



## *The White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders*

### **FACT SHEET: AAPI and Undocumented? Invest In Your Future**

About 1.5 million undocumented individuals of Asian descent currently live in the shadows.<sup>1</sup> Many are young people who, because of their immigration status, are unable to realize their full potential.

*"They are Americans in their heart, in their minds, in every single way but one: on paper. They were brought to this country by their parents – sometimes even as infants – and often have no idea that they're undocumented until they apply for a job or a driver's license, or a college scholarship. Put yourself in their shoes. Imagine you've done everything right your entire life – studied hard, worked hard, maybe even graduated at the top of your class – only to suddenly face the threat of deportation to a country that you know nothing about, with a language that you may not even speak."*

*–President Barack Obama, June 15, 2012*

#### **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)**

On June 15, 2012, the Obama Administration announced that the Department of Homeland Security would establish Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). The 2012 DACA policy allows certain undocumented individuals who came to the United States as children to seek temporary relief from removal as a matter of prosecutorial discretion on a case-by-case basis and, if provided, an opportunity to apply for employment authorization.



Estimates indicate that more than 130,000 undocumented individuals of Asian descent may be able to request consideration of DACA.<sup>2</sup> Most live in large states like California, New York, and Texas, but many also live in states like Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina. Koreans, Filipinos, Chinese, Indians, and Vietnamese account for the majority of those who may be eligible under the 2012 DACA policy. Additionally, many from the Pacific to East Asia are also potential DACA recipients.

<sup>1</sup> Analysis of United States Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata (PUMS). For methodology used to estimate undocumented population, see Robert Warren. "Democratizing Data about Unauthorized Residents in the United States: Estimates and Public-Use Data, 2010 to 2013." *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 2, no. 4 (2014).

<sup>2</sup> Analysis of United States Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata (PUMS). For methodology used to estimate DACA-eligible population, see Robert Warren. "Democratizing Data about Unauthorized Residents in the United States: Estimates and Public-Use Data, 2010 to 2013." *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 2, no. 4 (2014).

## Impact of DACA

Surveys of DACA recipients have shown that many are finding jobs with better pay, providing the ability to help their families financially; finding jobs that better fit their education and training; and pursuing additional educational opportunities.<sup>3</sup> This also helps raise wages and create opportunities for native-born workers in the United States.<sup>4</sup>

## DACA CHECKLIST

- WERE UNDER THE AGE OF 31 AS OF JUNE 15, 2012
- CAME TO THE UNITED STATES BEFORE REACHING 16TH BIRTHDAY
- CONTINUOUSLY RESIDED IN THE U.S. SINCE JUNE 15, 2007, UP UNTIL THE PRESENT TIME
- WERE PHYSICALLY PRESENT IN THE U.S. ON JUNE 15, 2012 AND AT THE TIME OF MAKING YOUR REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED ACTION WITH USCIS
- HAD NO LAWFUL STATUS ON JUNE 15, 2012
- ARE CURRENTLY IN SCHOOL, HAVE GRADUATED OR OBTAINED CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION FROM HIGH SCHOOL, HAVE OBTAINED A GENERAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT (GED) CERTIFICATE, OR ARE AN HONORABLY DISCHARGED VETERAN OF THE COAST GUARD OR ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES
- HAVE NOT BEEN CONVICTED OF A FELONY, SIGNIFICANT MISDEMEANOR, OR THREE OR MORE OTHER MISDEMEANORS, AND DO NOT OTHERWISE POSE A THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY OR PUBLIC SAFETY

SOURCE: USCIS

*"Before DACA, I was just surviving, moving from job to job, paycheck to paycheck. Now, I'm working at one of the largest companies in the world and I'm able to take care of my family. After DACA, my mindset is no longer just about surviving, but now I'm focused on thriving"*

– Sagar Patagundi, Louisville, KY (DACA Recipient)



*"We see DACAmented young people as talented, highly motivated individuals that strengthen the American workforce. DACA gives these individuals an opportunity to show what they can do, and as an employer we are excited to see just how far they can go."*

– Cathy Cha, San Francisco, CA (Employer)

*"Prior to DACA, I was uncertain about my future in this country, but had high hopes of one day becoming a doctor. However, medical school often seemed unattainable, especially when my immigration status made even volunteering in the clinical setting a challenge. Because of*

*DACA, I was able to work in clinical research and I'm now a first year medical student. DACA opened doors for me to attend one of the finest medical schools in the country."*

– Marcela Zhou, Los Angeles, CA (DACA Recipient)

## How to Request DACA

For more information about DACA, as well as how to file a request for consideration of DACA, visit U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services: [www.uscis.gov/data](http://www.uscis.gov/data).

Visit [www.whitehouse.gov/aapi](http://www.whitehouse.gov/aapi) to learn more about the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, which is housed in the U.S. Department of Education.

<sup>3</sup>Tom K. Wong, Kelly K. Richter, Ignacia Rodriguez, and Phillip E. Wolgin. "Results from a Nationwide Survey of DACA Recipients Illustrate the Program's Impact," July 9, 2015. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2015/07/09/117054/results-from-a-nationwide-survey-of-daca-recipients-illustrate-the-programs-impact/>. Roberto G. Gonzales et al. "DACA at Year Three: Challenges and Opportunities in Accessing Higher Education and Employment," February 25, 2016. <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/special-reports/DACA-at-Year-Three-Challenges-and-Opportunities>.

<sup>4</sup>White House Council of Economic Advisors. "The Economic Effects of Administrative Action on Immigration." November 2014. [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/cea\\_2014\\_economic\\_effects\\_of\\_immigration\\_executive\\_action.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/cea_2014_economic_effects_of_immigration_executive_action.pdf).