



In Defense of DACA:

Talking points on the far-reaching benefits DACA has had on individuals, families and America as a whole

Background:

DACA is an executive action, implemented by President Obama in 2012, providing deportation relief and the opportunity to work for a select group of young, undocumented people living in the United States. To qualify, applicants must 1) have been under age 31 as of June 15, 2012; 2) have arrived in the United States before age 16; 3) have continuously resided in the country; 4) be in the U.S. at the time of applying for DACA; 5) be in school or have a high school degree/GED or military service; and 6) not have been convicted of a felony or serious misdemeanors. Applicants must reapply every two years. Since the program's start, more than 755,706 young people have received DACA.¹ As many as 1.9 million people may be eligible.²

Who are DACA recipients?

- Select young people who arrived or were brought to the United States before age 16
- Many were brought to the United States as infants and have only known the United States as their home
- They are students or serving in the military or they have earned a high school diploma/GED or honorable discharge from military service
- They have passed Department of Homeland Security background checks and have been through an intensive vetting process

1 [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Process \(Through Fiscal Year 2016, 4th Qtr\)](https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/All%20Form%20Types/DACA/daca_performancedata_fy2016_qtr4.pdf), December 23, 2016, *available at* www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/All%20Form%20Types/DACA/daca_performancedata_fy2016_qtr4.pdf

2 [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals \(DACA\) Data Tools](https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca-profiles), *available at* www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca-profiles

- For those who have not already achieved it, many dream of or are pursuing higher education
- Many are providers—parents of young children or adults caring for aging parents
- They are trusted employees, filling in-demand positions in our economy, including teachers, finance analysts, health care workers, child care providers and engineers
- Finally, they have relied upon the government’s promise of confidentiality in order to seek protection from deportation and work authorization
- DACA creates access to opportunities that require a background check (through a Social Security number), including opportunities to volunteer in their communities.⁶
- DACA allows recipients to pursue higher education and, in some states, obtain in-state tuition. A few states offer financial assistance to DACA recipients.⁷
- DACA work authorization improves family financial stability.⁸
- DACA work authorization creates access to healthcare through employers.⁹
- A few states allow DACA recipients to apply for emergency Medicaid.¹⁰

The impact of DACA on individual lives and families

- DACA provides temporary protection from detention and deportation, lessening stress, fear, isolation, and exclusion, creating stability for individuals and families.³
- DACA allows people to become more integrated in their communities and plan for the future.⁴
- DACA allows people to obtain Social Security numbers, establish credit histories, work, purchase homes and get driver’s licenses.⁵

The impact of DACA on society and the economy

- DACA increases public safety by reducing fear of interacting with the police or reporting crimes.¹¹
- DACA enables access to healthcare (through employment or in certain states that allow DACA recipients to apply for emergency Medicaid), reducing the burden on high-cost emergency services, on which undocumented individuals in America are forced to rely.¹²

3 Jill Marie Bussey and Jose Magaña-Salgado, DACA After United States v. Texas: Recommendations for the President, July 15, 2016, available at www.adminrelief.org/resources/item.608862-DACA_After_United_States_v_Texas_Recommendations_for_the_President; Sanam Malik, DACA Helps Undocumented Students Access Higher Education, April 7, 2015, available at www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2015/04/07/110558/daca-helps-undocumented-students-access-higher-education

4 See *id.*

5 See *id.*

6 The Top Ten Benefits of Being DACA-mented, available at unitedwedream.org/daca-top10/

7 Sanam Malik, DACA Helps Undocumented Students Access Higher Education, April 7, 2015, available at www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2015/04/07/110558/daca-helps-undocumented-students-access-higher-education

8 See Bussey, DACA After United States v. Texas: Recommendations for the President, *supra*.

9 The Top Ten Benefits of Being DACA-mented, available at unitedwedream.org/daca-top10

10 Rachel Fabi, Undocumented Immigrants in the United States: Access to Prenatal Care, September 16, 2014, available at undocumentedpatients.org/issuebrief/undocumented-immigrants-in-the-united-states-access-to-prenatal-care

11 See Bussey, DACA After United States v. Texas: Recommendations for the President, *supra*.

12 See Fabi, Undocumented Immigrants in the United States: Access to Prenatal Care, September 16, 2014, *supra*.

- Through education opportunities and other protections, DACA enabled nearly half of all recipients who were employed to move to a job that better fit their skills, qualifications, and talents.¹³ The result is a more skilled and educated American workforce, tapping potential that had previously been stifled and improving the quality of goods and services for all Americans.¹⁴
- Eighty-seven percent of DACA recipients are employed.¹⁵ They work in all 50 states,¹⁶ across all sectors of the economy, including education and health services, wholesale and retail trades, the nonprofit sector, and in professional and business services.¹⁷
- DACA combats employer exploitation that is common with undocumented employees, including paying workers less than the minimum wage. It encourages higher-paying and higher-quality jobs.¹⁸
- DACA allows recipients to obtain driver's licenses in the majority of states. Most states collect between 3 and 6 percent of the auto purchase price in sales tax, plus registration and title fees.¹⁹ Ninety-six percent of DACA recipients who have bought a car purchased auto insurance.²⁰
- Twelve percent of DACA recipients purchased their first home.²¹
- Forty-seven percent of recipients opened a bank account and 57 percent obtained their first credit card.²²
- Ending DACA without a transition plan would reduce tax contributions by \$24.6 billion and create \$3.4 billion in turnover costs, resulting from employers being forced to fire the employees they have trained and invested in, and replace them with new, un-trained employees.²³

