

# The Hidden Dream





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immigrated to the United States when she was 11 years old. She has been involved in multiple advocacy efforts working on undocumented student rights, racial, and gender equity issues at Michigan State. She is currently a graduate student at the University of Michigan studying Higher Education.

# Who are we?

A group of Dreamers, who have gone through the immigration struggle, we created this organization to help others in the same situation

The Hidden Dream was built to **raise awareness** of the countless struggles faced by visa immigrants, **share resources, and create a community to uplift Visa Immigrants** who have spent several years in this country without a pathway to citizenship.

# Who is a Visa Dreamer?

A visa dreamer is an individual brought to the US at a young age on a dependant visa (i.e. H4, E2, L2 etc.)

They unfortunately have no realistic pathway to citizenship, they face aging out and self deportation at the age of 21 and many become undocumented after their visas expire at 21 years old.



From our 2022 San Francisco Pizza and Board Game night meetup!

# What are the issues faced by Visa Dreamers?



Do not qualify for in-state  
tuition  
Ineligible for financial aid



No work permit



Restricted from some  
colleges and areas of  
study



At high risk of  
deportation when they  
turn 21



Are not able to freely  
travel



Difficulty leaving abusive  
households due to being  
dependent on their  
abuser's visa

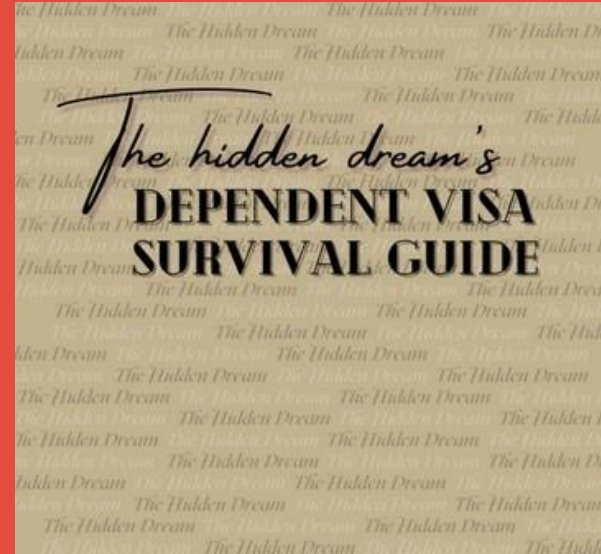


Difficulty obtaining  
driver's licenses/IDs

**200,000+**  
Visa  
Dreamers

# How does THD help?

A deep dive into our programming and resources





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# AGING OUT: SWITCHING TO F-1



## THE PROCESS OF AGING OUT

In order to continue staying in the US with a legal visa, dependent visa children must switch to another visa before they turn 21.

- The most common option is to switch to a **F-1 visa**.

- A **J1 visa** can also be obtained, however, this is selective and switching to another visa is difficult. This visa is ideal for research scholars and professors.

- M1** is also another option, these visas are non-academic and vocational visas for students. They allow students to work on this visa as well.

- Investor and humanitarian visas** are also another option, however, these visas are extremely difficult to get and are not ideal for dependent children.



## "BRIDGE THE GAP"

USCIS released a new guideline that removed the requirement to "bridge the gap" in status which indicates students were still in status if they aged out of H4 while their F-1 is pending.



- It is not illegal to stay in the U.S. while your F-1 is pending, it is just essential that those who are waiting for approval complete an application which will grant them extensions of time which will allow them to avoid the "gap" in their status.

- "To prevent a "gap" in status, USCIS will grant the change of status to F-1 effective the day USCIS approve an applicant's Form I-539, Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status if USCIS approve an application more than 30 days before the student's program start date, the student must ensure they do not violate their F-1 status during that time."**

# WORK PERMIT INFORMATION



## CAN YOU LEGALLY EARN MONEY OR GET A WORK PERMIT AS A PERSON ON A DEPENDENT VISA?

Dependents of those with immigrant work visas in the USA cannot work unless they themselves are eligible and qualify for their own work visa by receiving an employment authorization document (EAD) through their dependent status.

With an EAD, people can work part or full-time but only until the EAD is fully approved (not during the renewal process).

