

Immigration: Talking Points and Messaging

Anti-immigrant rhetoric was the first thing uttered by the man who would later become the President of the United States and the Chief Executor of the law. But despite the real fear presented by President Trump's words and Executive Orders on immigration, Millennials are leading a powerful grassroots resistance to his immigration policy.

Immigrant rights advocacy and organizing has been largely moved and led by young people. This is especially the case for those in the undocumented immigrants' rights movement. The motivation for many of these activists is that they are — or they have friends or family that are — themselves undocumented. For them, policies like the DACA program and those seen in "sanctuary" jurisdictions have allowed for their safety and the pursuit of their American Dreams.

Fast Facts: Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, program was established through an Executive Order on immigration enforcement priorities laid out under President Barack Obama in 2012. It provides temporary relief from deportation and a two-year work permit to qualifying young adults ages 15 to 30 who were brought to the U.S. illegally before 2007 and before they were 16 years of age.
- DACA is not a pathway to citizenship, and is not an end-all-be-all to the issue of comprehensive immigration reform.
- Ending DACA would jeopardize the futures of the current DACA recipients and their potential economic benefits to the U.S.

Fast Facts: Sanctuary Jurisdictions

- Jurisdictions (cities, counties, and college campuses) that adopt "sanctuary" policies choose to not assist federal immigration enforcement officials in holding undocumented individuals in custody beyond their release date on the basis of requested immigration detainers from Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE).
- These jurisdictions don't commit their law enforcement to hand those in custody over to ICE.

- College campuses that choose to be “sanctuary” communities do not allow ICE to conduct immigration raids on their premises without a warrant.
- Crime is statistically significantly lower in sanctuary jurisdictions compared to non-sanctuary jurisdictions.
- Undocumented immigrants are less likely to engage in criminal behavior compared to the born-citizen population.
- Local and campus police departments generally do not want to engage in civil immigration law. Police fear honoring ICE detainer requests would create distrust between themselves and immigrant communities. Police need the community to feel comfortable reporting crimes to them.
- Immigration enforcement by federal agents is not barred from sanctuary jurisdictions; local law enforcement just doesn’t assist them.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, is a program that brings value to American communities. More than 741,000 undocumented young people have received DACA and were granted a reprieve from deportation and a renewable work permit.

DACA has allowed these individuals to go to college, graduate, and get jobs in their chosen fields. Studies and surveys conducted in 2016 show that DACA recipients are doing quite well, and are making positive cultural and economic contributions.

DACA has a Positive Impact on Education

Overall, 46% of DACA recipients report that they are currently in school. Of these individuals, a full 83% are also working, which is perhaps reflective of the limited options for in-state tuition and financial aid that are available to DACA recipients.

Despite the challenge of facing higher tuition costs in 32 states and having fewer financial aid options, [DACA recipients are still pursuing their education](#).

- 4% are pursuing a high school or GED diploma.
- 20% are pursuing an associate degree.
- 4% are pursuing a trade, technical, or vocational certificate.
- 70% are pursuing a bachelor’s degree or higher.

DACA has a Positive Impact on the Economy and the Labor Force

- After receiving work authorization through DACA, 87% of recipients reported they are [currently employed in the labor force](#), with another 8% not working because they were enrolled in school.
- 63% of recipients reported [moving to a job with better pay](#); 49% moved to a job that “better fits [their] education and training”; and 48% moved to a job with better working conditions.¹
- 6% of DACA recipients have [started their own businesses](#). This rate of business starts is higher than that of both the American public as a whole—at 3.1%—and the entire immigrant population—at 3.6%.¹
- With their official work authorization, DACA recipients have been able to [advance their hourly wages](#) (up 40%), advance in work promotions, and gain more financial independence for themselves while better supporting their families. This allows them to make larger purchases and contribute more in tax dollars and economic activity.¹
- Ending the program would lead to a calculated \$433.4 billion GDP [loss over the next decade](#).²

Conclusively, the DACA program has benefited American society, and should be expected to do so holistically, if continued. By allowing “DACA-mented” individuals to pursue their education and career goals without the looming threat of deportation, the program has increased the educated, upwardly mobile populations in the states and cities where DACA recipients reside. They, like the locales where they reside, have benefited by keeping the promise of the American Dream for those brought to the country for that exact purpose.

Sanctuary Jurisdictions

Sanctuary jurisdictions are not the “havens of crime and subversion of law” that President Trump would wish for them to be in order to justify the brutal crackdowns on immigrant communities. To the contrary: cities, counties, and college campuses that adopt “sanctuary” policies have only increased the cooperation between local police and immigrant communities, helping to combat crime in those communities and overall.

Not having to live in fear of being detained by ICE after a traffic stop or revealing one’s immigration status when reporting a crime or incident relieves the immigrant community — undocumented or not. Furthermore, communities of color aren’t treated like second-class citizens because they aren’t personally compelled to constantly carry proof of citizenship or legal status out of fear of being profiled as “illegals” by local police. This community trust of police is linked more with safer communities that trend upward in economic benefits because immigrants feel free to live their lives and engage with police when they are needed.

- U.S. Census data between 1980 and 2010 shows that, among men ages 18 to 49, immigrants were [20% to 50% as likely to be incarcerated](#) as those born in the United States.
- There are, on average, 35.5 [fewer crimes committed](#) per 10,000 people in sanctuary jurisdictions compared to non-sanctuary jurisdictions.
- Median household annual income is, on average, \$4,353 [higher in sanctuary counties](#) compared to non-sanctuary jurisdictions.
- The poverty rate is 2.3 percent lower, on average, [in sanctuary counties](#) compared to non-sanctuary jurisdictions.
- Unemployment is, on average, 1.1 percent [lower in sanctuary counties](#) compared to non-sanctuary jurisdictions.⁴
- Active participation and mobility in the labor force reduces poverty in communities — citizen and immigrant alike — and lessens the inclination to be involved in criminal activity. This open participation is spurred by not living in fear of detention and deportation based on legal status alone.
- State and local law enforcement should not be involved in the enforcement of civil immigration laws since such involvement would likely create apprehension in both legal and undocumented immigrant communities in the degree they report criminal activity or assist police in criminal investigations.
 1. University campuses and local police departments at the city and county levels have largely come out against engaging in federal immigration law enforcement.
 2. Community trust in police is needed to reduce street and domestic crimes in undocumented and at-large communities.
 3. PD's believe that honoring ICE detainer requests in the jails and creating a system where a normal police stop can lead to deportation scares immigrant communities from interacting with them — making their job harder.
 4. Undocumented immigrant communities should not be a class of silent victims. Communities need to be able to work with police to report crime knowing they will not be detained because they cannot present legal ID.
 5. If communities are afraid to engage with police, then their victimization by street crime, fraud, and domestic abuse — committed by citizens or non-citizens — [would increase because such crimes would go unreported](#). It also eliminates the potential for assistance from immigrants in solving crimes or preventing future terroristic acts.