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HOW DACA IS IMPACTING THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO ARE NOW DACAMENTED: Preliminary Findings from the National UnDACAmented Research Project

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As Congress continues to debate immigration reform, August 15th marks the one-year anniversary of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. While not granting a path to legalization and citizenship, DACA provides an opportunity for a segment of the undocumented immigrant population to remain in the country without fear of deportation, allows them to apply for work permits, and increases their opportunities for economic and social incorporation. This research summary presents preliminary findings on the impact that DACA has had on some of the young people who have received it.

We find that the DACA recipients we surveyed experienced a pronounced increase in economic opportunities, such as getting a new job, opening their first bank account, and obtaining their first credit card. Many seek further social integration beyond DACA. In fact, almost all DACA recipients indicate that they would apply for U.S. citizenship if given the opportunity. Our study also shows that DACA recipients are often fearful that family members and friends could be deported at any time. Overall, our research indicates that although DACA opens up some economic opportunities for young aspiring Americans, it does not address the constant threat of deportation still facing those closest to them, including mothers, fathers, and siblings.

The findings from this research summary come from the National UnDACAmented Research Project (NURP), a longitudinal mixed-methods study of the impact of DACA on the educational, labor market, health, and civic engagement outcomes of young adult immigrants. The analysis presented here draws from a national survey of 1,402 young adults ages 18-31 who were approved for DACA through June 2013. While DACA eligibility is open to minors, our study focuses on young adult DACA recipients.

DACA contributes to the economic and social incorporation of young adult immigrants. Since receiving DACA, young adult immigrants have become more integrated into the nation's economic institutions. Approximately 61% of DACA recipients surveyed have obtained a new job since receiving DACA. Meanwhile, over half have opened their first bank account, and 38% have obtained their first credit card. Additionally, 61% have obtained a driver's license, which

has likely widened educational, employment, and other options for these young adult immigrants {Figure 1}.

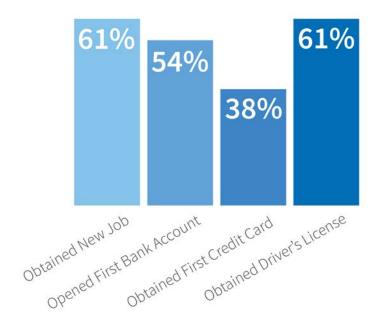


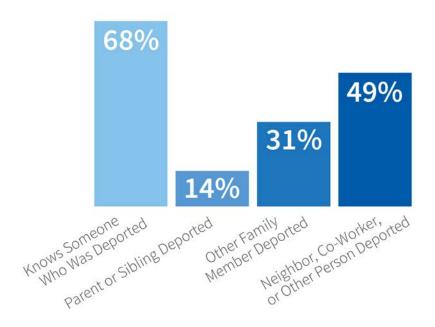
Figure 1: Economic and Social Incorporation Since Receiving DACA

DACA recipients would likely become U.S. citizens if given the opportunity. Ninety-four percent of survey respondents indicated that they would apply for citizenship if ever eligible. This finding suggests that DACA recipients seek to be further integrated into U.S. society.

Although DACA recipients are experiencing its benefits, they continue to encounter hardships related to the blocked pathway to legalization of their families and communities. Over the last several years, enforcement efforts have heightened levels of anxiety in immigrant communities and torn apart families. Survey results indicate that 49% of respondents worry "all of the time" or "most of the time" that friends and family members will be deported.

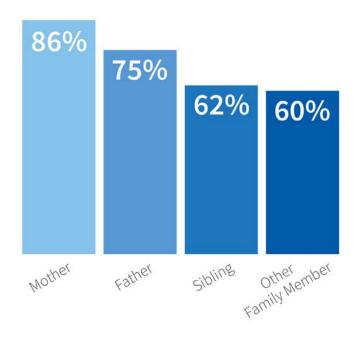
Nearly 2/3 of DACA recipients personally know someone who has been deported. Approximately 14% of DACA recipients in this study have experienced the deportation of a parent or sibling. These young adults are likely to have suffered significant stress and family hardships as a result of the forced departure of a close family member. Notably, nearly another third (31%) of respondents report that other family members have been deported. Almost half report that they know a neighbor, coworker, friend, or other acquaintance who has been deported {Figure 2}.

Figure 2: DACA Recipients' Connections to Deported Individuals



Comprehensive immigration reform that provides a pathway to legalization could benefit close family members of most DACA recipients. Approximately 86% of DACA recipients reported that their mother could potentially benefit from comprehensive immigration reform. Meanwhile, 74% said their fathers could benefit, and 62% said their siblings could benefit from such a change in federal immigration policy {Figure 3}.

Figure 3: Family Members Potentially Impacted by Comprehensive Immigration Reform



Description of Study Participants. NURP Survey respondents are slightly more diverse in terms of national origin when compared to all DACA recipients to date. Although nearly two-thirds come from Mexico, DACA recipients

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¹ These results are based on a subsample of 850 survey participants.

from other parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as Asia and the Pacific Islands, are well-represented in the sample. Survey respondents average 23 years of age, and women comprise 59% of the sample.



The NURP web survey was collected in collaboration with community-based, educational, and campus organizations that serve immigrant populations. To date the survey contains DACA recipients from 38 states. The survey results presented here do not rely on probability sampling and cannot be used to develop population estimates for all DACA recipients. However, findings provide important insights into how some DACA recipients are benefiting from temporary documentation, but continue to face challenges.

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