

Steps for Undocumented Students to Appeal a Financial Award Letter for Graduate School

This document consists of general steps to appeal a financial aid award letter. Additional information may be needed depending on the institution, respective state policies, institutional financial aid policies, etc. Please note that the following suggested steps may not apply to all institutions.

Step 1: Compile a list of 2-4 compelling reasons for your appeal:

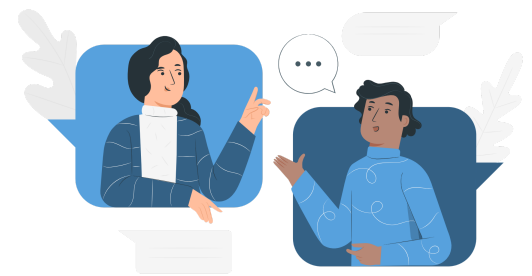
- *Example A: Research the institution's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and student demographic information. Highlight how the institution promotes diversity at large, however, there are only **X%** of the student **demographic** at the school.*

Adequate funding is necessary to recruit and retain diverse students. The funding provided is insufficient to retain your talents, negatively impacting their diversity efforts.

- A. Or highlight the percentage of individuals with a similar background who hold graduate or professional degrees.*
- Example B: Expand on how your talents and research interests address a gap in the field. Receiving the necessary funding would allow the institution to be a part of important research the field is missing.*
 - Example C: If you apply to graduate or professional school after years of working in the field, expand on your unique experience and how your career makes you an ideal candidate for the program.*

Step 2: Students are encouraged to connect with program undocumented alumni or current students. Ask the program manager or coordinator to facilitate a connection to learn more about their academic and funding experience. It is highly encouraged to talk to alumni about the appeal process.

Step 3: Next, you are encouraged to do the following:



- Once the list is compiled, write a short and [clear letter](#) expressing appreciation for your acceptance but stating how the funding provided is insufficient due to the reasons identified.
- Provide an estimate of the funding necessary for you to attend.
- Outline anticipated expenses including health care, housing, meals, transportation, etc.

Note: Make sure to ask for their commitment to increase your award for the entirety of your program and not just the first year. Make sure to get in writing!



Step 4: Next, you are encouraged to do the following:

- Send the appeal letter to the program manager and their financial aid office.
- Format the email like the introduction of the letter. Ask them to read your letter for more information.

Step 5: Await a response from the program manager or coordinator. If sufficient money is awarded, confirm your position, and maintain copies of all communication (*make sure you have everything in writing*). If the money is insufficient, follow steps 1-4 and consider appealing. Most programs don't have a cap on how many times you can appeal.