

FORFEITING THE TRILLION-DOLLAR DREAM

*The long-term, staggering human
and economic cost of ending DACA*

JUNE 2024



In 2012 President Barack Obama announced the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy. The policy allowed some Dreamers—undocumented individuals who came to the U.S. as children—to be temporarily protected from deportation and to work legally. Within a couple of years, more than 800,000 individuals—mostly individuals who were then high school students and college-aged young adults—were approved for DACA, with most renewing their DACA status every two years.

DACA has been one of the most successful immigration and integration policies of the last several decades. Being 31 years old, and living in the U.S. for 25 years, on average, DACA recipients have already contributed tens of billions of dollars to the U.S. economy while also paying tens of billions in federal, payroll, state, and local taxes. With DACA, Dreamers are teaching children, delivering lifesaving healthcare, and creating jobs for U.S. workers by leading homegrown American businesses. Many Dreamers have since gotten married, bought homes, had children, and have advanced in their careers.

From the start, DACA was intended to be a temporary fix, giving Congress enough time to pass a bipartisan legislative solution for Dreamers. More than a decade later, Congress has been unable to provide a pathway to citizenship for this population. Nevertheless, DACA has still proven to be life-changing, providing immigrant youth with opportunities to study, contribute to the U.S. economy through their careers, and ultimately build families of their own. As of 2024, most DACA recipients have been enrolled in the policy for a decade or longer.

Since 2017, however, the DACA policy has been volleyed back and forth in the courts and challenged at all levels, including at the Supreme Court. DACA will likely face a challenge in the Supreme Court again, potentially within the next year, based on legal steps of states such as Texas to persuade the courts to cease the policy. The reality is that DACA could end quite soon, throwing the futures of the hundreds of thousands younger adults and their families into further uncertainty, along with any hope for other DACA-eligible and younger Dreamers to access protections.

While DACA has remained in place for *current* DACA recipients during legal challenges, the courts have restricted it to benefiting mostly those who initially applied within the first five years of the policy, so those who did not apply during this time, or who only became eligible later, cannot get DACA today. This has effectively locked out hundreds of thousands of would-be DACA recipients from benefiting from the policy. And since the initial eligibility requirements have not been updated, like the required arrival date, hundreds of thousands of Dreamers who came to the U.S. after 2007 have no way to access this relief. As a result, more than 100,000 Dreamers graduating from high school every year will never be allowed to apply for DACA. Despite political differences on other immigration issues, a majority of lawmakers, along with the U.S. public, agree that upending the futures of Dreamers is morally wrong and economically foolish.

In response to these real threats to DACA, the Coalition for the American Dream gathered some of the country's most respected social scientists to quantify the costs of ending DACA—including for DACA recipients, other individuals who remain eligible for the policy, their families and their communities, and for the broader U.S. economy. **In pure economic terms, even though those eligible for DACA represent slightly more than a million people, the results of this report demonstrate the outsized impact they are having on their families and communities, to the tune of up to one trillion dollars over their working lifetimes, or equivalent to the annual GDP of Illinois.**

The report aims to provide a running tally of the economic costs of ending DACA while also lifting up the lived experiences of real-life DACA recipients. Economics aside, ending DACA would be devastating for the 500,000 or more remaining recipients and the nearly 1 million U.S. citizens who live with them. Their families rely on the DACA policy day after day to provide for them and to keep their families whole.

As this report shows, ending DACA, and the hope for a pathway to citizenship for other Dreamers, would be detrimental to our economy. It would upend industries and devastate families, creating new levels of poverty and denying these families the opportunity to have the American dream they've worked so hard to achieve. In wake of the legal threats, Congress still has an opportunity to do what is right and best for Dreamers and our economy.

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Overview

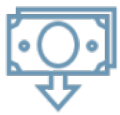
Ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy for undocumented individuals who came to the U.S. as children would be a disastrous and unnecessary calamity for recipients and their families. Also, the U.S. economy would suffer significantly, at local levels particularly, as hundreds of thousands of families face extreme disruption.

The dream and promise of this generation of DACA recipients has already begun, and has been ongoing for years—but most of it is yet to come. **Ending it would mean FORFEITING A TRILLION-DOLLAR DREAM**, when accounting for the wasted investments and squandered economic contributions in the last decade, as well as the future economic losses and costs that could result from ending DACA. The most significant and tangible impacts are highlighted below.



Profound disruptions for families:

- Nearly **1 million** U.S. citizen family members, including **90,000** spouses and **300,000** children of DACA recipients, could face potential separation from a loved one with DACA.
- An estimated **120,000** U.S. citizen children could be pushed into poverty.
- Some **118,000** children could have narrower access to healthcare with the loss of private health insurance of a DACA recipient parent.



Squandered economic investments in the DACA population:

- Some **\$8 billion** in business training and recruitment costs for current DACA employees could be lost.
- At least **\$63 billion** in past investment for K–12 education could be for naught.



Long-term future economic losses and costs:

- Up to **\$648 billion** in future economic losses are predicted.
- As much as **\$150 billion** in future revenue could be lost to state and local governments.
- A minimum of **\$30 billion** in lost business income from DACA-owned businesses could disappear.
- As much as **\$10 billion** in federal government costs could be incurred over the next three decades to support **120,000** U.S. citizen children pushed into poverty.
- More than **\$8 billion** in business retraining and recruitment costs to replace DACA employees could be required.



