

STATUS REPORT

DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) Is Three Years Old!

AUGUST 2015*

DACA just turned three! We've done and learned a lot since U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) first began accepting DACA applications on August 15, 2012. And as we look ahead, we know there's much more to be done.

What we've learned

The numbers. Between August 2012 and March 2015, [794,501](#) applications for initial DACA were filed and 664,607 were approved. Between June 2014 and March 2015, [381,188](#) applications for DACA renewal were filed and 243,872 were approved.¹

The [top ten countries of origin](#) of DACA recipients continue to be Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, South Korea, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, Colombia, and the Philippines.²

California and Texas are the [states](#) with the largest number of DACA recipients.³

The challenges. We have a better understanding of the challenges people face when applying for DACA. There are many people who would be eligible to apply for DACA if they met the education-related criteria.⁴ DACA has encouraged many young immigrants to return to school, but not everyone is in a position to be able to do this. Adult education programs are still limited in capacity and funding, and some federally funded education programs bar undocumented immigrants from even enrolling.⁵

The narrative. We have learned, particularly from working with immigrant youth-led groups in California, that there has been a shift away from the "Dreamer" narrative. For many years, the successes and contributions of immigrant youth who are college students and graduates, also known as "Dreamers," have been widely recognized. But immigrant youth are asking that the successes and contributions of parents, family members, neighbors, friends, and others who may not fit the conventional notion of "high-achieving immigrants" be recognized as well. They have demanded broader immigration relief, including protection from deportation for others in the immigrant community and an end to unjust and inhumane immigration enforcement practices.

The opportunities and successes. We have seen more and more opportunities made available to DACA recipients. More people with DACA have traveled abroad with advance parole, primarily seeking professional development opportunities. We have also seen more students inquiring about going into the field of medicine, which until recently was a field largely inaccessible to immigrant youth.⁶

We have learned the power of coalition-building and partnering with allies, including educators, counselors, and librarians, in order to amplify the power of immigrants and achieve pro-immigrant victories on the local, state, and national levels.

*Revised in July 2016 in the following way: Most www.nilc.org links were updated.

LOS ANGELES (Headquarters)
3435 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 2850
Los Angeles, CA 90010
213 639-3900
213 639-3911 fax



WASHINGTON, DC
1121 14th Street, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20005
202 216-0261
202 216-0266 fax

We have witnessed successes along the way. For example, Nebraska's and Arizona's policies denying driver's licenses to DACA recipients were reversed during the past 6 months as immigrant youth and allies in Nebraska pushed their state legislature to pass a law granting them licenses and the Arizona Dream Act Coalition (ADAC) was successful in suing to [block](#) Arizona's policy.⁷ DACA recipients are now able to get driver's licenses in all 50 states.

What we've done

Over the past three years, NILC has engaged in a range of activities to successfully implement DACA:

- We've hosted or been panelists in many webinars. Webinar topics have included how to apply for DACA and to renew DACA, and how to file taxes if you have DACA.⁸
- We've continued providing technical help to people applying for DACA and people who've received DACA, particularly about issues related to access to higher education, driver's licenses, health care, and employment.
- We've received over 50 inquiries from people who applied to renew their DACA but were worried because their initial DACA and work permit would soon expire or had already expired. We engaged in administrative advocacy to encourage the Department of Homeland Security to address this issue. We also created materials and engaged in media outreach encouraging people to apply 120 to 150 days before their initial DACA expires to minimize the chance that they would be left without DACA and a work permit, and informing them about how to inquire into the status of their application.
- When USCIS announced in July of this year that people who mistakenly received three-year work permits would need to return them or have their DACA and work permit terminated, we, along with our partners, rapidly responded by reaching out to the affected population and expressing to USCIS our concerns and suggestions.
- We coauthored, with Professor Tom K. Wong and the Center for American Progress, a [nationwide study](#) of DACA recipients. The study's results reveal that DACA has had a dramatically positive impact on the lives of people with DACA.⁹
- We've used social media, including [Facebook](#), [BuzzFeed](#), and [Twitter](#), to provide DACA applicants and recipients with updates and information.¹⁰

We've also created or updated these resources:¹¹

- A FAQ on applying for DACA (in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)).
- A FAQ on applying to renew DACA (in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)).
- A brochure with information on DACA (in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)).
- A [checklist](#) for those applying for DACA for the first time to use to prove that the educational program in which they are enrolled meets USCIS's criteria.
- [Four top tips](#) to keep in mind when applying to renew your DACA.
- A [calculator](#) to help people with DACA decide when to apply to renew it.

