

ELIMINATING BARRIERS TO HIGHER EDUCATION FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS IN WASHINGTON STATE

Dr. Martín Meráz García
Chicano Education Program
Eastern Washington University

Marcela Pattinson, M.Ed.
Bilingual Multi-Cultural Counselor
Washington State University

Outline

- What is the Washington State Access Coalition for HB 1079 Students
- Data Collection Methodology
- Materials Produced by the Coalition Thus Far
- Preliminary Results of Focus Groups and Survey
- Some quotes
- Recommendations

Preliminary video 1 (staff &

Washington State Educational Access Coalition for HB 1079 Students

- House Bill 1079 is a law passed in Washington State in 2003 allowing undocumented students to pay instate tuition (HB 1079)
- Formation of the Coalition
 - Resulted From a 3 Year College Sparks Foundation Grant
- Core Member Selected Based on Knowledge or Work Experience With Undocumented Student Population

Coalition Charter

- Mission: To improve practices for recruiting and retaining students with HB1079 status in all of Washington state's institutes of higher education. To share information about best practices with high schools and colleges state wide and thereby improve services offered to these students and their graduation rates. To develop technical reports and scholarly material that will inform the public and policymakers so that humane policies rooted in principles of social justice can be enacted to effectively address the needs of this vulnerable population. The coalition should continue to develop partnership with community leaders, academics, businesses, nonprofits and other entities with similar goals of the coalition.

Washington State Educational Access Coalition for HB 1079 Students



Coalition's Partners:

- College Spark
- Staff and faculty from Washington State University (WSU),
- Central Washington University (CWU),
- Eastern Washington University (EWU),
- University of Washington (UW) and
- The Latino Education Achievement Project (LEAP)



WASHINGTON
FUNDING SUCCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Purpose

- Develop a Standard Operating Procedures on the Best Practices on How to Serve 1079 Students
- Develop Training and Information Materials for Students, Faculty, Staff & Administrators in High Schools, Colleges and Universities in the State
- Dissemination Format:
 - Handbook (digital)
 - Videos (upload in social media sites including YouTube, Facebook, Google groups, etc.)
 - Website (bilingual, multiple languages)
 - Journal Publications
- Focus Areas
 - Enrollment, Financial Aid & Academic Services

Advantages of Coalition

- Develop a network of allies composed of academics, school administrators, students, policy makers, community leaders, activists, religious & professional organizations as well as advocacy groups throughout the state.
- This network will facilitate data gathering, educate the community by disseminating research findings in various institutional and public forums.
- This awareness will create the ripe environment for fundraising and favorable legislation that would allow 1079s students fulfill their educational goals.

Data Collection Methods

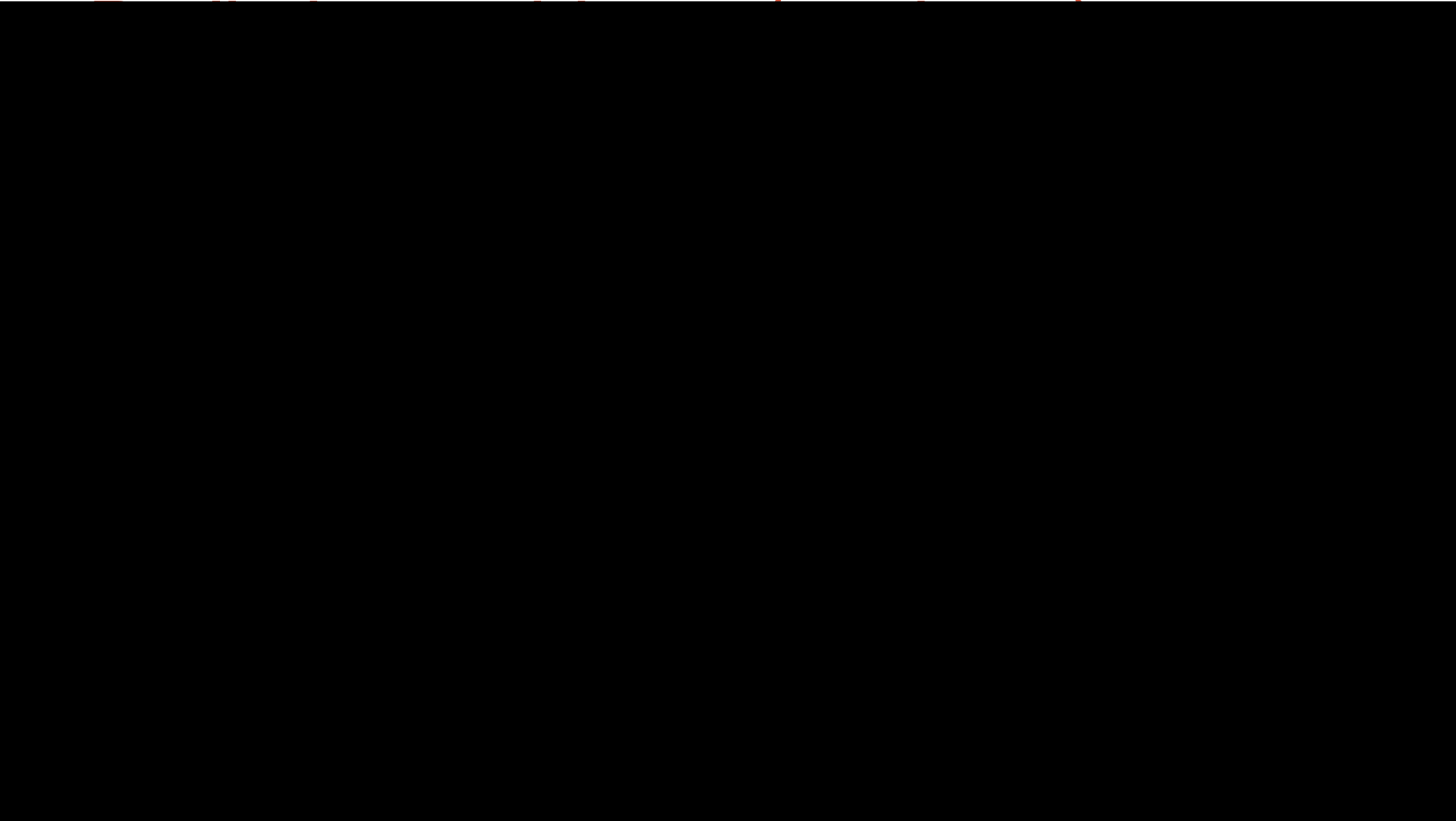
- Snowball Sampling Technique
 - Initial contact with 1079 student through student leaders on each campus
- Audio Recorded Focus Groups Conducted at Partner Institutions & Organizations
 - Eastern Washington University, Washington State University & University of Washington, Latino Educational Achievement Project
 - Begin with 5-10 participants per focus groups from each partner institution (students, parents, administrators, & faculty)
 - Length of interviews (1 ½ to 2 hours)
 - Assess the level of knowledge, services & support for 1079

Continue

- Survey (Pre & Post)
 - Before and after the dissemination of data & training
 - Survey to be administer to students, parents, staff & faculty
 - Time to take survey 15-30 minutes
- Studies Conducted on Undocumented Students and Their Access to Education
- Sample Size (estimate)
 - N=100 focus groups
 - N= 250-300 (survey)
 - Total N=400 (+-)

Data Collection Challenges

- Data on undocumented students attending higher education not easily available
- Student's undocumented status makes it a challenge to get IRB approval to interview and conduct surveys
- Students and school administrators are fearful and suspicious of anyone attempting to recruit undocumented students for studies due to recent Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids in the state



Preliminary Findings: Barriers Hindering Educational Attainment for Undocumented Students

- 1079 students tend to be first generation & low income
- Lack of information & Misinformation
- Often information provided to undocumented students about postsecondary education comes too late
- Marginalization even from programs that would be considered allies of this student population
- Legal barriers (federal & state)
- What to do with their college certificate or degree after graduation