U.S. workforce and businesses impacted:

- About **440,000** DACA recipient workers could be lost from the U.S. workforce.
- As many as **168,000** U.S. jobs in DACA-owned businesses could be lost.

These are just some of the largest losses associated with ending DACA. Many more secondary-level impacts and past investments are not included in this list. **All together, we estimate that the full cost of this forfeited dream could reach one trillion dollars.**

It's clear—morally and economically—that ending DACA would have staggering costs to hundreds of thousands of individuals and their families, and to the entire U.S. economy, felt in urban centers to small towns across the nation. As the numbers in this report show, Congress must pass a legislative solution for DACA recipients and other undocumented individuals who came to the U.S. as children before the policy potentially ends. Otherwise, America will forfeit the amazing contributions DACA recipients are making to this trillion-dollar dream.



DACA recipients: **Then and now**

When the DACA policy began in 2012, DACA recipients were generally young adults, mostly enrolled in high school or in college or starting their careers. A total of 835,000 individuals have benefited from DACA since its inception.

Since the establishment of DACA, recipients have contributed an estimated **\$140 billion** to the U.S. economy in their spending power, in addition to their combined federal, payroll, state, and local taxes amounting to about **\$40 billion** dollars. This has allowed DACA recipients to spend money in their local economies, buying homes and cars, investing in their neighborhoods, and supporting community organizations that continue today and into the future. As an example, since most came as young children, state and local governments have already invested an estimated **\$63 billion** in K-12 public education for this population to prepare them for their future careers.



Once I got DACA, I was able to get an ID and a Social Security number. This helped me get a bank account and apply for jobs. I got my first job at a youth summer program. I've been saving up ever since then and just doing a lot on my own. I pay my own phone bill, I buy things for the house, I help my mom out with any bills that she needs help with, I buy things for my sister, and I try to send things back home."

Diane, immigrated at 9 years old from Jamaica.

Some DACA recipients from that initial group have left the U.S., did not renew their DACA, or found a pathway to adjust their status, but more than 500,000 DACA recipients remain. These individuals have grown up in the United States and are now building careers and establishing families in a country they've called home for decades.

On average, DACA recipients:

- **Are 31 years old;**
- **Have lived for 25 years in the U.S.**

They are highly educated:

- **96% have graduated from high school.**
- **49% have some college education.**



I applied as soon as [DACA] came out, I didn't wait for it for a minute... And once I got it, it was a big change in our life. First thing I did was to get my driver's license. I bought a car...I also started to apply to jobs that weren't possible before...I could use my degree and pursue the career I trained for. Having a job in your career was really a turning point."

Rohil, immigrated at 9 years old from Bangladesh

They are contributing significantly to the U.S. economy:

- **83% are in the labor force.**
- **22% own their home.**

They are building families:

- **31% are married.**
- **38% have children.**

DACA recipients, having lived most of their lives in the U.S., are virtually indistinguishable in many life metrics from their U.S. citizen peers. For example, the majority of both DACA recipients (87%) and U.S. citizens (85%) ages 25 to 34 participate in the U.S. labor force. More than half of both groups of similar ages—DACA recipients (54%) and U.S. citizens (69%)—have attained some college education. Additionally, both groups earn similar median annual incomes of around \$40,000 annually.



I got DACA in high school. It gave me more motivation. I'm like, 'Okay, I can actually become somebody in this country.' Everything started to change. I acquired my driver's license. I was in the system...I would have to pay \$500 every two years and a lawyer's fee. It was still worth it because at least then, I couldn't just be deported for the sake of it."

Raj, immigrated at 6 years old from Guyana.

