

Discouraging and Denying Renewals: Supplemental Narratives¹

October 2, 2020

I. INTRODUCTION

Shortly after the release of the July 28, 2020 memorandum on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), TheDream.US and the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration conducted a survey of current DACA recipients to assess the impact of the memorandum. On September 29, 2020, TheDream.US and the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration (Presidents' Alliance) released a report, [*Discouraging and Denying Renewals: An Assessment on the Impact of the July 2020 DHS Memorandum on DACA*](#), providing statistics taken from the survey of 1,760 active DACA recipients. The following supplementary appendix serves to highlight select narrative responses taken from that same survey. For the full methodology and background, please reference [the report](#).

II. SELECT NARRATIVE RESPONSES²

1. Affordability

- I will most definitely NOT be able to renew every year, simply put, because I won't be able to afford it... I guess in the end, it's a numbers game... Money vs. innocent lives, all to be part of the land of free. What a shame.
- Having to come up with the money to renew my work permit yearly will cause great stress mostly when I am attending grad school and trying to pay that off.
- I am worried to not be able to work and provide for my family financially. We are at risk of not being able to afford the fees every year and could lead us to deportation.
- Having to renew my DACA yearly is most definitely going to become a hassle for me. I live with my single mother and I already help her pay bills. Consequently, this new policy is definitely going to affect me and become a barrier.
- I am worried I won't have enough money to apply yearly since my sister and I are both DACA.
- My brother and I both have DACA, it is a burden every two years to make up the \$495 for both of us. With the new policy, we are worried that we will struggle to afford to renew our DACA. Our DACA expires within the next year but having to renew it earlier than usual will be difficult, especially since we need the money to pay for expenses.
- I feel like under the new policy they are making it harder for DACA recipients who may be underprivileged or whose circumstances financially may not allow them to renew their DACA every year. If the new policy reduced the length to a year then the cost should have also been cut by half.

¹ This document serves as a supplemental resource to the report *Discouraging and Denying Renewals: An Assessment on the Impact of the July 2020 DHS Memorandum on DACA*, available at <https://www.presidentsalliance.org/new-report-new-administration-policy-will-reduce-number-of-daca-recipients-through-higher-cost-delays-and-denials/>.

² Narrative responses winnowed to avoid listing similar responses. Responses edited for grammar and clarity.

- I am worried about having to adjust budgets for things like bills, food, car, etc.
- DACA being shortened to only one year is unfair. The price for two years seemed high at a normal rate, however having to pay \$400+ every year is just downright ridiculous and unfair for families who are already struggling. It also doesn't help that we have too many other things that we have to pay for, including renewal of licenses and more.
- Fortunately, I am barely able to keep up with the fees needed to renew my DACA status. I just feel much sorrow and pain for many of the other DREAMers (and their families) who are not as fortunate when it comes to having to basically pay double the required fees to maintain status.

2. *Education*

- I am worried this will prevent me from taking the NCLEX-RN exam for my license and that I won't be able to further my education because of high tuition.
- I'm worried this will affect my chances of getting funding for graduate school.
- I worry that grad schools will not want to accept me if at the time of applications my DACA is not renewed.
- I have so many expenses for college as it is, and this could significantly affect my education. I am only trying to get my college degree and it is hard enough as it is, now I will probably have to work more to pay off this annual fee to simply be able to be here.
- I won't be able to apply to post grad programs. I won't be able to qualify for the educational loans needed to support my studies.
- If my current application does not go through, it will expire before I graduate and therefore affect my undergraduate degree.
- I am worried that I might lose my scholarship if my DACA lapses.
- I'm worried because I just stopped working so I can start school full time. I'm afraid that I might have to pause or prolong my educational career so I can continue working to be able to save for attorney fees and the DACA fee.
- I'm not sure how I will renew my DACA every year if I'm away from home. I attend a university in another state so I believe that it will be hard to show up for appointments if it's during school.
- As a trilingual International Relations student, I am scared I will not use my studies to their full potential because of these policies.
- My brother will not be able to apply to DACA as a first-time applicant. This means that although he qualifies, he cannot work or drive to help pursue his higher education as a high school graduate.

3. *Employment*

- I am in my fourth year of university, and I am very worried I will not be able to get a job after all my hard work.
- [If] we have to pay \$500 a year for a one-year EAD [employment authorization document], our employers may not deem it worthwhile to invest in us as employees because of the short period we have an EAD before we have to renew again.

- I am worried about employment overall, because despite me not having many issues, there's always that look [from] employers when they hire you due to the risk of DACA being taken away, or not being able to renew.
- I wouldn't be able to work as a RN with an expired EAD [employment authorization document].
- I'm worried my new card won't come in time and during the wait period I won't have protection. I'm worried I will lose my job because I can't get an extension on my current work permit, which expires soon.
- My employer will terminate me the moment my EAD [employment authorization document] expires.
- I am worried I will no longer be able to work, which will prevent me from paying my student loans.