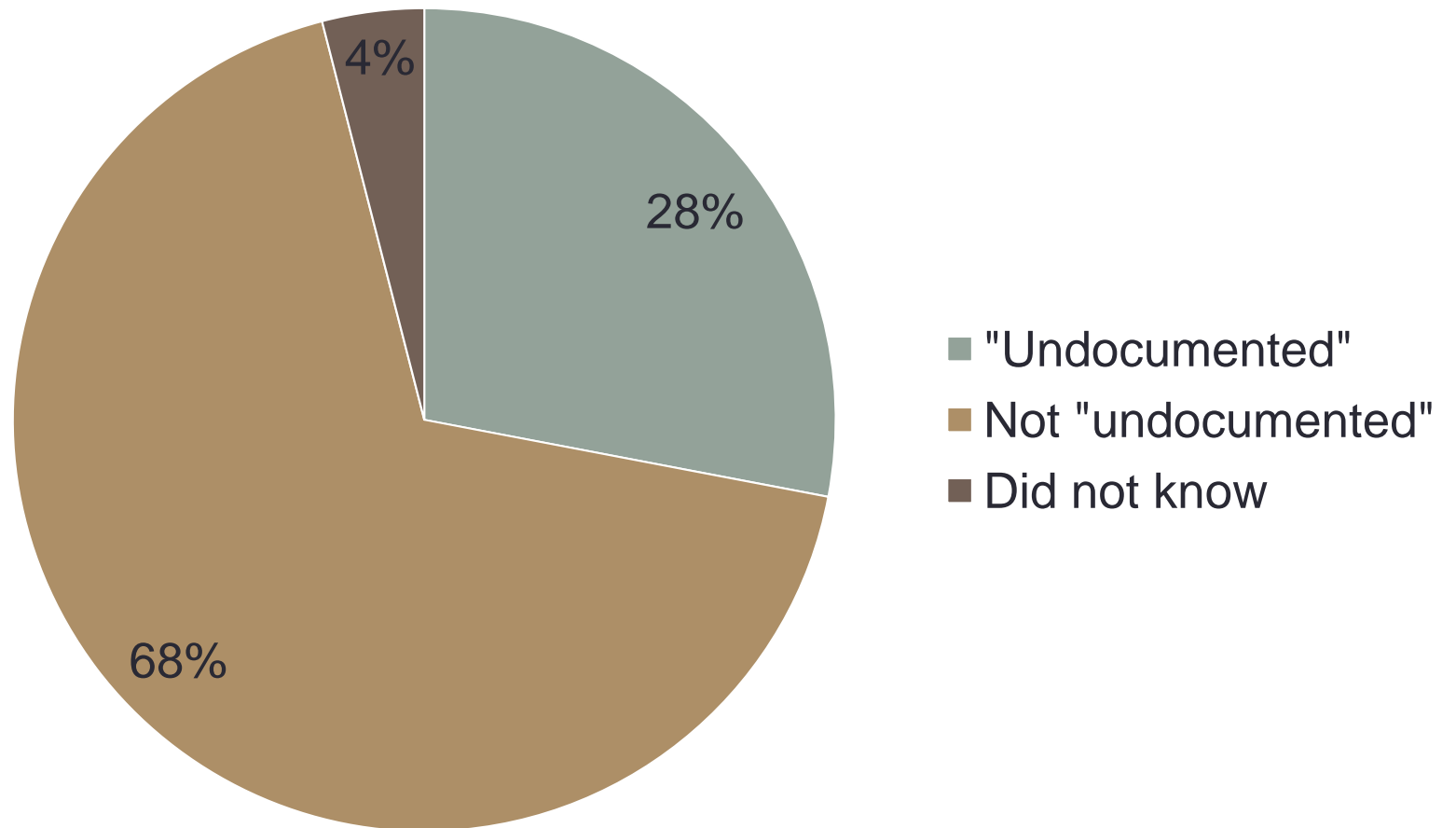
Continue

- 1079 students have fewer academic, social, and financial resources and greater work and family responsibilities than their peers
- While most students grapple with the expected transition to college, 1079 students' challenges are often compounded by racial and cultural-based feelings of isolation

