

Films Highlighting Undocumented Experience

Host your own movie night with films revolving around the undocumented experience. Here's a list of suggested short and feature-length films:

FEATURE-LENGTH FILMS

Adama (2011)

This documentary follows Adama Bah, a 16-year-old Muslim teen who is falsely accused of terrorist activities and detained. Though she is ultimately released, Adama must deal with the pressures of supporting her family and readjusting to normal life after her father is deported.

Available to stream for free on [Vimeo](#).

Breathin': The Eddy Zheng Story (2016)

Arrested at 16 and tried as an adult for kidnapping and robbery, Eddy Zheng served over 20 years in California prisons and jails. This documentary paints an intimate portrait of Eddy - the prisoner, the immigrant, the son, the activist - on his journey to freedom, rehabilitation and redemption.

Available to stream for free on [Kanopy](#).

Documented (2013)

In 2011, journalist Jose Antonio Vargas outed himself as an undocumented immigrant in the New York Times Magazine. This documentary chronicles his journey from the Philippines as a child; through America as an immigration reform activist; and inward as he reconnects with his mother, whom he hasn't seen in 20 years.

Available to rent or buy from [iTunes](#), [Amazon](#) and [YouTube](#).

Don't Tell Anyone (No Le Digas a Nadie) (2015)

In a community where silence is often seen as necessary for survival, undocumented activist Angy Rivera steps out of the shadows to share her parallel journey of being an undocumented immigrant and a victim of sexual assault.

Available to rent from [Vimeo](#) or visit their [website](#) to request a screening.

Forbidden: Undocumented and Queer in Rural America (2016)

This documentary tells the story of Moises Serrano, who grew up queer and undocumented in rural North Carolina. It follows his personal journey as an activist as he fights for justice for his immigrant community.

Available to rent or buy from [Amazon](#) or to stream for free on [Kanopy](#).

I Carry You With Me (2020)

Based on a true story, the movie follows aspiring chef Ivan and teacher Gerardo as they fall in love in Mexico. But ambition and societal pressures force Ivan to make the trip to New York, where he finds success but loses his immigration status.

Available to rent or buy on [Amazon](#) and [Youtube](#).

Lingua Franca (2019)

Olivia is an undocumented trans woman working as a caregiver in Brooklyn. Her main priority is getting her green card to stay in the US. But complications arise when she becomes romantically involved with her charge's grandson.

Available to stream on [Netflix](#) with a subscription.

Nanny (2022)

Aisha, an undocumented immigrant from Senegal, becomes a nanny for a wealthy couple in New York. She hopes to bring her young son to the US, but becomes plagued by terrifying visions that threaten her plans.

Available to stream with a subscription on [Amazon Prime](#).

No Data Plan (2019)

This experimental film follows a voiceless narrator as they travel across America by train sharing details about his mother's affair and its intersections with their undocumented identity. Directed by undocumented filmmaker, Miko Revereza.

Available to rent or buy on [Vimeo](#).

Rocio (2018)

When his mother is diagnosed with cancer, Dario, an undocumented Harvard student, chooses to return to Mexico with her to seek medical treatment. This documentary follows Dario's story as he struggles to return to the U.S. despite his DACA status. Directed by undocumented filmmaker Dario Guerrero.

Available to rent on [Icarus Films](#).

Sanson and Me (2022)

This documentary follows a filmmaker who connects with Sanson, an undocumented immigrant sentenced to life in prison without parole. Unable to interview him, both work together to recreate Sanson's childhood to paint a portrait of the cross-sections of immigration and the criminal justice system.

Available to buy through the film's [website](#).

The Infiltrators (2019)

Based on a true story, this film follows a group of young undocumented people who get deliberately detained by Border Patrol in order to infiltrate a detention center. But once inside, their plan to free people doesn't go as planned.

Available to rent or buy from [Amazon](#) and the film's [website](#).

Pair it with PBS's [Discussion Guide](#) and [Deeper Reading List](#).

The Sun is Also a Star (2019)

Natasha is spending her last days in New York fighting her family's deportation to Jamaica. While there, she meets and falls for Daniel, a college-bound student struggling with his parents' expectations.

Available to rent or buy from [YouTube](#) or [Amazon](#).

The Unafraid (2018)

Georgia is one of three states in the United States where undocumented students are banned from attending college and disqualified from receiving in-state tuition. This documentary follows three DACAmented students from Georgia as they near their high school graduation and fight to pursue their education.

Visit their [website](#) to request a screening.

Under the Same Moon (2007)

Carlitos lives with his grandmother in Mexico. His mother works as a maid in the U.S., hoping to someday send for her child. But when his grandmother dies unexpectedly, Carlitos must sneak across the border and seek out his mother.

