

**Migrant Student Transition Program Proposal**

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Over one million people immigrate to the US each year (Budiman, 2020). In fact, back in 2018, the US was on top of the list of countries that individuals immigrate to (Portal, Higher Ed Immigration, 2022). Immigrant-origin students represent a diverse and growing community. Immigrant-origin students accounted in 2018 for 5.3 million students, or 28% of all students, in higher education (Portal, Higher Ed Immigration, 2022). More than 80% of all immigrant-origin students in higher education are people of color (Portal, Higher Ed Immigration, 2022). Immigrant-origin students drove almost 60% of the growth in higher education students between 2000 and 2018 (Portal, Higher Ed Immigration, 2022).

Immigrant-origin students constitute first-and-second generation immigrants in the U.S. United States (Portal, Higher Ed Immigration, 2022). First-generation immigrants were born abroad and immigrated to the U.S. to live. Second-generation immigrants are U.S.-born individuals with at least one immigrant parent. (Portal, Higher Ed Immigration, 2022) In fact, there are 5,316,000 immigrant-Origin Students enrolled in higher education, 1,701,000 first-generation immigrant students and 3,614,000 second-generation immigrant students (Portal, Higher Ed Immigration, 2022). Many immigrants may face many obstacles when transitioning into living in the United States, and one of the main issues is how well immigrant students integrate into the education system and perform in school (Ge, 2021). Immigrant students often face racism, discrimination, and sometimes face challenges adapting into the higher education system here in the US. (Wagner & Locks, 2019) There is also the issue of poverty. Almost 45% of immigrant families are considered low income and the most schools that serve the low-income districts are considered under performing schools (Ge, 2021).

Altogether, these issues take a massive toll on the ability to be successful in school. It is for this reason that The Migrant Student Transition Program is being proposed. The purpose of the program is

to assist individuals who are new to the US thrive in the higher education system here in the us. The objective is to prepare new residents of the US for the realm of higher education in this country. The program will serve a diverse group of students, so there will be a variety of services provided that would be helpful to our attendees. The program will also connect students to cultural groups within the college they are attending or neighboring institutions. Advocates will be assigned to assist with all aspects of the transition into college, from the application process to tutorial services if necessary. In the long run the advocate would ideally be someone who has gone through the program themselves or someone who has been through the experience of immigrating to the US from abroad or at least is familiar with the immigration and student visa process so that they can relate to the students that they are assigned to in our program. The counselors will also assist with any issues that may come up with immigration by helping them with paperwork or providing them with pro bono legal services if needed.

As of 2018, 17% of college-educated U.S. adults ages 25 and older were born abroad. (Portal, Higher Ed Immigration, 2022) Thirty-two percent of all immigrant adults had a bachelor's degree or higher, similar to the 33% rate among U.S.-born adults. (Budiman, 2020) And the university-educated share for immigrants is rising among the recently arrived, with 47% of those arriving in the last five years having a college degree (Batalova, 2016). Unfortunately, there are groups within the immigrant student population will face discrimination, have difficulty navigating the complex legal system and the higher education system we have here in the US. or live below the poverty line or will struggle with language barriers while they are attending college here in the US. Among disadvantaged groups of immigrant students, rates of postsecondary enrollment are disproportionately low, with undocumented immigrants facing particularly high barriers to accessing higher education opportunities. (Budiman, 2020).

These findings were enough cause to propose the Migrant Student Transition Program Proposal. The program is a non-profit and shall be primarily funded by federal, state, and private grants.

Donations will also be accepted to run this program. The program will serve all immigrant students, migrant students, first generation college students of immigrant born parents from all socio-economic backgrounds, cultures, races, and religions.

The program will employ a Director, a General Manager, 3 Lead Counselors, Grant Writer and a small staff of Administrators who will carry out the business needs of this organization. We will also have two Outreach Ambassadors on staff to connect students with our services and on-board students to our program. Once a student is enrolled in the program, they will be assigned to a counselor. The program will hire three counselors to set progress plans for our students, and we will have several volunteer counselors to be assigned to each student. These volunteers can be any individual with at least a bachelor's degree, but we are targeting graduates who were also first-generation US residents or college students from diverse backgrounds. Individuals who are bilingual or speak multiple different languages are also preferred, but not required. Students will be assigned to counselors based on the need for interpretation services needed due to any language barriers and it will also depend on what challenges a particular student is facing. We will take that information into account to pair the student with a counselor who is best suited to assist the student with specific challenges or who can provide any specific cultural requirements. The counselors will help with admissions paperwork, program selection and linking the student up with whatever resources they need that we can provide.

The program will provide tutorial services in all subjects, ESL courses for students who are struggling with speaking, reading, writing, or comprehending English if needed. In order to provide these services, we will team up with alumni and grad students of educational programs of the school we are working with and hire volunteers from there. The program will also link students up with pro bono or extremely affordable legal services to assist undocumented immigrant students who are experiencing legal challenges due to their status, or any students who need to renew their visas and apply for a more permanent level of legal assistance. We will do this by partnering with immigration law firms and law

schools who would be willing to join our cause. There will also be partnerships with various cultural organizations such as the Asian Student Association, Arab Student organization, International Student Groups (ISSG) and other groups alike. These groups are beneficial for our attendees to connect with so that they may feel a sense of connection and community. We will also bring groups together on occasion to celebrate diversity and show a sense of unity. In light of prior research documenting the numbers of immigrant families in the US who are considered low income and the number of immigrants who come to the US specifically to attend college, we feel that many great connections between the students could form due to the several intercultural organizations that our program will establish partnerships with. This will improve the experience of these students who are transitioning into higher education. It is the goal of the program to minimize the feelings of isolation students may be experiencing and hopefully enrich their experience as a student in the US overall. This program will begin in several higher education institutions in the northern, central, and southern regions of Arizona. The program will expand if there is an increase in demand in other states and as our funding base increases.

## References

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