



FAQs on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

What is DACA?

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is a deferred action policy implemented by the Obama administration in June 2012. It is aimed at protecting qualifying young undocumented immigrants who came to the U.S. as children, temporarily shielding them from deportation and providing them work authorization with possible renewal every two years. DACA protections can be revoked by DHS and DACA recipients continue to lack legal status and a pathway to citizenship.

Who are Dreamers?

A Dreamer is an undocumented immigrant who came to the United States as a child. Dreamers often have only known the U.S. as home and identify as Americans. There are as many as 3.6 million Dreamers residing in the United States, many of whom either did not apply for DACA or aged into the program after it stopped accepting new applicants. Only a minority of the total Dreamer population – approximately 653,000 Dreamers – are currently protected under DACA. Even at the height of participation, only about 800,000 Dreamers were protected.

DACA recipients came to the United States from all over the world, representing almost approximately 150 different birth countries, but approximately 80% of them were born in Mexico. The states with the largest DACA populations are California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois.

The average DACA recipient arrived in the United States at age 7 and has lived here for more than 20 years. Because DACA required children to have arrived in the U.S. five years before its 2012 implementation (June 2007), younger Dreamers are not eligible for DACA. As the DACA recipient population has aged, a growing number have become parents. Currently, DACA recipients are parents to more than 250,000 U.S. citizen children.

Is DACA still in place?

Yes, but its days may be numbered.

The Trump administration announced on September 5, 2017 that it was ending DACA, a decision that was subsequently enjoined in the courts. Under a series of court decisions, Dreamers already covered under DACA have been able to maintain their temporary protections and continue to apply to renew their DACA protections for additional two-year terms, but new applicants have been unable to obtain protections.

The Supreme Court announced on June 28, 2019 that it would consider whether the Trump administration's rescission of DACA was lawful. It heard oral arguments on November 12, 2019 and will issue a decision this June.

What are the requirements of DACA?

To be eligible for DACA, qualifying young undocumented individuals are required to demonstrate the following:

- that they came to the U.S. before age 16;

- that they have resided here continuously since June 15, 2007;
- that they do not currently have legal immigration status;
- that they were present in the U.S. on June 15, 2012;
- that they were under the age of 31 on June 15, 2012;
- that they are currently in school, have graduated or obtained a GED certificate, or that they have been honorably discharged from the military;
- that they have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, or three or more misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety.

When USCIS was accepting new applicants for DACA, applicants were required to be at least 15 years of age and were required to pay an unwaivable application fee (originally \$465, subsequently increased to \$495, including \$85 for biometrics).

What are the requirements to renew DACA?

To renew DACA, recipients must show (1) that they have continuously resided in the United States since submitting their most recently approved DACA request; (2) that they have not departed the United States on or after Aug. 15, 2012, without advance parole; and (3) that they have not been convicted of a felony, a significant misdemeanor, or three or more misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety.

(4) In addition, applicants for DACA renewal must pay an unwaivable application fee of \$495.

How do DACA recipients strengthen the United States?

Dreamers have been here for many years and make vital contributions to our communities. American citizens depend on Dreamers. They serve in our military. They contribute to our economy and communities as teachers, health care providers, neighbors, co-congregants, and more. Together with their families, they make our nation a better place

Dreamers help the American economy and serve in the military. Over the next 10 years, Dreamers who currently have DACA will contribute an estimated \$433.4 billion to the GDP, \$60 billion in fiscal impact, and \$12.3 billion in taxes to Social Security and Medicare if they can continue to work legally in the U.S.

Over 900 DACA recipients with them valuable language and medical skills have enlisted in the military under the Military Accessions Vital to National Interest (MAVNI) Pilot Program.

The need for a permanent solution for Dreamers

Regardless of how the Supreme Court rules on the Trump administration's rescission of DACA, Congress should pass a permanent, bipartisan, legislative solution that protects Dreamers and provides them with permanent legal status, benefiting American workers and our nation. Even if left in place by the Supreme Court, DACA lacks permanence. We should cement the contributions of Dreamers, not keep them at risk of deportation.