



Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA): Funding Opportunities for Philanthropy

Overview

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is a federal policy directive that could benefit an estimated 1.76 million young immigrants known as “DREAMers.”¹ It is the first significant immigration policy development since 1986, when nearly three million undocumented immigrants were able to obtain legal status in the United States.² Beginning August 15, 2012, DACA provides “deferred action,” or relief from deportation, for a two-year, renewal period, and allows beneficiaries to apply for work authorization.³

DACA-eligible children and youth may not be Americans on paper, but they have grown up in this country and are members of local schools, churches, and community institutions. They confront many of the issues that philanthropy seeks to address—poverty, health, education, jobs, among many others. Helping them access DACA benefits and, in turn, expanded educational and job opportunities, particularly in regions with high numbers of undocumented youth, is crucial to achieving many philanthropic goals.

Although the program does not offer a path to legal status or citizenship, it provides tangible opportunities for young immigrants to participate more fully in our society and economy. It is also seen by many as a pivotal step toward broader reform measures in the years to come to address problems within our antiquated immigration system.

Foundations play a key role in supporting efforts that remove roadblocks and maximize the number of beneficiaries for this unprecedented program, including lack of quality legal services and the fees associated with the application. Funders with wide-ranging interests have a unique opportunity to seize the moment and help marginalized young immigrants gain a social, economic, and civic foothold in our society.

Potential Beneficiaries

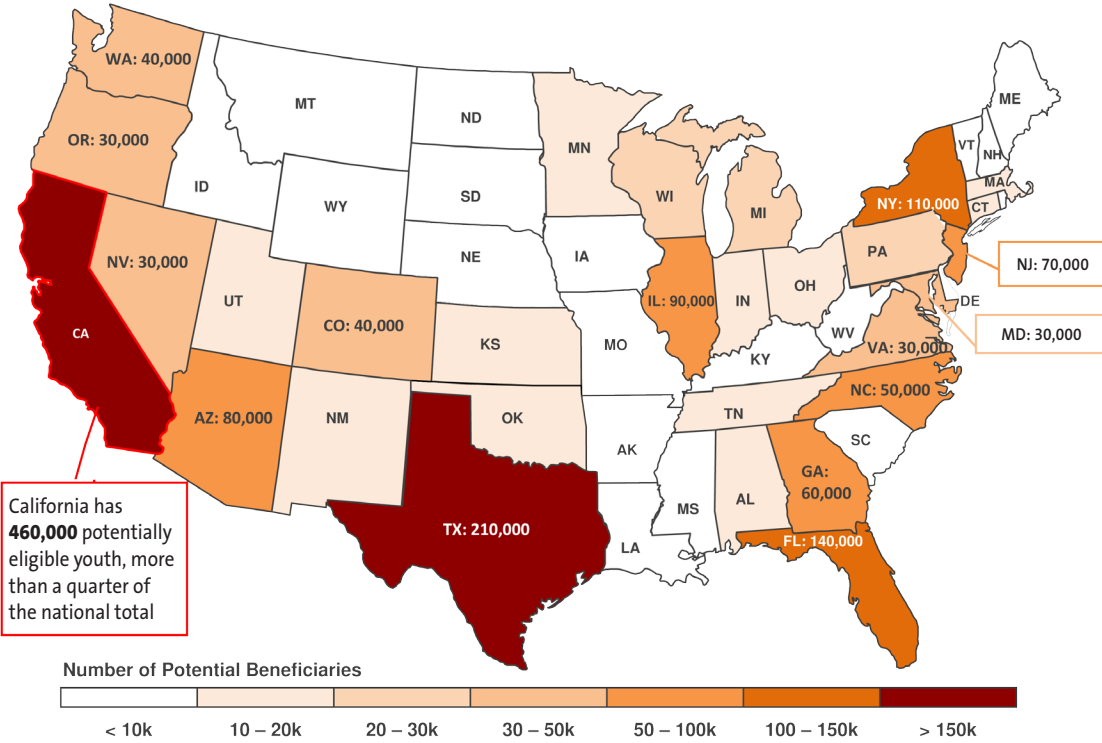
DACA is available to undocumented immigrants who meet the following criteria:

- ⊙ Arrived in the United States before the age of 16.
- ⊙ Younger than 31 years of age on June 15, 2012.
- ⊙ Lived in the U.S. continuously since June 15, 2007; present in the U.S. on June 15, 2012 and when request for DACA is submitted.
- ⊙ Graduated from high school, received a GED, or currently enrolled in school or GED program; or, honorably discharged from the U.S. military.
- ⊙ No more than two minor misdemeanors, no felonies or significant misdemeanors, and not a threat to national security or public safety.
- ⊙ Entered the United States without legal authorization or overstayed visa before June 15, 2012.
- ⊙ Pay \$465 for biometrics and work-authorization fees.



Funders have a unique opportunity to seize the moment and help marginalized young immigrants gain a social, economic, and civic foothold in our society.

Top States of Residence for Individuals Potentially Eligible for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals



California has **460,000** potentially eligible youth, more than a quarter of the national total

Source: Relief from Deportation: Demographic Profile of the DREAMers Potentially Eligible under the Deferred Action Policy, by Jeanne Batalova and Michelle Mittelstadt, Migration Policy Institute, August 2012.

72 percent of potential beneficiaries are 15 years of age and older and can apply immediately for DACA.

More than half (57 percent) of DACA-eligible children and young adults live in five states: California (460,000), Texas (210,000), Florida (140,000), New York (110,000), and Illinois (90,000).⁴

Nationwide, the highest share of potential DACA beneficiaries come from Mexico and Central America (74 percent), followed by South America and the Caribbean (11 percent). By country of origin, Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala account for the largest number of potential DACA beneficiaries with an estimated 1.17 million, just under 60,000, and 50,000 eligible individuals, respectively. Beyond Latin America, potential beneficiaries from India and Korea (approximately 30,000 for each country) represent the top five countries with the most DACA-eligible individuals.⁵

Currently, 72 percent (1.26 million) of potential beneficiaries are 15 years of age and older and can apply immediately for DACA. The remaining 28 percent (500,000) are under 15 years of age and will be eligible for DACA benefits when they reach the age requirement so long as the program remains in effect.⁶



A Vital Role for Grantmakers

DACA provides a unique opportunity for immigrant children and youth who have had to live in the shadows to become fuller members of our society. The implications—and opportunities—for philanthropy are significant and cut across multiple funding priority areas:

- ⊙ The chance to live and work legally in the United States has drawn tens of thousands of young immigrants to application workshops across the country, overwhelming already-stretched legal service providers, pro bono attorneys, and trained volunteers. The demand for application and legal assistance far exceeds current supply. Some community groups have reported that their workshops are booked nearly two months in advance. Increasing the availability of these workshops is critically needed.
- ⊙ DACA requires that potential beneficiaries have either graduated from high school, received their GED, or be currently enrolled in school or a GED program. An estimated 350,000 young immigrants could qualify for DACA if they re-enroll in high school or obtain their GED.⁷ DACA's education requirements are expected to result in significant numbers of youth returning to school, remaining enrolled at the secondary level, or pursuing their GED. Some may also elect to pursue post-secondary education or training in the future.
- ⊙ Children and youth granted DACA relief will have greater access to health and social services, and if they are employed, potentially access to employer-paid health insurance. Information and education are needed to help DACA beneficiaries understand these new resources and how to access them.
- ⊙ Having work permits, Social Security numbers, and in some cases driver's licenses (depending on the state) will provide DREAMers access to the formal economy for the very first time. Having likely only worked in the underground economy, they will need assistance to navigate this brave new world, understand their workplace rights, and gain access to educational, job training, and placement programs. Such assistance will help them improve their long-term job prospects, earning potential, and economic contributions to their families and our society.
- ⊙ In addition, Social Security cards and work authorization afford expanded access to financial institutions. As such, financial literacy and management classes will be vital to help DACA beneficiaries understand the perils of access to credit—from credit cards to various loan products—and avoid falling prey to predatory lending practices.
- ⊙ DACA beneficiaries can help address workforce shortages in various sectors of the economy, such as healthcare. In order for DREAMers to contribute in this regard, they will need access to financial aid, education and training opportunities, and reputable accreditation and degree-granting programs.

