



DACA's Termination

What Funders Need to Know in the Immediate Term

Updated September 19, 2017

Background

On September 5, 2017, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced the termination and phasing out of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program by March 5, 2018. Established in 2012 through executive action by President Obama, DACA provided temporary work authorization and relief from deportation for immigrants who met [strict eligibility requirements](#).

The nearly 800,000 immigrants who were granted DACA came to the United States as children, grew up in our communities, and have become part of our social and economic fabric. DACA made it possible for them to further their education, secure professional certifications and licenses, and work in the formal economy. It also allowed them to obtain health insurance, driver's licenses, and auto insurance, as well as fulfill basic needs that many take for granted. Perhaps most importantly, it provided a sense of safety and security, affirming for these newcomers that they belong. In turn, DACAmented immigrants have embraced this country and deepened their contributions to communities across the country through volunteerism and other forms of civic participation. DACA's rescission puts these immigrants at risk of economic hardship, forcible separation from loved ones, and deportation from the country they call home. Given how integrated DACA recipients are into American communities, their plight will have a far-reaching impact on our society as a whole.

While DACA was life-changing, it was temporary in nature and did not provide recipients a pathway to permanent immigration status. Federal legislation that would allow this population to gain permanent status (e.g., the DREAM Act) has been circulated for more than a decade but without resolution. Several bills have recently been introduced in Congress to either provide DACA-like temporary benefits or a path to permanent immigration status for affected populations. However, it is unclear whether any of the legislative proposals can move forward, particularly if harsh enforcement measures were attached to bills under consideration.

What DACA's Cancellation Means

- As of September 5, 2017, the DACA program stopped receiving new applications and will only process applications already submitted.
- Current DACA recipients with valid work permits that expire between September 5, 2017 and March 5, 2018 must submit their renewal applications by October 5, 2017. If

they are not able to do so on time or their renewal application is declined, their work authorization will expire between October 2017 and March 2018. This is a one-time-only renewal.

- Those whose work permits expired before September 5, 2017 may not apply for renewal after September 5, 2017.
- Current DACA recipients whose work authorization expires after March 5, 2018 will be able to retain their status until their permits expire but will not be permitted to submit renewal applications.
- Advance parole, i.e., permission to re-enter the United States after travel abroad, will no longer be granted to DACA beneficiaries.

Who Is Affected

[Data from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service \(USCIS\)](#) show that the vast majority of DACA recipients came from Latin America, with 79 percent from Mexico. The next largest group of recipients came from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. South Korea, Philippines, and India are the top Asian countries of origin. Although USCIS data do not provide information on race, sexual orientation, and gender expression, the DACA population includes black and indigenous immigrants and immigrants who identify as LGBTQ. In an environment of heightened hate and bigotry, DACA recipients of color, those from indigenous backgrounds, and those who are LGBTQ are especially vulnerable.

According to a [2017 survey](#) of DACA beneficiaries, the average DACAmented immigrant came to the United States at six and a half years of age and nearly 50 percent arrived when they were five or younger. This means that, by and large, DACA recipients were raised and educated in this country.

DACA's termination will have ripple effects on several million family members, including U.S. citizens with close ties to DACA beneficiaries. A [2015 survey](#) found that 57 percent of DACA recipients lived in a household of four or more people. A quarter were the parents of U.S.-citizen children; nearly 60 percent had a U.S.-citizen sibling; slightly over half had a U.S. citizen family member; and a quarter had family members with permanent residency.

While DACA recipients live in every state, [USCIS data](#) show that the vast majority reside in the following ten states: California (223,000), Texas (121,000), Illinois (42,000), New York (42,000), Florida (33,000), Arizona (28,000), North Carolina (27,000), Georgia (24,000), New Jersey (22,000), and Washington (18,000). The [impact in each state](#) will vary depending on which state benefits are available to undocumented immigrants, including health care, driver's licenses, in-state tuition for higher education, as well as other factors. For example, DACA recipients in New York City, while losing access to driver's licenses, will face fewer transportation obstacles than the 120,000 DACA recipients in Texas, a large state with fewer public transportation options.

In addition to nearly 800,000 beneficiaries, DACA's termination affects another 1.1 million immigrants who were eligible or would have become eligible for DACA but who now can no longer apply. These include immigrants who did not previously apply for DACA because they needed additional educational attainment, had trouble paying the application fee, or were too young to file an application by the deadline.

What Philanthropy Can Do to Address Immediate Needs

Philanthropy has played an important role in ensuring DACA's success. Through the [Delivering on the Dream initiative](#), GCIR engaged more than 100 foundations nationally and in 15 state, investing and leveraging over \$42 million to provide access to this life-changing benefit. Local, state, and national funders delivered on DACA's promise through collaboration and coordination, and these strategies can be deployed again to meet new challenges.

In the aftermath of DACA's termination, GCIR is heartened that so many foundations have publicly voiced their support for DACAmented immigrants and grantee organizations working with this community by issuing individual statements, signing onto joint statements ([see GCIR website](#)), and using social media. Many have also expressed a desire to allocate resources to address immediate and longer-term needs arising from DACA's termination.

GCIR's recommendations in this issue brief focus on immediate needs. These recommendations and other information in the brief reflect our understanding of the situation as of the publication date. Given the fluid policy context and the complex challenges facing DACAmented immigrants, GCIR will be monitoring developments and updating the contents of the brief as needed. Please check [our website](#) for the latest information.

Information Dissemination and Outreach. Outreach and information on eligibility and deadlines, legal screening, family preparedness, and fraud prevention are all critical immediate needs. Beyond the October 5th deadline, it will be important for trusted advocates and allies to keep the DACA community informed about regulatory implementation or shifting enforcement priorities by the Department of Homeland Security as a result of the

Geographic Priorities

With DACAmented immigrants in every state, all local and state foundations should consider a response that reflects the scale of need. In particular, GCIR encourages funders in states with the largest numbers—California, Texas, Illinois, New York, Florida, Arizona, North Carolina, Georgia, New Jersey, and Washington—to coordinate funding within their states; build and leverage partnerships with state and local governments and the private sector; and work collaboratively.

Funders in Texas and Florida have the added complication of responding to the aftermath of catastrophic hurricanes—and the unique challenges they pose for DACA recipients, including the inability to follow through on renewal applications, particularly if needed documentation has been destroyed.

DACA rescission, as well as any relevant judicial and legislative developments, whether at the federal, state or local level.

Renewal Assistance, Fees, and Legal Support. Existing DACA recipients will need immediate assistance with renewal applications and may also need support to pay the application fees. Several funds have been set up to provide assistance with application fees; contact [GCIR](#) for more information. After October 5, 2017, when the renewal period has closed, current and former DACA recipients as well as all other Dreamers will need access to legal screenings to determine if they have alternative routes to legal status since a timely legislative solution is not guaranteed.

Mental Health Services. Research has documented the tremendous strain that undocumented status places on individuals, particularly Dreamers, who feel American in every way but lack lawful immigration status. Until its rescission, DACA gave recipients temporary freedom from the worries of their undocumented status; those recipients may need support readjusting to a life of uncertainty and limited options. DACA recipients with family dependents and DACA recipients facing additional discriminatory barriers based on race, religion, sexual orientation, and gender expression confront even greater pressure. Holistic approaches that integrate mental health support with legal services can be a particularly effective approach with DACA recipients and their families.

Health Care. While DACA recipients were never eligible for federal health care programs like Medicaid or Medicare, an estimated [450,000](#) DACA recipients nationally will be forced to forfeit the health insurance and other benefits offered by employers. For DACA recipients who have health insurance through a state program, such as the 265,000 DACA recipients in New York and California, there are still possibilities to remain eligible for the [program under certain circumstances](#). Advocacy at the state level will be important to maintain these benefits. Also critical is support for safety-net providers such as federally qualified health centers, community clinics, and public hospitals that provide care and support to uninsured immigrants.

Livelihood. Former DACA recipients must adjust to life in the informal economy filled with uncertainty and heightened potential for workplace exploitation. Creative financial and business counseling and planning for DACA recipients and their employers, as well as associated legal work, will enable them to earn a living under legal constraints, support themselves and their families, and identify ways to manage debts incurred from property purchases and educational support. In addition, workers' rights education, organizing, and advocacy will be needed to prevent workplace abuse.

Educational Support. Many current DACA recipients are enrolled in K-12 schools, higher education, adult education programs, and professional schools. Although not eligible for federal student loans on their own, depending on the [state in which they live](#), many benefit from in-state tuition or rely on scholarships, which they may lose when their DACA status expires. Funders can support efforts by educational institutions to protect DACAmented students and put in place innovative measures to help them continue their education. This may entail new advocacy efforts to craft responsive policies, protect existing state financial

aid programs for undocumented students, and identify new sources of financial support for those who are directly impacted. In addition, funders can support educational institutions that are on the front lines to provide guidance, career counseling, mental health services, teacher training, and access to legal services and other community-based programs to immigrant students and their families.

Organizing and Advocacy. A timely federal policy measure that regularizes the status of DACA recipients is a goal but by no means a foregone conclusion. Maintaining robust public education, organizing, and advocacy efforts is essential to winning support for a long-term policy solution. There is no telling what compromises will be attached to any potential legislation to protect DACAmented immigrants and what difficult tradeoffs that imperil other immigrants will be linked to such legislation. Unless Congress acts, a [recent study](#) found that for every month that DACA renewals are put on hold, an average of 30,000 recipients will lose their authorization to work.

At the same time, state-level organizing and advocacy efforts will be crucial to maintaining current benefits and advancing new protections for DACA recipients and their families, including driver's licenses, health care, employment, and access to higher education, among others.

Movement Building. Organizing and leadership development will be critically needed to cultivate new alliances and strengthen existing ones, build long-term power for the movement, and change the fundamental narrative about immigrants. Advancing short-term goals should be done with longer-term goals and movement building in mind.

Looking Ahead

DACA's termination has implications for a wide range of philanthropic priorities. Whether your foundation funds health, housing, education, employment, or asset building, the end of DACA and its adverse impact on 800,000 immigrants and their families have implications for your work.

To help foundations support efforts to respond on multiple fronts, GCIR is consulting groups in the field and will release updated recommendations in the near future. If you are devising a funding strategy now, however, please [contact us](#) for additional information and technical assistance.

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