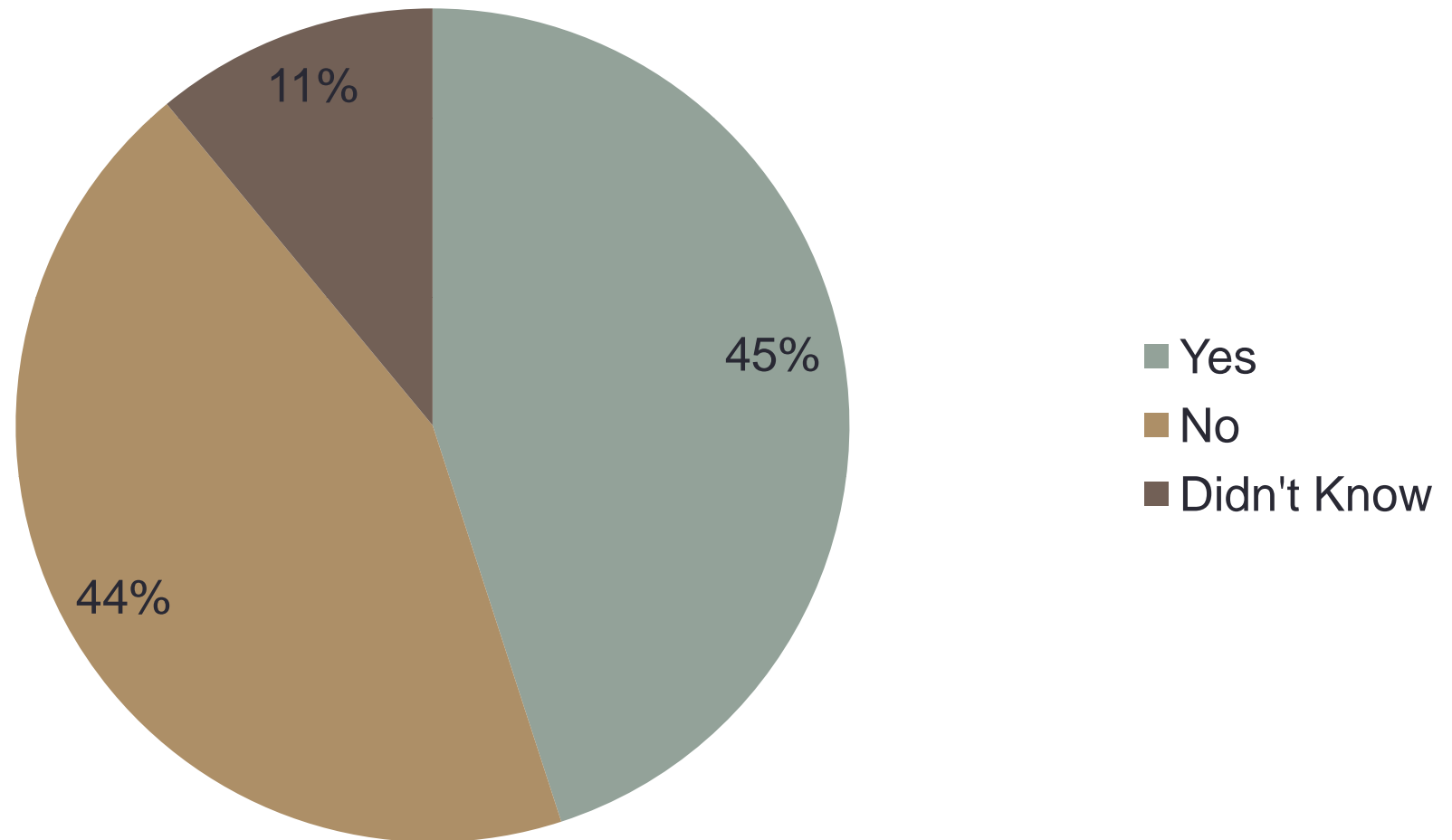
Continue

- In 2008, a total of 1.5 million undocumented children under age 18 are estimated to be residing in the US
- Previous estimates of undocumented students attending college in 2000 was approximately 10%
- Due to a population increase and better assessment studies have found that 49% of undocumented immigrants ages 18-24 who graduated from high school are or have attended college compared to 71% of U.S. born residents

Preliminary LEAP Survey Results N=270



While in middle school or high school did anyone explain to you if you qualified for financial aid for college?

