



Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

DACA by the Numbers



More than 750,000 initial requests approved



Approval rate for initial requests: 92%



More than 580,000 renewal requests approved



Approval rate for renewal requests: 99%

(Statistics current through 9/30/2016.)

What is Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)?

DACA allows certain individuals who lack legal immigration status (also known as “undocumented”) to request consideration for “deferred action” for two years at a time, meaning that a prosecutor postpones initiating deportation proceedings. Securing DACA status also allows an undocumented individual to seek work authorization.

When and How Was DACA Created?

DACA is not a law passed by Congress or an executive order, but rather an immigration policy established by the federal Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in June 2012. DHS’s United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) collects initial and renewal request forms and fees and grants DACA on a case-by-case basis.

Who is Eligible for DACA?

A person who lacks legal immigration status may apply for DACA if he or she meets the following criteria:

1. was younger than age 31 as of June 15, 2012 (i.e., the date the policy was announced);
2. arrived in the U.S. before age 16 and lived here continuously since June 15, 2007;
3. is currently enrolled in school, is a high school graduate, has a GED, or is an honorably discharged veteran; and
4. has not been convicted of a felony or certain misdemeanors and does not pose a threat to national security.

Source: [Congressional Research Service](#), 2017

Does DACA give undocumented immigrants a path to citizenship?

Generally speaking, people without legal immigration status (including those with DACA status) are ineligible to apply for a green card or citizenship. In most cases, they must exit the United States and then apply to re-enter legally. If they are deported from the country by court order, they generally must wait at least 10 years before applying to re-enter. If they re-enter legally and attain legal immigration status, they generally must be permanent legal residents for five years before they can apply for citizenship.

What are the employment options for an individual with DACA status?

A person who is granted initial or renewed DACA status may receive work authorization from USCIS if he or she can demonstrate an economic necessity for employment. For example, a student could continue to reapply for DACA after graduating from high school, a college, or a university and enter the workforce.

How long will DACA remain in effect?

DACA is an ongoing policy, but it is unclear how long it will remain in effect. It can be modified, superseded, or rescinded at any time without notice.

Related Federal Acts and Policies: The DREAM Act and DAPA

The federal **DREAM Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors)** has gone through several iterations since it was first introduced in 2001, but it has never passed Congress. Similar to DACA, the DREAM Act seeks to assist undocumented individuals who arrived in the U.S. in their youth. The most recent iterations of the DREAM Act were introduced in the Senate in 2017 and in the House as the Recognizing America's Children Act in 2017 and would, among other things, offer conditional legal status and eventually lawful permanent resident (LPR) status (i.e., a green card) to unauthorized immigrants who entered as children; earn eligibility through completion of educational, professional, and other criteria; have a clean criminal record; and maintain good moral character. The [Migration Policy Institute](#) estimates that 1.8 million people under the Senate bill and slightly more than 1 million under the House bill would immediately be eligible to earn conditional legal status. A smaller subset would be likely to get LPR – 1.5 million under the Senate bill and 938,000 under the House.

DAPA (Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents) was first proposed in November 2014 by the Obama administration as an extension of the DACA program. It proposed providing temporary relief from deportation for certain parents of U.S. citizens or LPR children. However, the DAPA policy was never implemented, as it was blocked by a federal court in 2015. The [Migration Policy Institute](#) estimates that DAPA could have applied to around 3.7 undocumented immigrants in the U.S. In June 2017, the Trump administration officially rescinded the DAPA policy.

Learn More

“OLR Backgrounder: Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals,” OLR Report [2012-R-411](#)

“Issuance of Driver’s Licenses to Undocumented Immigrants,” OLR Report [2013-R-194](#)

“Medicaid Eligibility for ‘Deferred Action’ Immigrants,” OLR Report [2015-R-279](#)

“[The DACA and DAPA Deferred Action Initiatives: Frequently Asked Questions](#),” Congressional Research Service, February 15, 2017

