Most colleges and universities require parent’s or student’s proof of income from a Federal Income Tax when the student is applying for state or federal financial aid. An Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN) is a tax processing number issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to those individuals who are unable to obtain a Social Security Number. ITINs are used for tax purposes only, and are not intended to serve any other purpose. The IRS issues ITINs to help individuals comply with the U.S. tax laws, and to provide a way to efficiently process and account for tax returns and payments for those people who are not eligible for Social Security Numbers.

WHY SHOULD PARENTS AND/OR STUDENTS REQUEST AN INDIVIDUAL TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (ITIN)?

Based on federal financial aid guidelines, if you are required to file as a dependent student, you and your parents are required to provide income tax information for your financial aid application. This will allow you to obtain a Tax Transcript for financial aid purposes.

Based on federal financial aid guidelines, if you are considered an independent student, only you and not your parents need to file an ITIN. You are considered an independent student if you meet one or more of the following criteria:

- You are over the age of 24
- You have dependents to claim on your income tax (i.e. children) and you provide more than 50% of their financial support
- You are legally married or have a common law marriage

AN ITIN:

1. Does not authorize work in the U.S. or provide eligibility for Social Security Benefits or the Earned Income Tax Credit.
2. Is not valid for identification outside of the tax system.
3. Does not change immigration status. An applicant must enter their ITIN in the space provided for the SSN when completing and filing a U.S. Federal income tax return (Form 1040, 1040A, 1040EZ, 1040NR, 1040NR-EZ, 1040X).
4. Should be filed early in the financial aid process as it can take anywhere between 6-10 weeks to receive.
5. May need to be renewed, depending on when you applied for your ITIN. For questions on renewal, you can contact the Internal Revenue Service or La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE) in the section below.
HOW DO I APPLY FOR AN ITIN?

- Complete form W-7 for every person in your household without an SSN
  - Each person will need original proof of identity with valid photo ID (passport is preferred). Visit a tax expert for a full list of acceptable documents1.
- Submit with your/your parents’ taxes at one of the following:
  - Internal Revenue Service Austin Service Center
    ITIN Operation
    P.O. Box 149342
    Austin, TX 78714-9342

Note: the above address should only be used to file taxes with your initial ITIN application.

- At an IRS authorized acceptance agent
  Go to https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/acceptance-agent-program to find an authorized acceptance agent

- At your local IRS Tax Payer Assistance Center or La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE) Office go to https://lupenet.org/locations/ to find the office closes to you.

DO I HAVE TO FILE AN INCOME TAX RETURN WITH MY ITIN?

While it is not required that you file an income tax with your ITIN, it is advised you do. File for the ITIN the first time you file your income tax return, since you will need the income tax return information to finish filling out your financial aid application.

WHERE CAN I FILE AN ITIN/INCOME TAX RETURN?

- Internal Revenue Service
  - https://www.irs.gov/itin
  - 1-800-829-1040
- La Unión del Pueblo Entero (LUPE) - Nonprofit Community Organization
  - http://lupenet.org/incometax1/
  - (956) 787-2233

ABOUT RGV FOCUS

RGV FOCUS is a collective impact initiative in the Rio Grande Valley—a group of leaders from school districts, higher education institutions, community-based organizations and the workforce partnering to improve student lives from cradle-to-career. RGV FOCUS was launched in 2012 to transform college readiness, access, and success across Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy counties. The work to date is driven by the following vision:

All RGV learners will achieve a degree or credential that leads to a meaningful career.