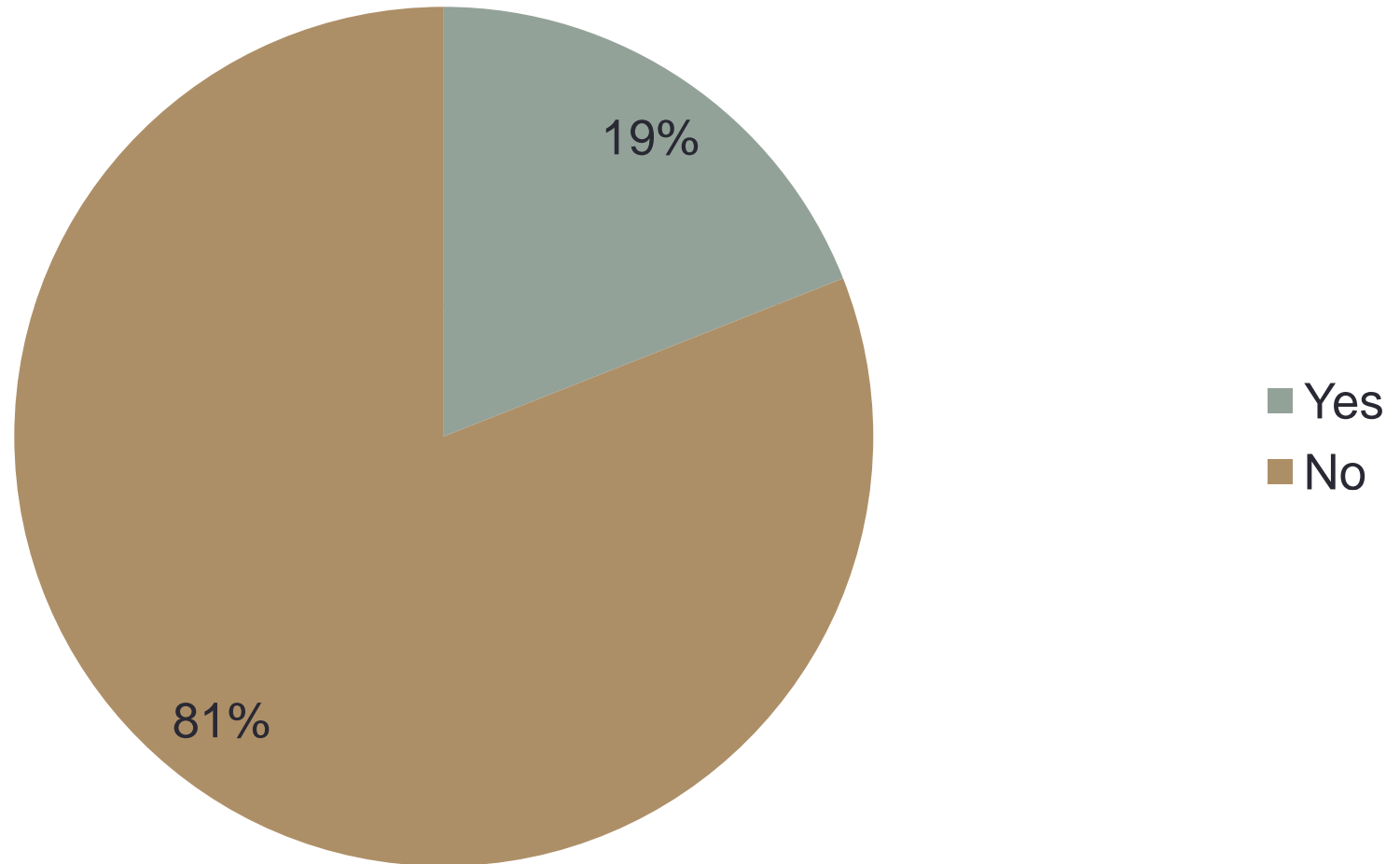


**Proportionate Representation of Race/Ethnicity Groups
In 2008 Washington Population and 2008-09 Degrees Awarded**

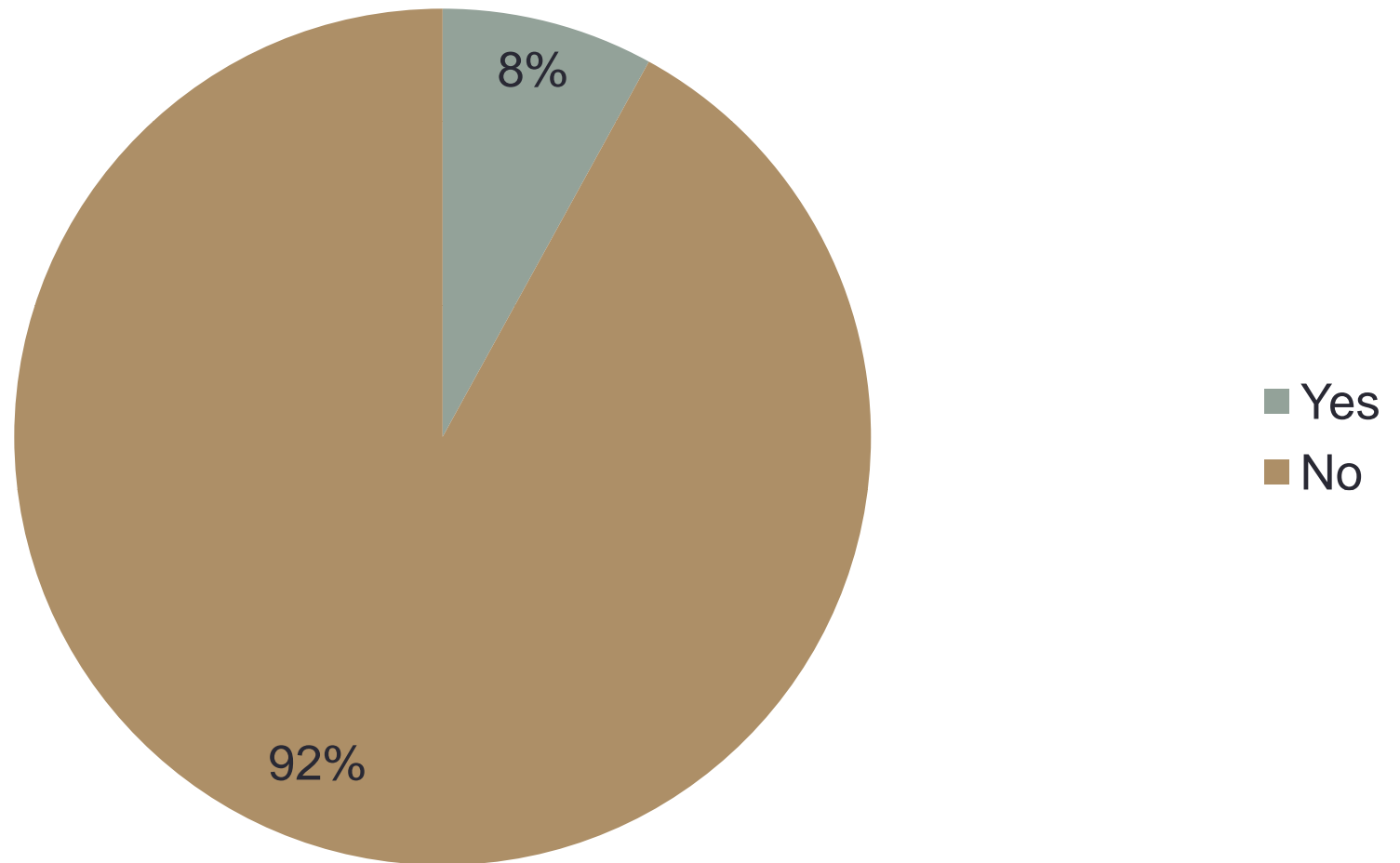
Race/Ethnicity	2009 Population	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Advanced Degrees
American Indian/ Alaska Native	1.6%	1.4%	1.3%	1.1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	8.6%	7.6%	11.7%	6.9%
African American/Black	4.1%	3.3%	2.8%	2.6%
Hispanic/Latino	11.9%	6.2%	5.0%	3.3%
White	71.1%	66.2%	67.6%	61.7%
Two+ Races	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%

