



# Simplifying the Financial Aid Application Process for Undocumented Students

## THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS CASE STUDY

### Challenges

- Goal of helping more undocumented students have access to a higher education; financial aid identified as a barrier
- Application process for state financial aid was paper-based, a cumbersome, inefficient, and poor experience

### Regent Solutions

- Regent Access

### Key Benefits

- Student applicants have an online submission experience similar to that of the FAFSA, with an intuitive interview format, personalized skip logic, integrated help, and e-signature capabilities.
- Data validation ensures fully-completed applications.
- Automatic EFC calculation in accordance with federal methodology

<sup>1</sup><https://www.unt.edu/notices/support-daca-and-undocumented-students-message-president>

### Institutional Profile & Vision

The University of North Texas (UNT), located in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area, is home to more than 38,000 students and offers 230 degree programs. UNT is one of the nation's largest universities, one of the Top 5 Texas universities, and generates an economic impact of \$1.65 billion annually.

As the most-comprehensive public research university providing a top-quality education in one of the nation's largest, most-dynamic regions, UNT will be celebrated for its academics, arts, and athletics. UNT will be a diverse and inclusive institution, creating knowledge and innovations that will shape the future while cultivating excellence in the next generation of scholars and leaders for the global community.

### Serving Undocumented Students is a Top Priority

One of President Smatresk's four targeted action plans, outlined in the 2017 State of the University, is improving student access to education. This effort extends to undocumented students who struggle to overcome tremendous barriers attaining a higher education.

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"These students aspire to a better life and are doing what our society asks of them — they work hard, study hard, and play by the rules. We need to encourage them to stay focused, hopeful, and invested in their education."<sup>1</sup>

—President Neal J. Smatresk

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UNT's Financial Aid team identified access to financial aid as a major barrier to higher education for undocumented students and sought innovative ways to simplify the process.

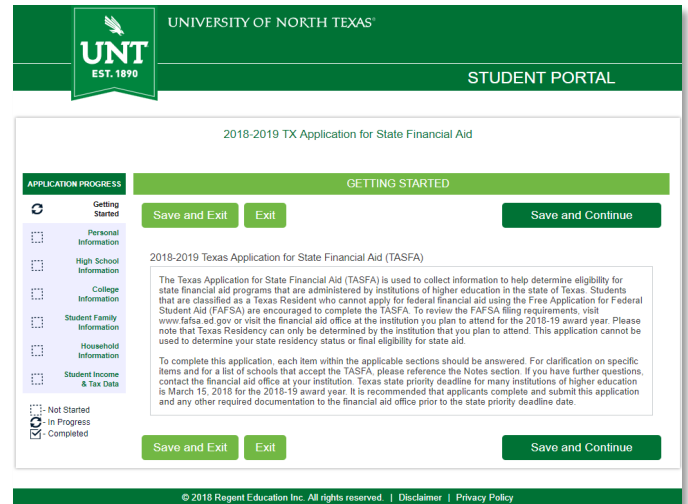
## Addressing the Financial Aid Access Barrier

While US and eligible non-citizens in Texas can apply for state aid using the online Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), undocumented students must download, print, complete, and submit the eight-page paper Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA) to be considered for state awards. "Requiring undocumented students to print an application, fill it out, and submit it creates a barrier that isn't acceptable. It also results in inefficient use of our staff and delivers a poor experience for student applicants," explains Lacey Thompson, Director of Operations for Student Financial Aid and Scholarships at UNT.

UNT's financial aid department sought to address the disparity between the application experiences. After extensive research, they selected and deployed Regent Access to convert the paper-based TASFA into a user-friendly, online experience that mirrors the FAFSA.

"Our goal is to create a financial aid application process for undocumented students that is equivalent to that of the FAFSA experience, and Regent Access has gotten us extremely close. Regent Access was very easy to implement, the Regent implementation team was great to work with, and the students have been pleased with the automation of the TASFA."

—Lacey Thompson, Director of Operations for Student Financial Aid and Scholarships



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS  
EST. 1890

STUDENT PORTAL

2018-2019 TX Application for State Financial Aid

APPLICATION PROGRESS: Getting Started

Personal Information  
High School Information  
College Information  
Student Family Information  
Household Information  
Student Income & Tax Data

GETTING STARTED

2018-2019 Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA)

The Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA) is used to collect information to help determine eligibility for state financial aid programs that are administered by institutions of higher education in the state of Texas. Students that are classified as a Texas Resident who cannot apply for federal financial aid using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) are encouraged to complete the TASFA. To review the FAFSA filing requirements, visit [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) or visit the financial aid office at the institution you plan to attend for the 2018-19 award year. Please note that Texas Residency can only be determined by the institution that you plan to attend. This application cannot be used to determine your state residency status or final eligibility for state aid.

To complete this application, each item within the applicable sections should be answered. For clarification on specific items and for a list of schools that accept the TASFA, please reference the Notes section. If you have further questions, contact the financial aid office at your institution. Texas state priority deadline for many institutions of higher education is March 15, 2018 for the 2018-19 award year. It is recommended that applicants complete and submit this application and any other required documentation to the financial aid office prior to the state priority deadline date.

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## Significantly Increased Aid Awarded

With the e-TASFA, student applicants have an experience similar to the FAFSA, from the intuitive interview format, personalized skip logic, and integrated help to the electronic signatures.

For UNT financial aid staff, the e-TASFA eliminates manual submission receipt, processing, and tracking. Expected Family Contribution (EFC) calculations also are automated in accordance with federal methodology. Finally, the e-TASFA performs data validation to ensure fully-completed applications, thereby increasing departmental efficiency and dramatically decreasing the time required to process applications.

UNT also is materially increasing aid to undocumented students. They deployed the e-TASFA in January 2017; and, between 2015-2016 and 2017-2018, along with their natural student growth, they have **nearly doubled the aid awarded to undocumented students** – a figure they anticipate will continue to grow.

Let us see what we can do for your institution!

### About Regent Education

Regent Education is the leading provider of SaaS solutions that automate financial aid verification, packaging and disbursement for not only traditional academic years but also borrower-based academic year and competency-based education using standard and nonstandard terms as well as non-term enrollment models. Regent's financial aid management solutions offer institutions an unprecedented ability to automate the financial aid process to increase efficiency, mitigate compliance risks, expand enrollment, improve the student experience and satisfaction and enhance financial management and financial aid lifecycle visibility. For more information, please visit <http://www.regenteducation.com>.