados pueden recibir el subsidio conocido como *Texas Grant*. Para solicitar esta ayuda, deben llenar la nueva forma estatal de ayuda financiera aunque no tengan un número de seguro social y tramitarla directamente con la oficina de ayuda financiera de la universidad o colegio comunitario a donde asistirán.

- ☛ Por último, todas las universidades estatales en Texas ofrecen becas académicas que los estudiantes inmigrantes, sin importar su estado migratorio, pueden solicitar. Si un estudiante inmigrante gana una de estas becas, también gana el derecho a pagar la matrícula como residente. Un ejemplo de estas becas son las ofrecidas por **Prairie View A&M** o la **University of Houston Downtown**.
- ☛ Si usted está en el 10% de los mejores estudiantes de su grado, en algunas universidades califica para dinero adicional como en la **Universidad Estatal de Stephen F. Austin** en la ciudad de Nacogdoches.

Para más información puede contactar a:

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