The demand for application and legal assistance far exceeds current supply. Some community groups have reported that their workshops are booked nearly two months in advance.



© The leadership of immigrant youth is widely credited for the creation of the DACA program. Since DACA's announcement, these young immigrants have been playing a crucial role in ensuring effective implementation, maximizing the number of applicants through outreach and application assistance, and engaging in ongoing organizing and advocacy efforts on a range of issues from immigrant to education rights. Funders have the opportunity to invest in their leadership development, organizing, and advocacy efforts—and their partnership with other communities—to bring about social change and shape debates on a range of policy issues.

© For foundations supporting citizenship, DACA provides the chance to test and leverage the impact of recent citizenship investments on the field's capacity to respond to this new policy directive. Many legal services providers working on citizenship issues are also playing an instrumental role on DACA.

Funding Opportunities

Rapid Response and Immediate Term

- © **Outreach and information** on eligibility requirements; possible fraud by unqualified and/or unscrupulous immigration consultants, notaries public, and attorneys; screening and application assistance by trusted providers; and other available community resources. Information on fraud prevention is especially urgent given the high level of interest in DACA and the limited availability of legal services.
 - © Churches, schools, traditional media, and social media all play a critical role in outreach efforts.
 - © Hard-to-reach populations require targeted outreach efforts; these include monolingual parents with children approaching the age of eligibility for DACA, Asians and Pacific Islanders, LGBT youth, and those living in rural communities and other areas with limited service infrastructure.
- © **Involvement of educators, schools, health clinics, and other institutions that work with immigrant youth.** All play an important role in helping immigrant youth secure documents needed to prove eligibility, as well as learn about relevant and reputable community resources. These institutions also play an important role with the longer-term integration process.
- © **Legal screening and application assistance** to help the full range of applicants, from those applying *pro se* (on one's own) to those with more complex cases, apply successfully for deferred action and work authorization. Ideally, assistance can be extended to those who turn out not to qualify for DACA but may be eligible for other forms of relief.



The leadership of immigrant youth is widely credited for the creation of the DACA program. Since DACA's announcement, these young immigrants have been playing a crucial role in ensuring effective implementation.

- ⊙ **Expansion of legal resources**, including (1) training and accreditation of lay immigration legal service providers;⁸ (2) recruitment and training of private volunteer attorneys, law students, law professors, and DREAMers themselves; and (3) the hiring of legal aid attorneys to help meet the exponential demand for legal services.
- ⊙ **Financial assistance** to defray the \$465 required fee for biometrics and work permit applications through scholarships and low-cost loans funded by private donations, foundation grants, and program-related investments (PRIs).
- ⊙ **Education services**, such as GED programs, that will help immigrant youth qualify for DACA.
- ⊙ **Public education and communications campaigns** to highlight the potential contributions of integrating immigrant youth into our society and counter criticisms such as the idea that these immigrant youth will take jobs from Americans.

Ongoing and Mid-Range Needs

- ⊙ **Access to education**, including assistance to help young immigrants pursue ongoing or additional education, avoid the pitfalls of for-profit schools, and seek academic opportunities that increase their employability.
- ⊙ **Scholarships and loan opportunities** to help young immigrants pursue advance education or training, particularly in fields where workforce shortages exist, such as health and allied care.
- ⊙ **Financial literacy services** to help DACA beneficiaries understand financial options, avoid falling prey to predatory lenders, effectively manage their personal finances, start their own businesses, and save for education and consumer purchases, e.g., cars and homes.
- ⊙ **Workforce integration**: Job training, placement, and information to help young immigrants succeed in the formal economy.
- ⊙ **Information on benefits**, e.g., health insurance, social services, and other programs, for which DACA beneficiaries are eligible.
- ⊙ **Advocacy for critical services and benefits**, including driver’s licenses, in-state tuition, eligibility for academic scholarships and loans, and health insurance coverage regardless of long-term/temporary immigration status, e.g., through Affordable Care Act, tax credits, Medicaid, and Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act.
- ⊙ **Creative uses of technology** for outreach, education, civic engagement, and advocacy.