Sources: HECB staff analysis of data from Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), National Center for Education Statistics; U.S. Census Bureau.

While in middle school or high school, did anyone explain to you what HB 1079 means for undocumented students?

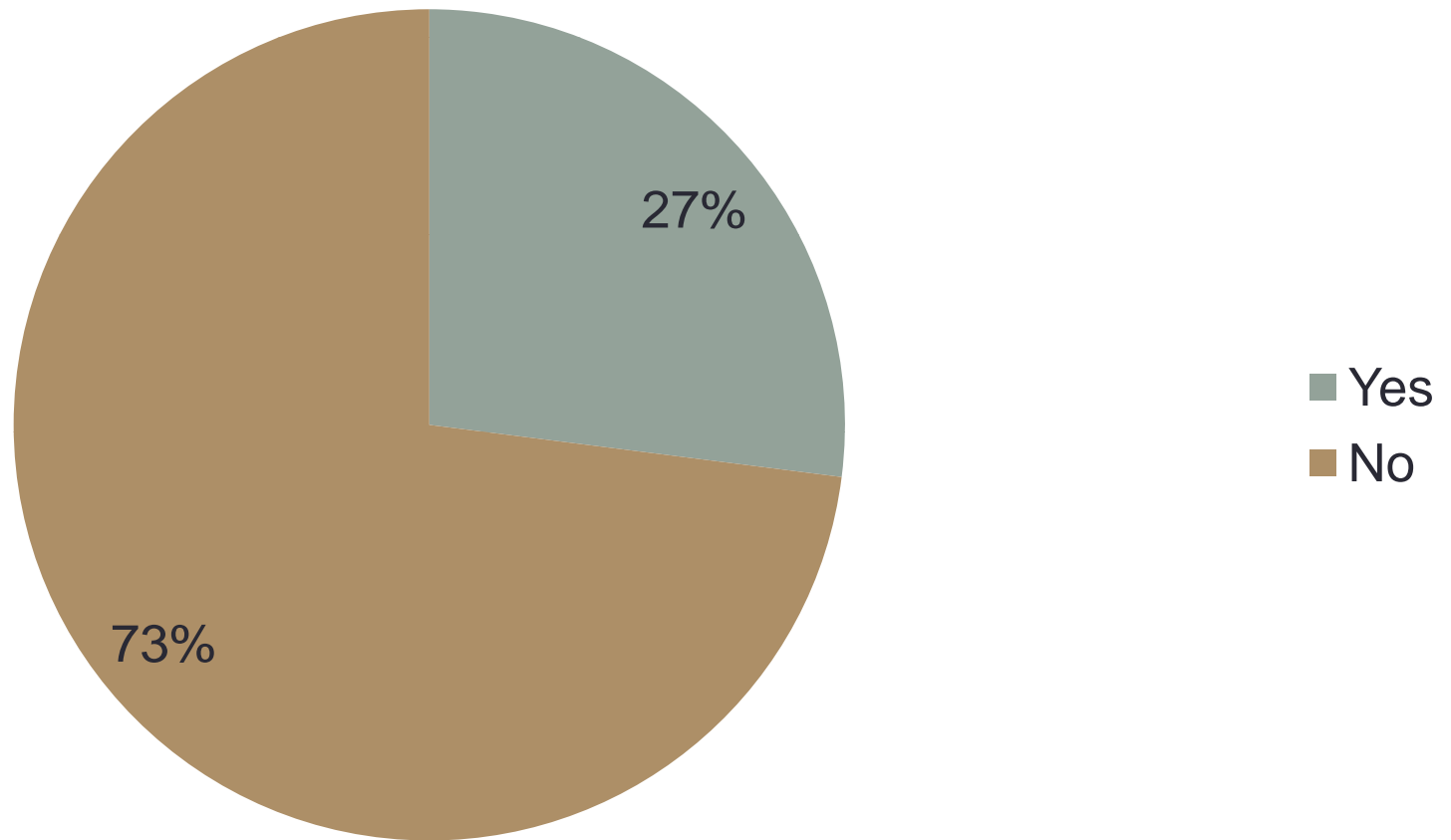


While in middle school or high school, did you or your parents receive written information about HB 1079?