Characteristics of DACA recipients and their families, by state

| State | Population | Average Age | Average Years in U.S. | % with High School Diploma | % with some college education | % in labor force | % own their home | % married | % have children | U.S. citizen children impacted | U.S. citizen spouses impacted |
|----------------|------------|-------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|-----------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| United States | 530,000 | 31 | 25 | 96% | 49% | 83% | 22% | 31% | 38% | 340,000 | 90,000 |
| Arizona | 20,000 | 31 | 26 | 97% | 43% | 81% | 34% | 35% | 45% | 21,000 | 5,000 |
| Arkansas | 4,000 | 30 | 24 | 93% | 59% | 93% | 12% | 17% | 38% | 1,000 | <1,000 |
| California | 150,000 | 31 | 25 | 97% | 53% | 85% | 15% | 28% | 35% | 77,000 | 25,000 |
| Colorado | 12,000 | 32 | 26 | 96% | 53% | 81% | 20% | 34% | 45% | 11,000 | 4,000 |
| Florida | 21,000 | 31 | 24 | 96% | 48% | 83% | 15% | 20% | 29% | 11,000 | 2,000 |
| Georgia | 17,000 | 28 | 23 | 91% | 31% | 81% | 31% | 25% | 34% | 10,000 | 2,000 |
| Illinois | 28,000 | 32 | 25 | 97% | 48% | 86% | 25% | 31% | 37% | 16,000 | 6,000 |
| Indiana | 7,000 | 27 | 24 | 90% | 40% | 83% | 33% | 28% | 52% | 3,000 | <1,000 |
| Kansas | 4,000 | 29 | 24 | 95% | 50% | 83% | 19% | 36% | 44% | 3,000 | <1,000 |
| Maryland | 7,000 | 32 | 24 | 95% | 38% | 88% | 20% | 35% | 51% | 3,000 | <1,000 |
| Massachusetts | 4,000 | 31 | 26 | 99% | 81% | 79% | 9% | 34% | 21% | 1,000 | <1,000 |
| Michigan | 4,000 | 29 | 26 | 98% | 59% | 71% | 22% | 30% | 24% | 1,000 | <1,000 |
| Minnesota | 4,000 | 29 | 23 | 90% | 68% | 91% | 11% | 21% | 32% | 2,000 | <1,000 |
| Nevada | 10,000 | 30 | 24 | 99% | 51% | 87% | 9% | 23% | 45% | 8,000 | 2,000 |
| New Jersey | 13,000 | 31 | 25 | 98% | 66% | 79% | 24% | 31% | 29% | 6,000 | 1,000 |
| New Mexico | 4,000 | 30 | 23 | 96% | 53% | 74% | 38% | 31% | 50% | 4,000 | <1,000 |
| New York | 21,000 | 32 | 26 | 96% | 43% | 88% | 7% | 28% | 23% | 5,000 | 3,000 |
| North Carolina | 20,000 | 30 | 25 | 92% | 36% | 83% | 33% | 32% | 50% | 13,000 | 2,000 |
| Oklahoma | 5,000 | 30 | 24 | 99% | 22% | 78% | 35% | 42% | 35% | 4,000 | 2,000 |
| Oregon | 8,000 | 31 | 24 | 99% | 47% | 90% | 14% | 29% | 33% | 6,000 | 1,000 |
| Pennsylvania | 4,000 | 31 | 27 | 91% | 66% | 87% | 34% | 55% | 44% | 4,000 | 1,000 |
| South Carolina | 5,000 | 32 | 25 | 97% | 49% | 73% | 28% | 51% | 52% | 4,000 | 1,000 |
| Tennessee | 6,000 | 29 | 23 | 98% | 48% | 77% | 22% | 32% | 29% | 4,000 | <1,000 |
| Texas | 88,000 | 30 | 24 | 95% | 47% | 76% | 29% | 38% | 38% | 67,000 | 17,000 |
| Utah | 7,000 | 29 | 25 | 98% | 42% | 87% | 29% | 32% | 35% | 10,000 | 2,000 |
| Virginia | 8,000 | 29 | 24 | 97% | 71% | 84% | 24% | 34% | 40% | 2,000 | 1,000 |
| Washington | 13,000 | 31 | 24 | 98% | 43% | 85% | 17% | 29% | 54% | 14,000 | 3,000 |
| Wisconsin | 5,000 | 30 | 25 | 97% | 55% | 74% | 49% | 40% | 53% | 5,000 | <1,000 |

Impacts of ending DACA, by state

| State | Lifetime income loss | Annual state fiscal loss | Lost DACA recipient workers | Lost U.S. jobs of DACA-owned businesses | Annual business income lost | Impacted U.S. citizen children in school | U.S. citizen children losing health insurance | U.S. citizen children pushed into poverty |
|----------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|---|---|
| United States | -\$234 billion | n/a | -440,000 | -168,000 | -\$1.3 billion | 233,000 | -118,000 | 120,000 |
| Arizona | -\$11.5 billion | -\$193 million | -22,000 | -13,000 | -\$215 million | 15,000 | -7,000 | 12,000 |
| Arkansas | -\$1.8 billion | -\$43 million | -4,000 | -3,000 | -\$12 million | <1,000 | -1,000 | 1,000 |
| California | -\$68.0 billion | -\$1.6 billion | -126,000 | -45,000 | -\$269 million | 49,000 | -33,000 | 31,000 |
| Colorado | -\$6.3 billion | -\$124 million | -13,000 | -3,000 | -\$27 million | 8,000 | -4,000 | 4,000 |
| Florida | -\$6.6 billion | -\$197 million | -15,000 | -6,000 | -\$72 million | 6,000 | -2,000 | 6,000 |
| Georgia | -\$7.4 billion | -\$160 million | -15,000 | -6,000 | -\$34 million | 8,000 | -4,000 | 3,000 |
| Illinois | -\$11.4 billion | -\$329 million | -25,000 | -6,000 | -\$37 million | 12,000 | -7,000 | 5,000 |
| Indiana | -\$2.7 billion | -\$97 million | -4,000 | -3,000 | -\$23 million | 2,000 | -1,000 | 1,000 |
| Kansas | -\$2.4 billion | -\$41 million | -5,000 | -1,000 | -\$15 million | 2,000 | -2,000 | <1,000 |
| Maryland | -\$2.2 billion | -\$63 million | -5,000 | -3,000 | -\$25 million | 2,000 | -1,000 | <1,000 |
| Massachusetts | -\$1.0 billion | -\$44 million | -2,000 | -1,000 | n/a | <1,000 | -1,000 | <1,000 |
| Michigan | -\$2.2 billion | -\$43 million | -3,000 | -1,000 | -\$16 million | <1,000 | -1,000 | <1,000 |
| Minnesota | -\$2.3 billion | -\$45 million | -6,000 | -1,000 | -\$29 million | 1,000 | -1,000 | 1,000 |
| Nevada | -\$6.3 billion | -\$88 million | -12,000 | -5,000 | -\$44 million | 5,000 | -2,000 | 4,000 |
| New Jersey | -\$4.6 billion | -\$128 million | -9,000 | -3,000 | -\$7 million | 5,000 | -3,000 | 1,000 |
| New Mexico | -\$2.1 billion | -\$31 million | -4,000 | -1,000 | n/a | 3,000 | -1,000 | <1,000 |
| New York | -\$7.7 billion | -\$239 million | -14,000 | -4,000 | -\$17 million | 3,000 | -3,000 | <1,000 |
| North Carolina | -\$5.8 billion | -\$210 million | -11,000 | -7,000 | -\$42 million | 9,000 | -3,000 | 5,000 |
| Oklahoma | -\$3.1 billion | -\$49 million | -6,000 | -2,000 | -\$10 million | <1,000 | -1,000 | <1,000 |
| Oregon | -\$4.5 billion | -\$83 million | -9,000 | -2,000 | -\$25 million | 4,000 | -1,000 | 3,000 |
| Pennsylvania | -\$2.0 billion | -\$55 million | -4,000 | -1,000 | n/a | 2,000 | -3,000 | 1,000 |
| South Carolina | -\$1.1 billion | -\$49 million | -3,000 | -1,000 | n/a | 3,000 | -1,000 | <1,000 |
| Tennessee | -\$1.9 billion | -\$66 million | -5,000 | -1,000 | -\$7 million | 3,000 | -1,000 | 2,000 |
| Texas | -\$37.0 billion | -\$782 million | -67,000 | -34,000 | -\$227 million | 45,000 | -16,000 | 17,000 |
| Utah | -\$5.0 billion | -\$73 million | -8,000 | -1,000 | -\$20 million | 7,000 | -6,000 | 3,000 |
| Virginia | -\$2.2 billion | -\$67 million | -4,000 | -1,000 | -\$7 million | 2,000 | -1,000 | <1,000 |
| Washington | -\$7.7 billion | -\$139 million | -14,000 | -4,000 | -\$92 million | 11,000 | -3,000 | 5,000 |
| Wisconsin | -\$1.9 billion | -\$69 million | -3,000 | -2,000 | -\$6 million | 4,000 | -4,000 | <1,000 |