DACA’s education requirements are expected to result in significant numbers of youth returning to school, remaining enrolled at the secondary level, or pursuing their GED.



Long-Term Issues

Although these are longer-term issues, funders should consider them at the outset as part of their overall DACA funding strategies.

- ⊙ **Engagement of young immigrant leaders** in organizing and advocacy efforts on a range of social issues from education to LGBT rights to immigration reform.
- ⊙ **Building capacity and networks** of organizations in areas with emerging or growing immigrant communities such as North Carolina and Georgia—as well as in areas with sizable immigrant populations but limited philanthropic resources such as Florida and Texas.
- ⊙ **Documentation and evaluation:** It is critical to track and assess lessons, models, and strategies to allow for course corrections, inform future funding, and improve program design and implementation. DACA provides the opportunity to test the field's capacity and, in particular, can inform the response to large-scale immigration reform.
- ⊙ **Advocacy and organizing for policies that promote immigrant integration:** Immigration, education, workforce, and healthcare are but a few general examples of such policy issues.

GCIR's Role and Philanthropic Responses to Date

(as of 9/1/12)

Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR) is playing a central role to help funders connect around DACA, coordinate and learn from one another's funding strategies, and leverage investments at the national, state, and local levels. Drawing from our experience in coordinating funding in the fields of citizenship and as part of the 2010 Census, our efforts to date include:

- ⊙ **Coordinating and informing national funding strategies:** GCIR is organizing biweekly conference calls to provide national funders a forum for sharing information and discussing strategies. We are also conducting background research; tracking investments to date, as well as developments in the field; and serving as a sounding board to funders developing their internal funding approach.
- ⊙ **Supporting regionally coordinated funding strategies:** California, Illinois, and New York are leading the way in establishing regional DACA funding collaboratives, and GCIR is working to help them coordinate and leverage their current and future investments.



*DACA's implications—
and opportunities—
for philanthropy
are significant
and cut across
multiple funding
priority areas.*

- © **Supporting targeted initiatives by our member foundations:** Unbound Philanthropy’s rapid-response fund to support application workshops is one example. Another is the Public Interest Projects’ [Fund for DREAMers](#), a scholarship fund to help defray the costs of DACA filing fees. GCIR is also working with an individual donor to establish revolving-loan funds to help cover the fees.

GCIR welcomes your inquiries about DACA, ways to develop your own funding strategy, and how to become involved in funding initiatives at the local, state, and national level. For more information, please contact GCIR Consultant Walter Barrientos at walter@gcir.org or 212.993.7229. Please direct questions related to funding in California to GCIR Director of Research and Programs Felecia Bartow at felecia@gcir.org or 707.303.0035.

¹ “DREAMers” refers to intended beneficiaries of the federal legislation first introduced in the U.S. Senate on August 1, 2001, the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act or the DREAM Act. This bill would provide conditional permanent residency and an eventual path to citizenship for certain undocumented youth. Although DACA benefits a narrower pool of undocumented youth than the proposed DREAM legislation, the term “DREAMers” is used interchangeably with DACA beneficiaries and undocumented youth in this document.

² For more information about the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, see:

http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/PolicyBrief_No3_Aug05.pdf.

³ Benefits under DACA include: relief from deportation for two years (renewable); work authorization; travel abroad for educational, employment, or humanitarian reasons; and, depending on the state, a driver’s license and in-state tuition.

⁴ Batalova, Jeanne and Michelle Mittelstadt. *Relief from Deportation: Demographic Profile of DREAMers Potentially Eligible Under the Deferred Action Policy*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2012. Web.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Batalova and Mittelstadt, 2012. Web.

⁸ The Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) within the Department of Justice provides accreditation that allows non-attorney advocates with a certain level of experience and knowledge of immigration law to provide legal advice and representation in immigration matters. Once fully accredited, an individual can provide legal advice and represent clients before the Department of Homeland Security, United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (which administers DACA), immigration courts, and the BIA. BIA-accredited representatives can only offer legal advice and services while working for a BIA-recognized nonprofit organization.