

USCCB DACA Messaging Guidance

What is the Difference Between Dreamers and DACA Recipients?

- Dreamers are undocumented individuals who were brought to the U.S. as children by their parents. DACA recipients are Dreamers who applied for temporary relief from deportation and for the right to work under the DACA program and have been approved for the DACA program.
- Currently, there are around 700,000 individuals who have DACA and overall the Dreamer population is around 1.8 million. The Dreamer population is larger as these individuals were either a few years too old or too young for the DACA program (when it began enrollment in 2012 and ended enrolling new people in 2017) but they were also brought to the US by their parents as children. USCCB is advocating for Dreamers.
- If the DACA program is cancelled, all DACA recipients and Dreamers in general will face a huge amount of uncertainty and they may face the possibility of being deported and separated from their families and communities.

COVID-19 Presents Additional Threats to DACA Recipients

- In a time of heightened uncertainty amidst the coronavirus pandemic, 700,000 DACA recipients across the country are facing extreme, unprecedented challenges - far beyond their current day-to-day hardships. DACA recipients across the country - nearly 90% of whom are currently employed - face the loss of their jobs, wages, and healthcare as the crisis continues. Many of their parents and loved ones may lack legal status and perform difficult, dangerous labor even in normal economic times; without any safety net, they face serious harm with the loss of a job and any source of income and are more likely to lack access to healthcare.
- Thousands of DACA recipients are the primary breadwinners for their families and children; when their jobs are threatened, their entire family and broader community can be at risk.

Dreamers Are Working on the Frontlines of the COVID-19 Response

- **There are an estimated 27,000 DACA recipients who are working as healthcare providers, including doctors, nurses and paramedics.** According to the [New American Economy](#), 62,600 DACA-eligible individuals are currently employed in the healthcare industry nationally.
- According to the [Center for Migration Studies](#):
 - **21,100 DACA holders work in transportation and warehousing**, including 6,400 in warehousing and storage and 5,100 in truck transportation.

- **32,800 are employed in retail trade**, including 12,400 in supermarkets, 3,200 in pharmacies, and 5,200 in merchandise stores such as warehouse clubs.
 - **14,500 work in the manufacturing sector**, which includes food and beverage, pharmaceutical, cleaning products, and medical equipment manufacturing.
 - **13,300 work in support and waste management services**, including 10,100 who work in services to buildings and dwellings and 1,000 in waste management.
 - **76,600 have been working in restaurants and other food services**. While some restaurants continue to operate on a limited basis, many providing “curbside” service, it is difficult to estimate the number of DACA recipients who continue to toil in this sector.
- These figures indicate that DACA recipients are deeply embedded in our society and are now in the front lines of the labor force responding to pressing needs.

We Should Protect Dreamers and Advocate for Legislative Protection

- Dreamers essentially grew up in the U.S. and many of them remember little, if anything, about where they were born. Many have never even visited their country of birth following their arrival here. They are American in everything but immigration status. These young people attend colleges and universities with our own children or siblings, pay taxes, serve honorably in our nation’s armed services and reserves, and worship with us in our parishes.
- **DACA recipients are among the most “extremely vetted” immigrants in the United States.** The government knows they have not previously committed any felonies, knows where they live and work, how much they pay in taxes, and know if they leave the country and return. **DACA recipients contribute to the economy, over \$42 billion annually in GDP ([according to American Action Forum](#)) and pay for the DACA program.**
- Many native-born Americans are second or third generation immigrants, and many others are first generation immigrants just like DACA recipients. For many Americans whose family has lived in the United States for generations, our last name is a reminder of our immigrant heritage.

What does the Church and Catholic teaching say about Dreamers?

- The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has long supported Dreamers, and we continue to urge Congress to work with all deliberate speed towards a bipartisan legislative solution that includes a path to citizenship for these youth.
- As Catholics, we are taught to care for the stranger and the vulnerable: “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me.” (Mt 25:35). These are our obligations as a Christian people – to care for our neighbor. Let’s remember and live by the teaching in Leviticus 19:34: *The foreigner living with you must be treated as one of your native born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt.*