Half a million families, including hundreds of thousands of U.S. citizen children, face severe financial and health risks



An estimated **500,000 American families** include at least one DACA recipient. They live with their parents, siblings, spouses, and children, including nearly **one million U.S. citizens**. Many of these family members rely on their DACA recipient family members for economic survival and continued ability to thrive.



It's hard to think about the future. At this point in my life, my entire family is relying on me. My mother is ill and my father is taking care of her...my sister and I both have DACA. Neither of us will be able to work without [DACA]. I don't want to think about how we will survive."

Sabrina, immigrated at 4 years old from Brazil.

Additionally, many DACA recipients now have their own families. Nearly one-third are married and more than one-third are parents of a U.S. citizen child, including:

- **170,000 married DACA recipients**, among whom 90,000 married to U.S. citizens;
- **200,000 DACA recipient parents**, with 300,000 U.S. citizen children of all ages, from preschoolers to teenagers.



My happiest memory ever was when I got the email saying I was approved for DACA. I just felt a sense of relief, like somebody untied my hands. I could finally move. I could finally offer my kids a better future, a better life. It was like a key to a door."

Nereyda, immigrated at 8 years old from Mexico.

If DACA were eliminated, **233,000 school-aged children of DACA recipients would be impacted**, including several thousand in some of the country's largest school districts:



4,000

IN PHOENIX'S PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS



4,000

IN CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS



3,000

IN LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



3,000

IN HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



2,000

IN NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



2,000

IN OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



1,000

IN MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BILL TO:
U.S. government

FOR:
Child poverty

COST:
\$10 billion

Up to **118,000 U.S. citizen children** could lose the private health insurance they now receive through their DACA recipient parents, directly endangering their physical and mental health. This would force additional costs on state and local governments to meet the healthcare needs of U.S. citizen children.

The majority (78%) of U.S. citizen children in DACA-recipient families live above the poverty line. But the loss of employment for one or two DACA parents could push an estimated **120,000 additional U.S. citizen children** into poverty. This could lead to at least **\$10 billion** in shelter, food, tax expenditure, and healthcare costs to the federal government during the next decade.

Hundreds of billions in economic losses over the next several decades



DACA recipients and their families contribute tens of billions of dollars to the U.S. economy each year. Stripping DACA recipients of their work authorization would have disastrous impacts on the U.S. economy, and, given the young age of the DACA workforce, would continue to harm the economy for decades to come.

Without legal work authorization through DACA, many undocumented young adults will likely find work in the informal economy, but far below their education and training, reducing their economic contributions. If DACA recipients were to stop working altogether, or if they and their families were ultimately forced to leave the U.S., the losses would be magnified substantially.

“ I started my first job thanks to my DACA. The uncertainty around [DACA] weighs on me and has me questioning my future...[My boss] told me, ‘Hey, look, I see when you applied using that DACA card. We are going to have to let you go when that expires.’ That stresses me out. I don’t really want to lose my job, have to quit school, and not be able to help my parents pay the bills. That’s where I am right now.”

