

Securing Our Future: The Need for a Pathway to Citizenship for Dreamers



For the past twelve years, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program has allowed hundreds of thousands of Dreamers – immigrants who entered the country as children – to go to school, work, and build their lives with lessened fears of deportation. However, this program was always meant to be replaced with a path to permanent status.

Over the last decade, Congress has attempted and failed to pass a legislative solution that would replace DACA and provide a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers. An estimated **100,000 undocumented students** will graduate from high school every year over the next three years and the vast majority will not qualify for DACA due to its narrow and outdated eligibility guidelines.

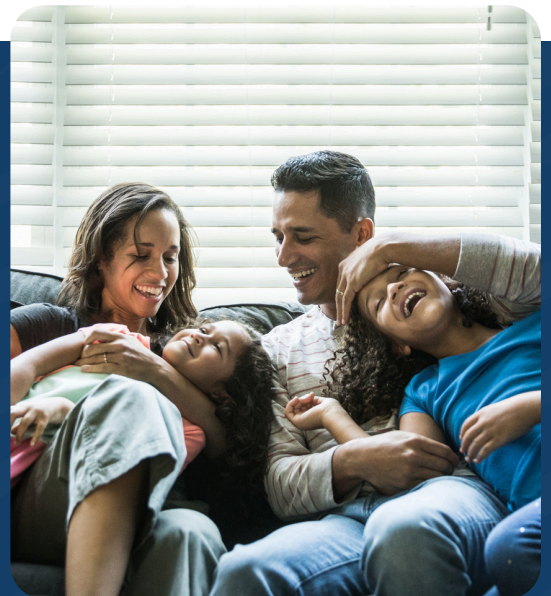
Now, the DACA program and the population that it protects are at risk as a **DACA case moves through the court system and could land at the Supreme Court. Should the Court decide to end DACA without Congressional relief, the impacts will affect recipients, their families, and families across the country as a whole.**

What would DACA rescission mean for...

DACA recipients?

Nearly **600,000** current recipients of DACA would lose their work authorization and deferred status. Many DACA recipients have been enrolled in the program for over a decade, and losing status would be a massive disruption to the lives they have built.

Family Unity: Many DACA recipients have built families in the United States. A **recent survey** of DACA recipients found that – at least once per day – 71 percent of parents think about being separated from their children and 68 percent worry that they won't be able to watch their children grow up.





Education and Careers: After receiving DACA, [more than half](#) of recipients reported moving to jobs with better pay that match their education, training, and career aspirations. Ninety-nine percent of DACA recipients have [graduated](#) from high school and, despite being ineligible for federal aid, nearly half have attained at least some college education. The thousands of DACA recipients who are [currently enrolled](#) in postsecondary education may face a hard time finishing their degrees if they lose their status and work authorization. The rescission of DACA would upend thousands of careers and jeopardize futures.

Mental Health: In the wake of the court rulings challenging the DACA program, recipients [have reported feelings](#) of sadness, despair, anxiety, and even instances of self harm and attempted suicide.

Health Care Access: The program led to increased health care access for DACA recipients through employer-sponsored and private health insurance. Without DACA, many will lose their health coverage, including those with employer-sponsored insurance or Affordable Care Act coverage, as well as those whose increased earnings enabled them to afford private insurance.

The children of DACA recipients?

1.3 million people [who live with a DACA recipient](#) would be impacted by a rescission, including the 300,000 U.S.-born children who have parents with DACA.

Economic Stability: DACA decreased the likelihood of recipient households living in poverty by [38 percent](#). With the loss of DACA, children will be at increased risk of housing instability and food insecurity, which is [harmful](#) for young children's development and long-term health outcomes.

Physical and Mental Health: Without DACA, the program's positive impacts, like [decreased stress](#) and improvements in [mental](#) and [physical](#) health among recipients, would likely be reversed. The positive impacts of the program on children's health would also be lost, as research demonstrates that the children of DACA recipients have better [mental health outcomes](#) and the children of DACA-eligible mothers have [improved birth outcomes](#). If their parents lose their health insurance due to job loss or other reasons, this could also impact their children's coverage. Furthermore, separation from a parent due to deportation or even the fear of losing a parent has serious negative short- and long-term [consequences](#) for children, affecting their brain development, behavior, and mental and physical health.



U.S. communities?

DACA recipients are integral members of the American workforce, holding essential jobs as teachers, health care workers, and grocery store clerks, among many other professions. The effects would be immediate, as [18,000 people](#) would lose their jobs every single month for the next two years at a time when [workforce shortages](#) threaten the economy.



Essential Workforce: During the pandemic, approximately [343,000 DACA recipients](#) were employed as essential workers, representing more than three-quarters of working DACA recipients. Additionally, approximately [45,000 DACA recipients](#) worked in health care settings, including during the height of the pandemic, despite lacking equitable access to protect their own health.

Disruptions to Child Care and Education: If DACA ends, [600 personal care workers](#) in child and senior care will lose their jobs each month. This would happen even as families continue to struggle to access quality, affordable child care. Additionally, an estimated [20,000 teachers](#) will eventually lose their work authorization, impacting countless schools and students across the country.

Urgent action is needed to protect children and families

The Biden Administration must use all possible administrative levers to protect DACA recipients at risk of losing their status. Possible avenues include expanding and modernizing administrative immigration relief options for undocumented immigrants with U.S. citizen spouses, children, and other dependent family members.

Congress must pass legislation like [S. 365/H.R. 6](#) to secure a pathway to citizenship as permanent relief for all Dreamers. DACA recipients and their families should not have their livelihoods tied to the whims of the courts, and undocumented youth who call this country home should not continue to face an uncertain future. DACA was never meant to be a permanent solution. The time for action is now.