

Hello Children's Defense Fund – MN's Beat the Odds® Applicants and Nominators:

CDF-MN is committed to supporting all children and youth thrive. Our *Beat the Odds* Scholarship is an opportunity to support young people who overcome significant challenges in their lives to make their dream of attending higher education an opportunity. Part of the *Beat the Odds* Scholarship is highlighting the amazing stories of our scholarship recipients. CDF collects personal information on applicants and creates written materials and audio/visual products which all may contain information regarding the youth's undocumented status. In this way, we collect, hold and disseminate personal information on students. These stories are shared at our *Beat the Odds* honoree event, CDF-MN's website and on social media. We do this to honor our *Beat the Odds* Scholars and to help shape a positive narrative about the potential of all our young people.

CDF has a history of honoring youth who are undocumented. (We have also honored students who are legal citizens of the United States, having been born in the U.S., but their parents are undocumented and are at risk of deportation.) Today, the hostile climate for undocumented youth and the federal government's statements that it is granting wider latitude to custom patrols and Immigration and Custom Enforcement officers, has increased the risk of deportation to youth and their families. Any activity we perform that shines a light on the young person's stories at our annual award events across the country, potentially places those students and/or their parents and family members at greater risk of being targeted, detained, and deported. We want to make sure we are taking every precaution in avoiding risks for the youth, their families, and our organization.

We believe that continuing to admit undocumented students, if they are the most qualified and compelling applicants, is the right approach and aligns with our values as an organization. Undocumented youth have limited access to loans or scholarships when even compared to immigrant students with DACA or temporary protected status. Any student, regardless of their citizenship status, is invited to apply for a Beat the Odds Scholarship. CDF-MN does NOT ask any questions regarding immigration status.

Given the current climate we advise applicants to NOT disclose ANY and ALL information that address immigration status of the student or their family on the scholarship application. CDF-MN will maintain all applications as confidential, but on-going risks exist in our community. We understand that this may be a significant part of a student's story of overcoming challenge, however we advise against including this information.

If you or a student have questions about this process, please call Bharti Wahi, Executive Director of Children's Defense Fund – Minnesota by phone at (651) 855-1171. We can discuss alternative ways of conveying the totality of a young person's experience without requiring written disclosure about citizenship or immigration status.

If an undocumented youth is selected for a *Beat the Odds* scholarship, we will determine alternative ways in which to honor their accomplishment's that will NOT include the sharing of their story.

Sincerely,

Bharti Wahi
Executive Director
Children's Defense Fund - Minnesota