Justin, immigrated as an infant with Bangladeshi parents.

BILL TO:

U.S. economy

FOR:

**Long-term
income losses**

COST:

\$648 billion

Ending DACA could shrink the U.S. economy by an estimated:

- **\$38 billion** in income from underemployed DACA recipients over their lifetimes (per-affected person loss of \$70,000 in lifetime income);
- **\$234 billion** if DACA recipients are no longer working over their lifetimes (per-affected person loss of \$430,000 in lifetime income);
- **\$295 billion** if DACA recipients *and* their spouses are no longer working over their lifetimes (per-affected person loss of \$543,000 over their lifetimes);
- **\$648 billion** if all DACA-eligible individuals *and* their spouses were no longer working over their lifetimes (per-affected person loss of \$561,000 over their lifetimes).

The economic losses would be felt most significantly in California (\$68 billion alone for nonworking DACA recipients), Texas (\$37 billion), Illinois (\$11 billion), and Arizona (\$11 billion).



When you look at the people who do have DACA...It's like, "Come on man, you have this whole group of people that you can hone and use in your workforce and you're holding us idle." That's what it feels like at times. We're just idle. We're waiting for someone to give us a green light. I feel like that's just the energy that's present right now. Everybody's holding their breath for the next step."

Sam, immigrated as an infant from Mexico.

Prohibiting DACA recipients from working would have an especially harmful impact on the economic output of critical industries during the next three decades, **including estimated losses of:**



-\$32 billion

IN HEALTHCARE



-\$28 billion

IN MANUFACTURING



-\$28 billion

IN RETAIL AND
WHOLESALE TRADE



-\$26 billion

IN CONSTRUCTION



-\$25 billion

IN BUSINESS SERVICES



-\$21 billion

IN LEISURE AND
HOSPITALITY SERVICES



-\$13 billion

IN FINANCE AND REAL
ESTATE SERVICES



-\$12 billion

IN TRANSPORTATION AND
UTILITIES



-\$11 billion

IN EDUCATION



All of us [DACA recipients] have jobs, and the only reason that we have a job is because we have DACA. And we have decent jobs. We have put our school skills, our college skills, into our jobs."

Angela, immigrated at 7 years old from Mexico.

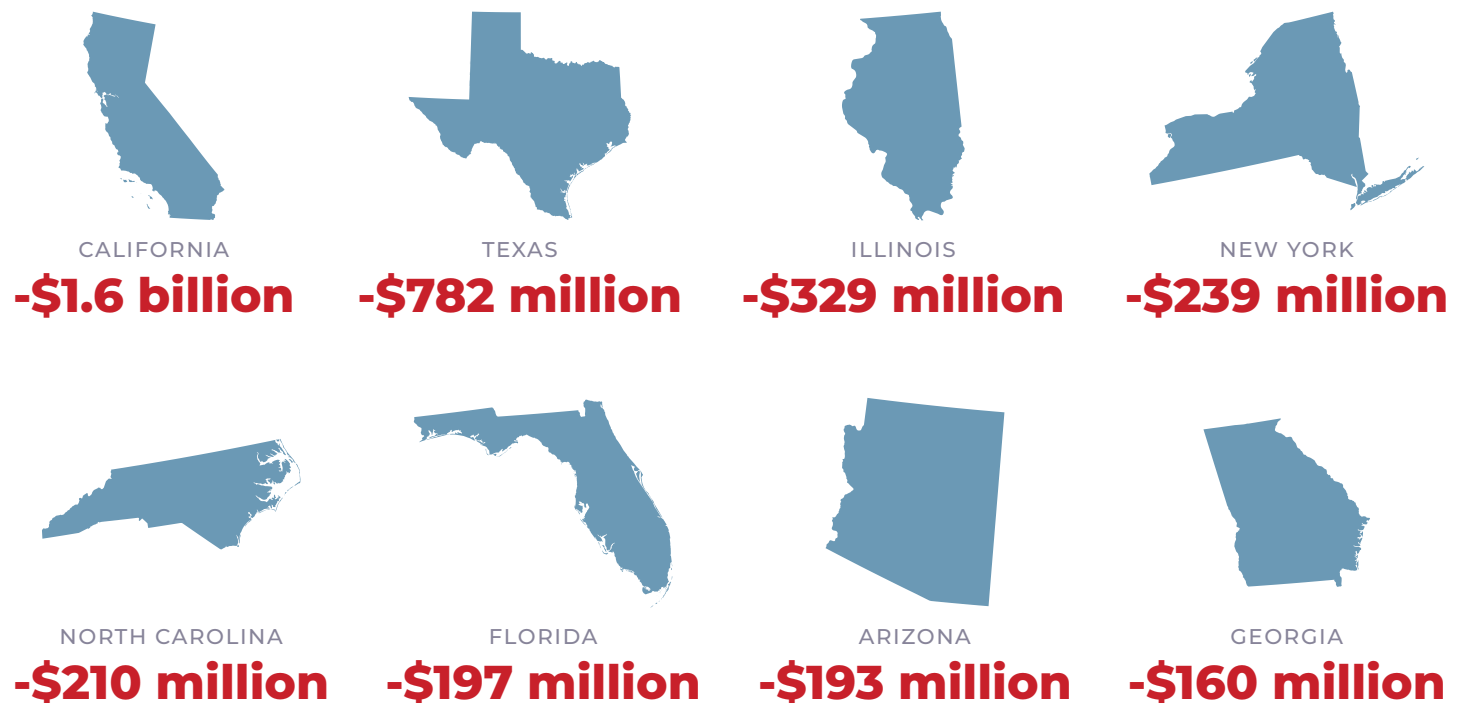
Billions in fiscal losses to state and local governments



Some opponents of DACA have repeated the falsehood that DACA recipients, as undocumented immigrants, are a net fiscal cost to state and local governments. This is simply not true.