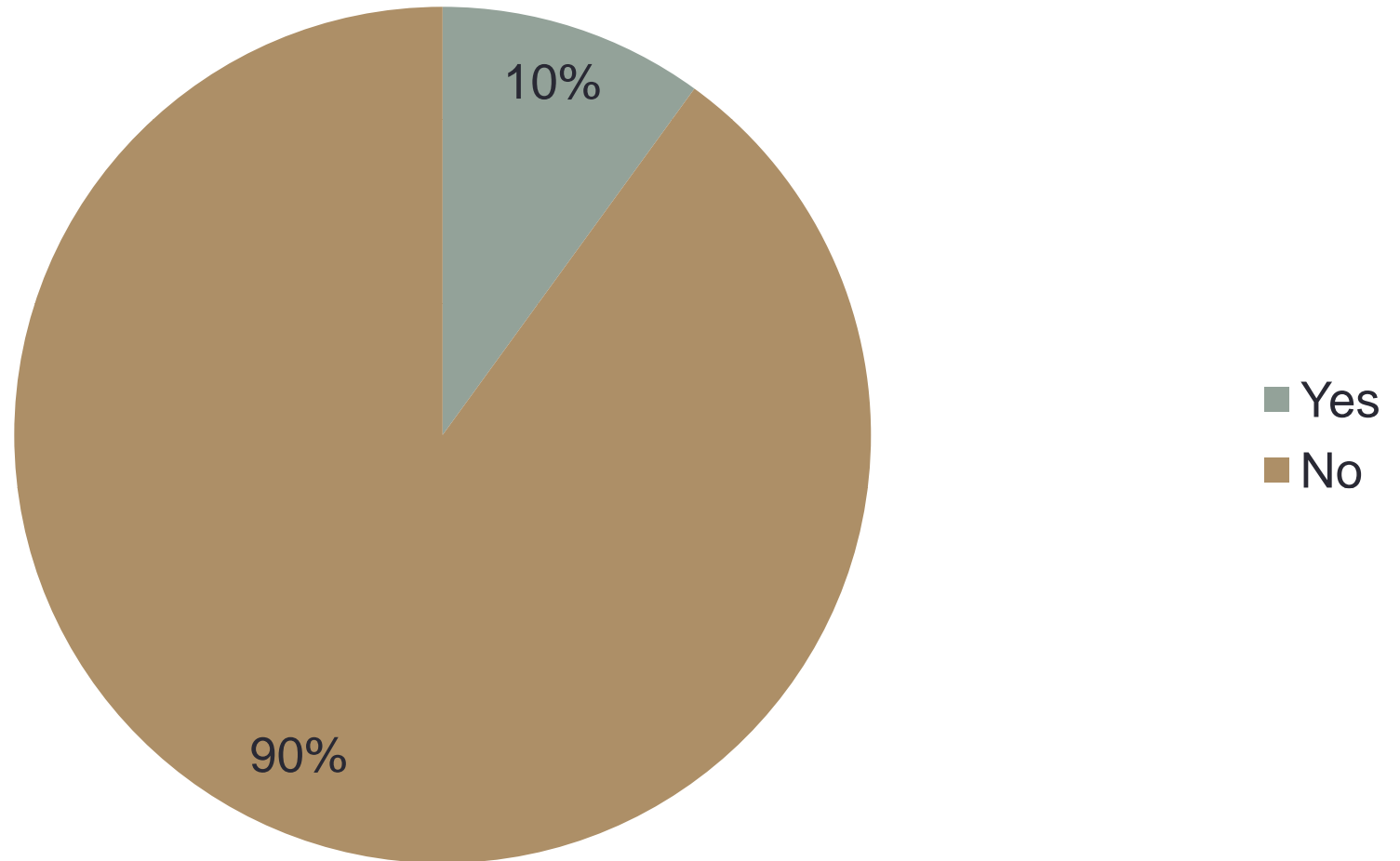


While in middle school or high school, did anyone explain to you what HB 1079 means for undocumented students?

Undocumented Students *Only* Survey Results



While in middle school or high school, did you or your parents receive written information about HB 1079?



Demographics of Undocumented Student Population in Washington State

- Age (2 months to 16 years of age)
- Mexico (Michoacán, Guerrero, Baja California and others)
- Africa (Zambia), Russia, Brazil
- Mix status & in some instances entire family is undocumented
- Disciplines:
Psychology, Sociology, Engineering, Nursing, Biology, Pre-Med, Community Health & Education, Kinesiology, Sports Management, Communications,

Factors Aiding Undocumented students Navigate Postsecondary Process

- Counselors, teachers & administrators
- Local, regional & state conferences by advocacy groups and organizations:
 - Latino Educational Achievement Project (LEAP)
 - Children of Aztlán Sharing Higher Education (CASHE)
 - Annual Izcalli Calmecac Student Conference (MEChA)
 - Secondary Education for Migrant Youth (SEMY)
- Informal networks of friends & family members

Funding Sources

- Bill and Melinda Gates College Success Foundation:
 - Achievers program, Realize the Dream Scholarship & others
- Waivers offered by private as well as public regional and state universities
- Scholarships offered by non-profit organizations, city foundations, private donors, family members, and out of pocket funds generated from part time work
- Fundraisers by student organizations

Preliminary Themes of Focus Groups

- Students expectation
 - Information pamphlets discussing resources specifically targeting their needs
 - Legal administrative advise in (i.e. not having to show or provide SS # to school officials)
- Develop institutional policies harboring an environment of inclusion and awareness (safe zone)
- Feelings of exclusion
- Lack of administrative, faculty & counseling support services
- Only the high performing 1079 students were helped by key high school & college counselors and administrators

Exclusion

- “When I first came to..., I saw there was a division...if you are not in the program they ask you well why aren't you in CAMP? Well because I can't...in my freshmen year they try to welcome you...it excludes 1079 students in the programs that they offer...they are always doing things together and I always ask, well why can't I be part of that...I actually got tutoring from TRiO and I felt more included than... and I think that's wrong....should try to do more to include everyone. Some of my friends did not apply for college because since they did not have papers, they thought they could not attend college.”

Lack of Knowledge of Documentation Required

- “I did not know that you did not have to show your social security to anyone in the offices. I had someone from the registration threatening me and telling me all these things when I showed them my license and they said that was not a valid form of ID, she was like we need to see your Social Security number and I did not know that it was not required, that I did not have to do that...I was put in a very uncomfortable position, so I think just informing before hand that NO is not require to show your SS # to school administrators.”
- “I come from a school where 90% of student population is Latino and I did know that I could pay instate tuition, but most of my friends because they did not have papers they did not know they could apply for college.”.

Recommendations

- State must fully fund a strong dissemination campaign to create awareness in its various institutions about 1079 population
- Mandated training in the K-12 as well as postsecondary system of teachers, administrators, counselors and any other personnel with potential contact with targeted student population
- Develop 1079 friendly application process at colleges and universities:
 - 1079 friendly college admission & scholarship application
- Develop curriculum around 1079 issues

Continue

- Empower students through leadership training & research and provide a platform to disseminate their message through various outlets including conferences & media
- Create support groups made up of 1079 students, faculty & administrators
- Building networks of support and advocacy are critical for success
- Policymakers must enact legislation that allows 1079 students access to some form of state financial aid

- (Passel & Cohn, 2009)
- (Gonzales 2009; Passel 2003)
- (Abrego & Gonzales, 2010; Passel & Cohn, 2009)