## WHO CAN EARN MONEY LEGALLY AND HOW TO APPLY FOR A WORK PERMIT:

### H4

Generally cannot, but if you are a spouse of a person with H-1B status, with an approved I-140 or are in the process of getting a green card then they may be able to obtain an H-4 EAD.

### L-2

L-2 spouses are eligible to work and can apply for the EAD. L-2 children cannot apply for EAD.

### E

Dependent spouses of E-1 and E-2 and E-1 visa holders may apply for the EAD. Dependents children are not eligible for EAD.

### J-2

Those in J-2 status may apply for the EAD. However, the J-2 spouse must show that they are not going to work in order to support the J-1 holder.

### F-2

(F-1 dependent) Those in F-2 status cannot work in the U.S. Additionally, an F-2 spouse may not engage in full-time study and the F-2 child may only engage in full-time elementary or secondary school ( kindergarten through twelfth grades). F-2 spouse or child may engage in a study that is vocational or recreational in nature.



To learn more about how to apply for an EAD and what type of forms each dependent visa holder needs, visit this link: <https://www.visapro.com/other-visas/employment-authorization-document/>

Dependent Visa Survival Guide

The Hidden Dream has created a 30+ page survival guide which reviews dependent visas, aging out, college on a dependent visa, financial aid, career help, and more.

# Financial Aid



We have compiled a list of scholarships without any immigration requirements in order to give students more resources



6 Annual Scholarships Awards  
~\$15K raised so far



This fund is intended to be used for test fees, certification expenses, and side project materials costs.



# College Prep Resources



- **College Mentorship Circle**

- Visa Dreamers do not have many resources when it comes to understanding the college application process
- With the mentorship circle those who have already applied for college are paired with those who are currently applying to college.



- **College Workshops**

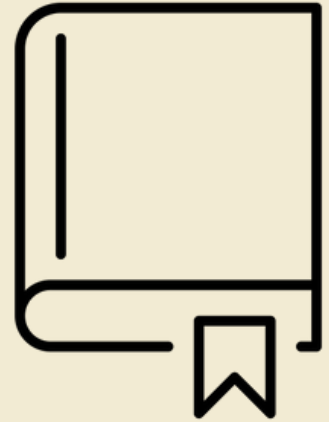
- Over the last 2 years we have continuously hosted college workshops to help students ask the right questions and provide them the help they need

# Workshops & Guides

- **Workshop Topics**

- Preparing for College on a Visa
  - How to talk about immigration with colleges?
- Career Panel with Aged Out Visa Dreamers
- Webinars with lawyers
- Wellness and Mindfulness
- Resume Building as a Visa Dreamer
- How to finance your education
- Is Canada an option?
- How to switch to an F-1 visa and avoid deportation
- How to go to Med school, Law School etc!

- 



# Career and Professional Development



- **Job Referral Network**
  - Visa Dreamers are not able to apply for internships without work authorization.
  - People from different companies are able to give a referral to help visa dreamers secure a job or internship
- **Career Mentorship Circle**
  - Students get paired with professionals in different industries and they work on various projects in the industry of their choice.

# Mental Health Resources



- **Therapist Partnerships**
  - We have paired with multiple mental health professionals in the past and have been able to give visa dreamers methods to help cope with their situations.
- **Support Groups for Parents and Kids**
  - Weekly support group meetings with guided therapist questions to build community
- **Activity Calls and meet ups**
  - We host movie nights, game nights and have had meetups in many major Metropolitan Areas!



# How can you partner with Us?

- Training at local schools, universities, non-profits to create awareness among folks who work with this community
- Present resources to law firms
- We are well versed in working with other immigrant groups as well as building coalition relationships
  - We can host Immigrant resources nights and walk through resources not only for kids on visas but also those who may not have status, are refugees, TPS, asylees etc. We believe it's imperative to make sure immigrant students are empowered in an inclusive manner.

# Our Partners and Coalition memberships



NCSO



SK

**Read more and hear from us!**

**<https://thehiddendream.org/pressrelease/>**

# Ways to connect with us!



@\_thehiddendream\_



@\_thehiddendream



The Hidden Dream



Website:  
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