In fact, with work authorization, DACA recipients are a net fiscal *gain* to state and local governments each year, paying more in property, income, local, and sales taxes than costs incurred on their behalf by the states and localities.

If DACA ends, some of the highest, annual losses in state and local government revenue, beyond expenses incurred for DACA recipients, would happen in California, Texas, Illinois, and New York, as well as other states with a high number of DACA recipients:





With DACA, I was able to obtain a New York State driver's license, get my own car, open a bank account and apply for health insurance...You know, it just helped me a lot. I don't fear being deported, I feel safe having DACA."

Juan, immigrated at 2 years old from Mexico.

BILL TO:

U.S. state and local governments

FOR:

Fiscal losses

COST:

\$150 billion

No state in our analysis experiences a net fiscal loss *with* work authorizations for DACA recipients, meaning that work authorization for DACA recipients is clearly a benefit for all localities in which they work. Stripping DACA recipients of their ability to work, pay taxes, and participate in local economies would eliminate their tremendous contributions, at a minimum of \$5 billion annually, and as much as **\$150 billion** over the next three decades.



Before DACA, I didn't want to think about my future. What future? Once I got it, I could open a bank account. I could work legally. I decided to switch my major to serving people and working with people with mental illness. Having opportunities kind of pushed me to think bigger and go further."

Jun-seo, immigrated at 13 years old from South Korea.

Hundreds of thousands of workers forced out of an already shorthanded labor force



BILL TO:

U.S. businesses

FOR:

Recruitment and retraining costs

COST:

\$8 billion

If DACA ended, and work authorizations were not renewed, this would mean **440,000 workers** could be forced out of the U.S. workforce over a period of two years or face underemployment by shifting to different industries or lower-paying jobs. Beyond just the sheer number of lost workers, the economy would also lose cultural knowledge and bilingualism in their workplaces that cannot be as readily replaced.

Every occupational field would be affected, but health, education, and STEM occupations would be hit most acutely; these occupational fields are already experiencing historic labor shortages, and would have significant difficulty in finding new workers to replace DACA recipients.

With the equivalent of six to nine months of wages in recruitment and retraining costs to fill all DACA recipient positions, *if* replacements could even be found in these labor-short industries, businesses could incur more than **\$8 billion** in additional costs, with a similar past loss on investment in recruiting and training those DACA recipients in the first place.



I think about it and I'm just like 'What if I lose [DACA]? What am I going to do here?' My brother keeps on saying 'Oh, let's go to Canada. I'm a computer engineer, we can try to find a job there.' And I was like 'But that's like giving up my entire life away, because I grew up American, basically.' And to move to another country, that's so hard for me to think of living in another country that's not the U.S."

Patricia, immigrated at 3 years old from Ecuador.



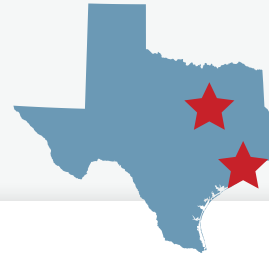
Up to **37,000 healthcare personnel across the country could be lost**, resulting in the loss of more than a billion patient appointments, such as doctor visits, with these healthcare providers in the decades ahead. Health professional losses would particularly be felt in major cities in California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois:



-12,000 jobs

IN CALIFORNIA

-4,000 jobs in the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim area



-5,000 jobs

IN TEXAS

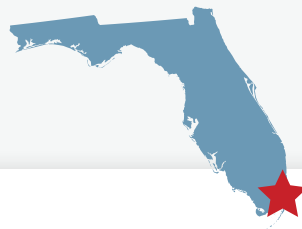
-1,000 jobs in the Houston area
-800 jobs in the Dallas-Fort Worth area



-1,000 jobs

IN NEW YORK

-500 jobs in the New York City area



-2,000 jobs

IN FLORIDA

-500 jobs in the Miami area



-1,000 jobs

IN ILLINOIS

-500 jobs in the Chicago area



Up to **17,000 STEM professionals across the country could be lost**, including thousands each in California, Texas, Arizona, and New York.



-7,000 jobs

IN CALIFORNIA

-3,000 jobs in the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim area

-2,000 jobs in the San Jose area

-1,000 jobs in the San Francisco-Oakland area

-500 jobs in the San Diego area



-2,000 jobs

IN TEXAS

-500 jobs in the Dallas-Fort Worth area



-1,000 jobs

IN ARIZONA

-500 jobs in the Phoenix area



-1,000 jobs

IN NEW YORK

-500 jobs in the New York City area



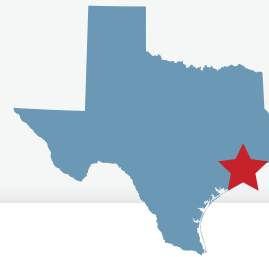
Up to **17,000 educators across the country could be lost, impacting more than 250,000 students in classes across the country**, and up to 7 million students in the decades ahead. Educator losses would particularly be felt in major school districts in California, Texas, Illinois, New York, and Florida.