4. *Mental Health*

- There's just so much uncertainty.
- I'm afraid of the mental impact it will take on me and my family. The fact that every year we learn about a close family member abroad who has passed away while we are stuck here and unable to visit. Going through this so often makes me immune to grief and disappointment.
- I'm just terrified. I wish that I could visit my elders.
- I'm just scared of the unknown.
- I've lived in the United States since I was one year old. I grew up in the United States, not knowing about my legal status, and it wasn't until I was older that I learned of my situation. It's been a very hard road to follow, and with the policy change my future is once again unsure. I'm just tired of having an unsure future.
- I worry that on top of going to grad school and working full time, I will have to be on edge and always thinking in a year's time mark.

5. *Current Delays with USCIS*

- I applied three months back [for renewal] and they sent me a [letter] saying that they have received it. But ever since, I have not received my biometrics appointment, and because of that my employment card will expire three days from now. It sucks and I don't know what to do.
- I'm worried that USCIS has not gotten back to me regarding my last application. I applied a year before the expiration date because I was scared due to the Supreme Court's decision in June. However, even though USCIS has sent a receipt of my application, they have not gotten back to me since June, even though I have called, USCIS said their system was down and to call again. I'm really frustrated.
- I am worried that my DACA won't be approved since I filed it before 150 days, prior to the recent changes.

6. *Advance Parole*

- It is an increasing amount of money that I can barely afford. Not only that but my dream of going to a third world country as a nurse to help just got harder.

- I would like to study internationally. I am in college right now but there are some programs that offer traveling and working on the field to better my understanding in marine biology, but I can no longer travel even for higher educational purposes.
- I won't be able to travel with medical missions abroad, which is a program offered at my university.
- The new advance parole does not account for deceased family members, and that is an issue.
- I am not able to see my family again because of the old and new advanced parole policy. I have not seen them for 17 years.
- I am currently an undergraduate and I was not aware that I could have applied for a study abroad program during the old policy. Now under the new one that option has been taken away for the foreseeable future.
- I will not be able to travel for educational programs such as Engineers without Borders.
- I'm worried that if I leave the country I won't be able to come back in, even with the parole.

7. *Family*

- I am worried that I will have trouble financially providing for my family, covering medical costs, and having to pay extremely high costs of the renewal.
- I am worried I won't be able to pay. Back at home my father is the only one that sustains our family.
- I am worried that I won't be able to financially support myself and I will have to rely on my parents, who are already struggling to pay their own bills, for support.
- DACA policy changes will dramatically affect what my parents have sacrificed by coming to this country.
- I have a dream to purchase a house. I have been working hard for the last three years in school and work. I got a preapproval letter from a bank, but as a DACA recipient I'm not sure if I will get the house. This new policy will affect my school, my life, my family, and, what is most important, every single Dreamer here in the USA.

8. *Other*

- I am troubled by the fact that the renewal only grants a one year period. I feel as if the current administration holds us in contempt for only being non-natives.
- I'm worried I will accumulate unlawful presence.
- I am worried that they will eventually take DACA away.
- This will make it harder for me to apply for a green card.
- My scholarship for college is in jeopardy. I have three children born here. I do not want to leave.
- I am afraid to travel within the U.S.
- This new one year DACA renewal is truly a nuisance, especially for students that are unemployed. The yearly fee is too high, it was very difficult to renew with the two year term, imagine how much more difficult it will be to do the renewal process every year.

This means I will also have to keep updating my drivers license and updating my school forms, etc. every year!

- I am worried about more uncalled for expenses through the form of annual driver's license renewal fees. As well as a complete distraction from school annually to put in a lot of time to filling out all the sheets, as well as supporting documents, and putting together the fee for the application, passport pictures, etc.
- I am worried that renewal of DACA documentation will become even more limited than it already is, and I worry for the thousands of families that will be affected by this change in terms of financial and career-oriented reasons.
- I believe we should be afforded the same opportunities as citizens for traveling abroad regardless of our status. I should be able to visit family in my home country without anyone being ill. Additionally, many of us go to out of state schools, and returning home to renew during the school year may hinder our academic performance.
- I was brought to the United States at the age of one. I have had DACA for two years already and this will be my third renewal. I believe that we should get something better for our status, such as residency or citizenship. This policy is going to affect many immigrants, especially right now with the pandemic. A lot of people lost their jobs due to the pandemic and now that they won't be able to afford and renew their DACA, it brings me tears. Currently I am in college and think it might affect my studies as well.
- My story is mostly like all of my fellow DACA recipients. In my life I am grateful to have DACA and to build my mariachi music career. I've been performing mariachi music for eleven years and counting. I've played in Universal CityWalk and Disney's Epcot! I feel like these new laws do affect me. I pay a substantial amount of money just to renew, \$495 plus filing fees! Now I'm scared that I will have the money for it, but I have to sacrifice lots of things and work more. Harder for us during a pandemic [now] that a lot of people are losing their jobs. My job is affected by this pandemic, and this new law beats us up and we have to give more money, it's not fair at all! Now [I am] starting my college education and I want to build my business administration career, [but it] is harder for me to apply every year and having to do it 150 days before! It's not fair.