13 Tom K. Wong, Greisa Martinez Rosas, Adrian Reyna, Ignacia Rodriguez, Patrick O'Shea, Tom Jawetz, and Philip E. Wolgin, New Study of DACA Beneficiaries Shows Positive Economic and Educational Outcomes, October 18, 2016, available at www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2016/10/18/146290/new-study-of-daca-beneficiaries-shows-positive-economic-and-educational-outcomes

14 Julia Glum, Immigration 2017: Undocumented Students Nervous about Affording College Tuition Under Trump, December 8, 2016, available at www.ibtimes.com/immigration-reform-2017-undocumented-students-nervous-about-affording-college-tuition-2455833

15 See Wong, New Study of DACA Beneficiaries Shows Positive Economic and Educational Outcomes, *supra*.

16 Phillip Wolgin, The Top 4 Things You Need to Know About DACA for its 4th Anniversary, June 9, 2016, available at www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2016/06/09/139044/the-top-4-things-you-need-to-know-about-daca-for-its-4th-anniversary

17 See Wong, New Study of DACA Beneficiaries Shows Positive Economic and Educational Outcomes, *supra*.

18 Erica Williams, Michael Leachman, Marlana Wallace, Nick Albares, For States, Inclusive Approach to Unauthorized Immigrants Can Help Build Better Economies, October 29, 2015, available at www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/for-states-inclusive-approach-to-unauthorized-immigrants-can-help

19 Maria Ignacia Rodriguez, DACA on its third anniversary, August 19, 2015, available at thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/civil-rights/251380-daca-on-its-third-anniversary

20 Tom K. Wong, Kelly K. Richter, Ignacia Rodriguez, and Philip E. Wolgin, Results from a Nationwide Survey of DACA Recipients Illustrate the Program's Impact, July 9, 2015, available at www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2015/07/09/117054/results-from-a-nationwide-survey-of-daca-recipients-illustrate-the-programs-impact

21 Tom K. Wong, Results of Tom K. Wong, United We Dream, National Immigration Law Center, and Center for American Progress National Survey, September 2016, available at cdn.americanprogressaction.org/content/uploads/2016/10/21111136/2016-daca_survey_draft_updated-FINAL2.pdf

22 See Wong, Results of Tom K. Wong, United We Dream, National Immigration Law Center, and Center for American Progress National Survey, *supra*.

23 Jose Magaña-Salgado, Money on the Table: Economic Costs of Ending DACA, December 2016, available at www.ilrc.org/sites/

- Recipients report that having DACA increased average hourly wages by 42 percent.²⁴
- Higher wages and earning potential increases personal income tax revenue and other sources of revenue resulting from full compliance with the tax code.²⁵
- Ending DACA would reduce the United States' Gross Domestic Product by **\$433.4 billion** over the following 10 years.²⁶
- “Migrants are our brothers and sisters in search of a better life, far away from poverty, hunger, exploitation and the unjust distribution of the planet’s resources which are meant to be equitably shared by all. Don’t we all want a better, more decent and prosperous life to share with our loved ones?” - Pope Francis²⁹
- “The Church without frontiers, Mother to all, spreads throughout the world a culture of acceptance and solidarity, in which no one is seen as useless, out of place, or disposable.” - Pope Francis³⁰

DACA is in line with Catholic social teaching

Catholic social teaching emphasizes the rights and dignity of all persons, from all countries, religions, social groups, creeds, and ethnic backgrounds.²⁷

Catholic social teaching views migration not as a divisive, but as **an opportunity to build the human family**. It recognizes human rights for newcomers, based on their God-given dignity. All people have the right to survival, food, clothing, education, medical care, and the expression of culture.

- “Migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of humanity. They are children, women, and men who leave or are forced to leave their homes for various reasons, who share a legitimate desire for knowing and having, but above all for being more.” - Pope Francis²⁸

- “[W]hen the stranger in our midst appeals to us, we must not repeat the sins and the errors of the past. We must resolve now to live as nobly and as justly as possible, as we educate new generations not to turn their back on our ‘neighbors’ and everything around us.” - Pope Francis³¹

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default/files/resources/2016-12-13_ilrc_report_-_money_on_the_table_economic_costs_of_ending_daca.pdf

24 Silva Mathema, Assessing the Economic Impacts of Granting Deferred Action Through DACA and DAPA, April 2, 2015, available at www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2015/04/02/110045/assessing-the-economic-impacts-of-granting-deferred-action-through-daca-and-dapa

25 Undocumented Immigrants' State & Local Tax Contributions, February 2016, available at itep.org/itep_reports/2016/02/undocumented-immigrants-state-local-tax-contributions-1.php#.WHRRtyMrJQL

26 Silva Mathema, Ending DACA Will Cost States Billions of Dollars, January 9, 2017, available at www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2017/01/09/296125/ending-daca-will-cost-states-billions-of-dollars

27 Catholic Social Teaching On Immigration And The Movement Of Peoples, available at www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/immigration/catholic-teaching-on-immigration-and-the-movement-of-peoples.cfm

28 Quotes from Pope Francis on Immigration, available at cliniclegal.org/cst/resources/quotes

29 See *id.*

30 See *id.*

31 See *id.*