-5,000 jobs

IN CALIFORNIA

-200 jobs in the Los Angeles Unified School District



-2,000 jobs

IN TEXAS

-200 jobs in the Houston Independent School District



-1,200 jobs

IN ILLINOIS

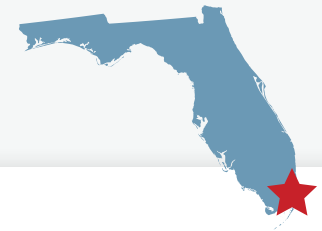
-900 jobs in Chicago public schools



-600 jobs

IN NEW YORK

-400 jobs in New York City public schools



-400 jobs

IN FLORIDA

-200 jobs in the Miami-Dade public schools



Getting DACA, the first time and even now normalized my life. I don't have to worry about the fear of being deported. It helps me to focus more on what I want to do with my life. I currently work, so I go to school full time and then I work on weekends, so it allows me to support myself more."

Jodi, immigrated at 6 years old from Jamaica.

Billions in lost business income, impacting thousands of U.S. workers employed by DACA recipients



DACA recipients, like immigrants on the whole, are disproportionately active entrepreneurs, starting small businesses across all kinds of industries.



In high school, when I was applying for colleges, I was sending my applications and thinking, ‘What can I do? Can I work any job that I studied?’ But then that’s when DACA came out. All of my friends were so happy for me. They were like, ‘Oh you’re finally going to be able to do what you like.’”

Yolanda, immigrated at 9 years old from Mexico.

BILL TO:

U.S. economy

FOR:

Lost business income

COST:

\$30 billion

35,000 DACA recipients are self-employed, including:

- **8,000** in construction;
- **5,000** in business services;
- **4,000** in services.

Forcing DACA recipients to close their businesses in light of their potential deportation could mean a minimum of **\$30 billion** in lost business income in the decades ahead, as well as the loss of up to **168,000 U.S. jobs** provided by DACA-owned businesses, including:



**-42,000
U.S. jobs**

IN BUSINESS SERVICES



**-27,000
U.S. jobs**

IN CONSTRUCTION



**-21,000
U.S. jobs**

IN TRANSPORTATION
AND UTILITIES



**-20,000
U.S. jobs**

IN MANUFACTURING



**-15,000
U.S. jobs**

IN WHOLESALE AND
RETAIL SALES



**-13,000
U.S. jobs**

IN LEISURE AND
HOSPITALITY SERVICES

Job losses from DACA recipients losing their businesses would be felt nationwide, but particularly in states such as:

- **45,000 U.S. jobs** in California;
- **34,000 U.S. jobs** in Texas;
- **13,000 U.S. jobs** in Arizona.



My mom told me about DACA and said, ‘we are going to do it right now for you. You’re going to get a work permit, a Social Security number, and you’re going to go to school, because you’re going to be something great in the future.’ That changed everything.”

Sonia, immigrated as an infant from Mexico.

METHODOLOGY

Demographic estimates for the current population of DACA recipients, including their characteristics (age, migration, education, labor force participation, family composition), are drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) accessed from [IPUMS](#), with age and years in the U.S. upwardly adjusted to reflect 2024. The estimates employ the [immigration status assignment methodology](#) of FWD.us. Population weights in the ACS were adjusted to account for the most recent estimates nationally and by state as of the end of calendar 2023, as [reported by USCIS](#). Unless otherwise noted, city areas are considered metropolitan statistical areas.

A similar assignment methodology for identifying DACA recipients in previous years of the ACS allowed for the calculation of their economic contributions to the economy through their total income as well as taxes paid to all government levels, per the economic methods used in this [recent FWD.us report](#) (for 2012 through 2022), plus additionally estimated economic and tax contributions for 2023. Educational investments of K-12 education is based on the number of current DACA recipients multiplied by 12 years (average age of arrival was age 6) at [roughly \\$10,000](#) annual government cost per student prior to 2012.

DACA families at risk estimates are also based on the 2022 ACS, using household and family relations variables. City boundaries that closely match school district boundaries are used for estimating the number of school-age children of DACA recipients. Using IPUMS' variable for poverty, the resulting poverty level for families through the loss of a DACA parent is reverse engineered, identifying the number of children who would now be pushed into poverty below the 100% poverty line. The combined, long-term cost for the next decade by the federal government is based on [studies showing](#) that the federal government spends, on average, \$10,000 per child in poverty, multiplied by 10 for a decade lifetime representing most children of DACA recipients.

For projected workforce impacts, the combined, long-term number of patients served by the loss of DACA healthcare professionals is based on [studies](#) that estimate, conservatively, at least a 1,000 patient interactions annually, multiplied by 30 for lifetime working-age years. Similarly, the combined, long-term number of students served by the loss of DACA educators is based on studies [estimating](#) roughly 15 students in a typical classroom, all over the next 30 years.