Available to rent or buy from [Amazon](#) and [iTunes](#).

Unseen (2023)

This documentary follows Pedro, an aspiring social worker, who juggles his blindness and immigration status to get his college degree and support his family. Directed by undocumented filmmaker Set Hernandez Rongkilyo.

Available to stream on [PBS](#) or visit their [website](#) to request a screening.

Underwater Dreams (2014)

This documentary follows the story of undocumented teens from Arizona as they compete in a national robotics contest.

Available to rent or buy from [Amazon](#).

Waking Dream (2018)

This documentary follows six young undocumented people following the 2017 DACA rescission. Their stories range from fighting for legal status, struggling with the deportation of loved ones, and pursuing their dreams in a country that is pushing them out.

Available to stream for free on [Kanopy](#).

Yellow Rose (2019)

An undocumented Filipina teen dreams of leaving her small town to pursue her country music dreams.

Available to rent or buy on [Amazon](#).

SHORT FILMS

Advance Parole (2018)

This documentary chronicles the efforts of Mayra Garibo, a DACAmented student, as she advocates to reinstate Advance Parole in order to see her ailing grandparents in Mexico before it's too late. Directed by undocumented filmmaker Lidieth Arevalo.

Available to stream for free on [Vimeo](#) and [Youtube](#) (with Spanish subtitles).

Alpharaoh (2019)

Undocumented artist, Alex Alpharaoh, reflects on his experiences while touring his one-man show, WET: A DACAmented Story, across the country. Directed by undocumented filmmaker Lidieth Arevalo.

Available to stream for free on [Vimeo](#).

Beyond Status Film Series (2021)

This series of short films by migrant creatives seeks to tell stories that envision life beyond immigration status. The films follow an undocumented immigrant in Atlanta, an alien looking for an opportunity to leave Earth, and a homesick Filipina who rediscovers folk dance.

Visit their [website](#) to stream the films for free.

COVER/AGE (2020)

This documentary follows two undocumented immigrant leaders as they fight to expand healthcare access for all in California. Directed by undocumented filmmaker, Set Hernandez Rongkilyo.

Available to rent on [Vimeo](#) or visit their [website](#) to request a screening.

Halmoni (2016)

Undocumented immigrant rights activist, Ju Hong, travels back to South Korea to reunite with his ailing grandmother after 13 years of separation.

Available to stream for free on [Vimeo](#).

Lost & Found (2007)

This early short film chronicles the experience of Stephanie, an undocumented Filipino student from UCLA. Directed by undocumented filmmaker and Dream Act advocate, [Tam Tran](#).

Available to stream for free on [Youtube](#).

Made in America (2021)

Two rival migrant workers must work together to escape an ICE raid in their workplace. Created by undocumented filmmaker Edgar Aquino-Huerta.

Available to stream for free on [Vimeo](#).

Mojosito & Me (2021)

This story follows a young undocumented immigrant's adventures with her 16-year-old American car. Created by undocumented filmmaker, Lidieth Arevalo.

Available to stream on Youtube in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

NBC Asian America Presents: Deported (2017)

This 5-part, 10-minute documentary series looks at the global fight to end the deportation of Cambodian refugees from the U.S.

Available to stream for free on [NBC News](#).

Stories Beyond Borders Film Series (2019)

This series of short documentary films highlights the different facets of undocumented life in America. Stories include the fight of a Guatemalan asylum seeker claiming sanctuary in a church, the experiences of a detained U.S. permanent resident from Somalia, and a nationwide biking campaign for citizenship led by Asian American activists.

Visit their [website](#) to request a free virtual screening.

StoryCorps Shorts: A Mother's Promise (2019)

This animated short follows Maria Rivas and her teenage daughter, Emily, as they contemplate the possibility of Maria losing her TPS status and leaving the United States.

Available to stream for free on [PBS](#).

The Undocumented Lawyer (2020)

Lizbeth Mateo, an undocumented attorney, utilizes her personal background and years of community organizing experience to fight for a client avoiding deportation by taking sanctuary in a church.

Visit their [website](#) to request a screening.

We wish to thank Set Hernandez Rongkilyo, Lidieth Arevalo, and the [Undocumented Filmmakers Collective](#) for providing additions to this resource to better uplift the stories of undocumented creatives.

Immigrants Rising helps you make decisions based on your potential, not your perceived limits. Visit our website so you can see what's possible: [immigrantsrising.org](#). For inquiries regarding this resource, please contact Madeleine Villanueva, Higher Education Manager, at madeleine@immigrantsrising.org. Revised 12/2023.