

The Case For Protecting DACA Recipients



The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (“DACA”) program was created in 2012 and allows certain young people who came to the U.S. as children to request work authorization and protection from deportation. DACA recipients must meet a series of strict criteria, are required to pass an extensive background check as part of the application process, and must renew their application every two years to remain in the program.

By any measure, DACA has been a tremendous success for hundreds of thousands of young people and for our country - but the program is under threat again due to a recent court ruling out of Texas that has halted new applications and thrown immigrant youths’ futures further into uncertainty. Now, the Department of Homeland Security is opening a [notice-and-comment rulemaking period](#) as part of the Biden Administration’s efforts to preserve and fortify DACA - and inviting the public to show their support by submitting a public comment. The fact remains that only Congress can provide a permanent legislative solution, and they must act now to pass a pathway to citizenship.

DACA recipients across the country continue to live in fear and uncertainty. Members of Congress must pass a pathway to citizenship to prevent hundreds of thousands of young people from being ripped from their loved ones, their communities, and their jobs, with devastating consequences for their lives and the U.S. economy.

DACA Recipients Live in and Contribute to Nearly Every Community Across the Country

- As of March 2021, about [616,000](#) young people in the U.S. currently hold DACA. Across the country, more than [1.5 million](#) people live with a DACA recipient.
- These hard working young people came forward and volunteered their personal information to the government in good faith, but that very same information could now be used to target them for deportation if Congress fails to take action.
- All DACA recipients have lived in the United States for at least a decade, and many for much longer. The average DACA recipient came to the United States at the age of [seven](#) and is now 28 years old. They were educated in American elementary, middle, and high schools, and many have earned degrees from U.S. universities. **Immigrant youth are Americans in virtually every way, except on paper.**
- Immigrant youth are deeply integrated in nearly every community across the United States. They work as nurses, teachers, and engineers; they go to our schools, teach our children, play on our kids’ sports teams, and worship alongside us in our churches.

\$3.1 billion

Annual state and local taxes paid by DACA recipients and their households

\$5.6 billion

Annual federal taxes paid by DACA recipients and their households

\$24 billion

Spending power of DACA recipients and their households

More than 600,000

young people in the U.S. are DACA recipients

Over 1 million

DACA-eligible immigrants live in the United States

\$42 billion

Annual GDP contributed by DACA recipients in the U.S.

Nearly 1 million

immigrant youth are essential workers

DACA Recipients and Other Young People Who are Undocumented are Essential Workers

- Immigrant youth play [a crucial part in America's COVID-19 recovery](#).
- Approximately [5.2 million](#) undocumented immigrants, including immigrant youth, work in [essential industries](#).
- Immigrant youth account for nearly [1 million](#) of these essential workers, with DACA recipients making up [400,000](#) among them.
- An estimated [260,000](#) immigrant youth provide essential work in housing-related industries such as facilities and construction. About the [same number](#) work in food services and production, and an additional [110,000](#) work in health industries. About [90,000](#) immigrant youth work in essential transportation sectors, and a further [50,000](#) work in education.
- [Nearly half](#) (49%) of the total immigrant youth population work in essential industries. This share rises to [two-thirds](#) (67%) when excluding immigrant youth students.

Hurting DACA Recipients and Immigrant Youth Hurts Everyone

- Immigrant youth have deep roots in their communities across the country; uprooting their lives hurts not only them, but millions of their loved ones, neighbors, and employers.
- The U.S. will lose nearly [\\$93 billion](#) in federal tax revenue over a 10-year period if DACA is reversed.
- More than [400,000](#) immigrant youth are parents of at least one U.S. citizen child. This amounts to about 750,000 U.S.-citizen minor children with at least one immigrant youth parent. Congress' failure to pass a permanent legislative solution would be directly responsible for ripping apart hundreds of thousands of American families.
- More than [200,000](#) immigrant youth covered by the 2021 Dream Act, or about 1 in 10, are married to U.S. citizens.
- Since DACA's rescission in 2017, nearly [100,000](#) immigrant youth have graduated from high school without DACA or protection from deportation, harming their work prospects and limiting their access to higher education.
- Approximately [620,000](#) K-12 students in U.S. schools are undocumented. These students came to the U.S. as children and are part of the immigrant youth population.
- Nearly [8%](#) of all K-12 students are at risk of having their families torn apart by deportation, which would devastate students and families - as well as their broader communities - unless Congress passes a pathway to citizenship.

Upwards of \$21 billion

The cost of removal alone of DACA recipients from the U.S. in addition to the terrible moral consequences

Approximately 620,000 K-12 students are undocumented and are part of the immigrant youth population

256,000 U.S. citizen children who have at least one parent that is a DACA recipient

Nearly 8% of all K-12 students at risk of having their families torn apart by deportation