Demographic estimates were prepared by Phillip Connor, Senior Demographer and Immigration Fellows Director at FWD.us.

Projected income loss estimates employ the same DACA assignments in the 2022 ACS. Controlling for several demographic factors (age, state of residence, gender, education), the average difference in total annual income (earnings and business income) for different DACA scenarios was calculated: (1) underemployment of DACA recipients compared with employment and wage levels of undocumented immigrants without protections, (2) total unemployment of DACA recipients, (3) total unemployment of DACA recipients and their spouses, and (4) total unemployment of DACA-eligible individuals and their spouses. Using standard economic techniques, these annual estimates were projected forward for the working lifetimes of DACA recipients and corresponding family members. Since DACA recipients have only begun their careers, most would have more than three additional decades of employment in the U.S. labor market. Long-term economic contributions allowed for likely increases in their wages from career growth and additional educational attainment, particularly for the youngest of DACA individuals. This estimation approach is commonly used among economists when estimating lifetime earnings. Estimates are in 2022 dollars and are adjusted by inflation as they are at constant 2022 prices.

Projected income estimates were calculated by Francesc Ortega, Professor of Economics at City University of New York (CUNY).

Annual state and local fiscal estimates rely on calculated state and local tax rates by state (including income, sales, property, and other taxes) as prepared by the [Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy](#) and applied to FWD.us' DACA assignments in the ACS. The expense side of fiscal contributions is based on the [Census of Governments 2021 Annual Survey of State and Local Government Finances](#). The methodology used to calculate the current, net fiscal loss if DACA recipients no longer lived in these states, researchers employed a similar approach taken by the [National Academies' report](#) on the economic and fiscal consequences of immigration. Public education costs for dependents of DACA parents are not applied in fiscal estimates in this report; however, in most states, the current fiscal balance, with work authorizations, is positive even when including their children's public education. The only exceptions, with resulting fiscal costs when including DACA recipient dependent children, are: Arizona (\$12 million), North Carolina (\$34 million), South Carolina (\$11 million), Utah (\$11 million), and Washington (\$47 million). Researchers had sufficient data to compile fiscal estimates for 28 states: AZ, AR, CA, CO, FL, GA, IL, IN, KS, MD, MA, MI, MN, NV, NJ, NM, NY, NC, OK, OR, PA, SC, TN, TX, UT, VA, WA, and WI. The lifetime estimate is simply a multiplication of available state estimates multiplied by 30 years. Net fiscal impact can vary year to year based on revenue and expenditures, all according to age and education; consequently, this is considered a rough lifetime estimate.

Fiscal impact estimates were calculated by Kevin Shih, Associate Professor of Economics at City University of New York (CUNY).

Business impacts are based on self-employed DACA recipients identified in the ACS, with the next decade's business income estimates reflecting the annual difference between job earnings and total income, so presumably business income, multiplied by 30 for the next three decades. The annual business estimates originate from the same income loss data listed earlier, but without earnings based on employment. Estimates for U.S. jobs are based on the average number of paid employees for self-employed immigrants in the March 2022-2023-2024 Current Population Surveys and applied to self-employed DACA recipients in the ACS by industry.

Business impact estimates were prepared by Phillip Connor, Senior Demographer and Immigration Fellows Director at FWD.us, in consultation with Francesc Ortega, Professor of Economics at City University of New York (CUNY).

Quotes of DACA recipients are part of an extensive mixed-methods research project of undocumented immigrants enrolled in higher education institutions throughout New York City. The research was funded by the William T. Grant Foundation and Russell Sage Foundation. A more complete analysis of findings from the study can be found in Amy Hsin and Sofya Apketar's book, *Beyond Dreamers: School, Work and Identity among Diverse Undocumented New Yorkers*, which will be published by the Russell Sage Foundation. To protect the confidentiality and anonymity of those interviewed, pseudonyms are used and any identifying information was not included. (One exception is Nerayda's quote, which was drawn from the FWD.us storybank of DACA recipients).

Quotes were provided by Amy Hsin, Professor of Sociology at City University of New York (CUNY).

The trillion-dollar estimate is meant to illustrate the loss of DACA-related individuals in their income contributions to the U.S. economy (past and future) due to the removal of work authorization and protection from deportation of DACA recipients, as well as those eligible for DACA, and their spouses. In advancing the potential of DACA recipients as well as those eligible for DACA, the trillion estimate is meant to capture the economic dream for these individuals and the U.S. overall rather than represent a specific and precise estimate. Some listed costs are not internally consistent with DACA recipients remaining or leaving the U.S. and could impact the overall estimate. Some economic estimates impact different DACA-related populations (recipients, those eligible for the policy, spouses), and are not consistently expressed throughout the report. Also, the loss estimates are for different time periods (decade, lifetime, several decades). Moreover, there is the potential for double counting: for example, tax revenue losses can be considered the reshuffling of dollars from individuals to governments, and the educational investments into the population are implicitly included in the lifetime income losses. At the same time, however, some secondary costs to DACA ending such as spin-off business losses, travel or childcare costs for families, or the investments made by several states in the postsecondary education for some DACA recipients, are not included in this report. Consequently, it is possible that the trillion-dollar estimate is actually conservative, especially given that the lifetime income loss (the bulk of the potential economic cost) uses conservative scenarios and assumes completion of careers by age 65.