- [Information](#) on what to do if a person is experiencing delays in their DACA renewal application processing (created in partnership with the Immigrant Legal Resource Center).
- A FAQ on workplace rights for people who are applying for or have been granted DACA (in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)).
- A fact sheet about [in-state tuition](#) for college students.
- Information for DACA recipients about [health care](#) and the [Obamacare tax penalty](#).

What comes next

Outreach. Each day more people become eligible to apply for DACA and to renew their DACA. Immigrant youth who turn 15 can apply for DACA. The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) reports that 74,591 potentially eligible people (17 percent of those who are probably eligible) have yet to apply to renew their DACA due to a lack of outreach and information, confusion about the renewal process (particularly the education requirement), or inability to afford the \$465 application cost.¹² More needs to be done to reach out to this group and to help them renew their DACA.

Education and professional licenses. More should be done to ensure that immigrant youth can access adult education programs, not just so they can meet DACA's education-related requirements, but also so they can achieve their educational goals and obtain higher-paying jobs. The number of immigrant youth interested in graduate schools and professional licenses is growing, so there is a real and immediate need to make these programs more accessible and affordable.

Expanded DACA. Finally, the immigrants' rights movement achieved a huge victory last year when President Obama announced that the DACA program would be [expanded](#).¹³ This expansion has been [put on hold](#) by a court,¹⁴ but the court's order has not stopped people from continuing to work to make DACA more inclusive, fight unjust immigration enforcement, and advance pro-immigrant policies. We will keep fighting with you in the streets and in the courts until our communities are protected from deportation and are treated fairly and with justice.

More information. Much more information about DACA is available from our [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals](#) webpage and from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' [Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals](#) webpage.¹⁵

¹ *Number of I-821D, Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals by Fiscal Year, Quarter, Intake, Biometrics and Case Status: 2012-2015* (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, March 31, 2015), [www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports and Studies/Immigration Forms Data/Naturalization Data/1821d_performancedata_fy2015_qtr2.pdf](http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/Naturalization%20Data/1821d_performancedata_fy2015_qtr2.pdf).

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ USCIS's website states that people may apply for DACA if, among other criteria, they "Are currently in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school, have obtained a general education development (GED) certificate, or are an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States" "Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)" (USCIS webpage, Aug. 3, 2015), www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/consideration-deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca.

⁵ See Sarah Hooker, Margie McHugh, and Angelo Mathay, *Lessons from the Local Level: DACA's Implementation and Impact on Education and Training Success* (Migration Policy Institute, Jan. 2015), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/lessons-local-level-dacas-implementation-and-impact-education-and-training-success.

⁶ See, e.g., the Pre-Health Dreamers website, www.phdreamers.org.

⁷ See www.nilc.org/court-blocks-arizona-daca-drivers-license-ban/.

⁸ Visit www.nilc.org/nilcwebinars/ to access recordings of our webinars.

⁹ See <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2015/07/09/117054/results-from-a-nationwide-survey-of-daca-recipients-illustrate-the-programs-impact/>.

¹⁰ See <https://www.facebook.com/NationalImmigrationLawCenter>, www.buzzfeed.com/natimmlawcenter/five-reasons-to-apply-to-renew-your-daca-as-soon-as-possible, and <https://twitter.com/NILC> org.

¹¹ Most of the resources listed immediately below are available from www.nilc.org/daca/.

¹² Angelo Mathay and Margie McHugh, *DACA at the Three-Year Mark: High Pace of Renewals, But Processing Difficulties Evident* (Migration Policy Institute, Aug. 2015), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/daca-three-year-mark-high-pace-renewals-processing-difficulties-evident.

¹³ See www.nilc.org/dapa-and-expanded-daca-programs/.

¹⁴ See www.nilc.org/united-states-v-state-of-texas/.

¹⁵ See www.nilc.org/daca/ and www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/consideration-deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca.