



BTC Brief

BUDGET & TAX CENTER

December 2017

ENJOY READING
THESE REPORTS?

Please consider
making a donation
to support the
Budget & Tax Center at
www.ncjustice.org

MEDIA CONTACT:

ALEXANDRA F. SIROTA
919/861-1468
alexandra@ncjustice.org

BUDGET & TAX CENTER

a project of the

north carolina

JUSTICE CENTER

P.O. Box 28068

Raleigh, NC 27611-8068

www.ncjustice.org

DACA and North Carolina's Workforce

By ALEXANDRA F. SIROTA, DIRECTOR

Congress has just a few days left this month to enact legislation that would address the immigration status of at least 1 million immigrants who arrived in this country as children after President Trump announced in September his plans to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Failure to act will mean that beginning on March 6, 2018, 915 people on average will fall out of DACA status each day.¹

Recently released data from the Migration Policy Institute provides additional insight into the specific impact to industries in North Carolina of the failure to find a legislative solution for young immigrants. Inaction in the effort to identify a pathway for young immigrants to achieve legal status to work, learn and participate fully in communities will cause well-documented economic harm to the growth, revenue and earnings in the country and North Carolina.²

Beyond the harm to business and the economy, the lived experience for tens of thousands of young people in North Carolina of losing status and the connection to opportunities in the state they call home will ripple through families and communities.

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy was initially introduced through an Executive Order in 2012 by President Obama to address the needs of some undocumented immigrants who had arrived to the United States as minors – a subpopulation within the undocumented immigrant community. DACA provides temporary protection from deportation and work authorization (applicants must apply for renewal after two years), and has led to an increase in employment opportunities and participation in higher education among many beneficiaries.³

DACA Population Contributes to the State's Labor Force

Young people with DACA, also known as DREAMers, in North Carolina are working and going to school. In North Carolina, 28 percent of DREAMers

¹ Zong, Jie, Ariel G. Ruiz Soto, Jeanne Batalova, Julia Gelatt, and Randy Capps, November 2017. A Profile of Current DACA Recipients by Education, Industry, and Occupation. Migration Policy Institute: Washington, DC.

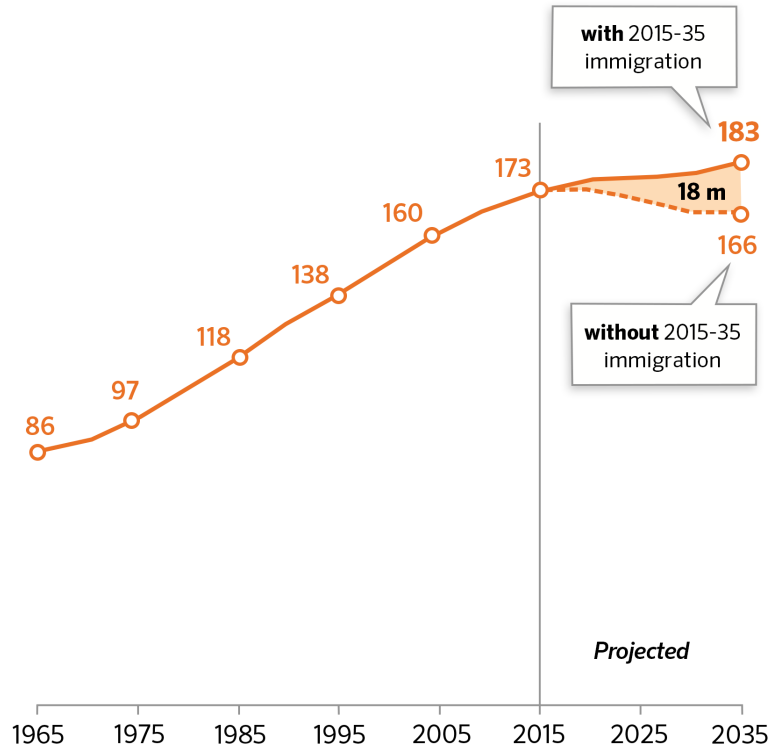
² Crouse, Victoria, August 2017.

³ Wong, T. K., A. S. Garcia, M. Abrajano, D. Fitzgerald, K. Ramakrishnan, and S. Le. *Undocumented No More: A Nationwide Analysis of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA*. Rep. Washington D.C.: Center for American Progress, 2013. Print.

are enrolled in high school, while 12 percent are in post-secondary institutions. These enrollment levels are higher than the national average for DREAMers in high school and lower than the national average for DREAMers in post-secondary. This difference could

Without future immigrants, working-age population in U.S. would decrease by 2035

Working-age population (25-64), in millions



Note: Numbers for 2015 onward are projections.
Source: Pew Research Center estimates for 1965-2015 based on adjusted census data; Pew Research Center projections for 2015-2035

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

in part be attributed to the lack of tuition equity for young people with DACA status in North Carolina that would remove a barrier to post-secondary education. More than half (53 percent) of DREAMers are employed. Of that 53 percent, 12 percent are also going to school.

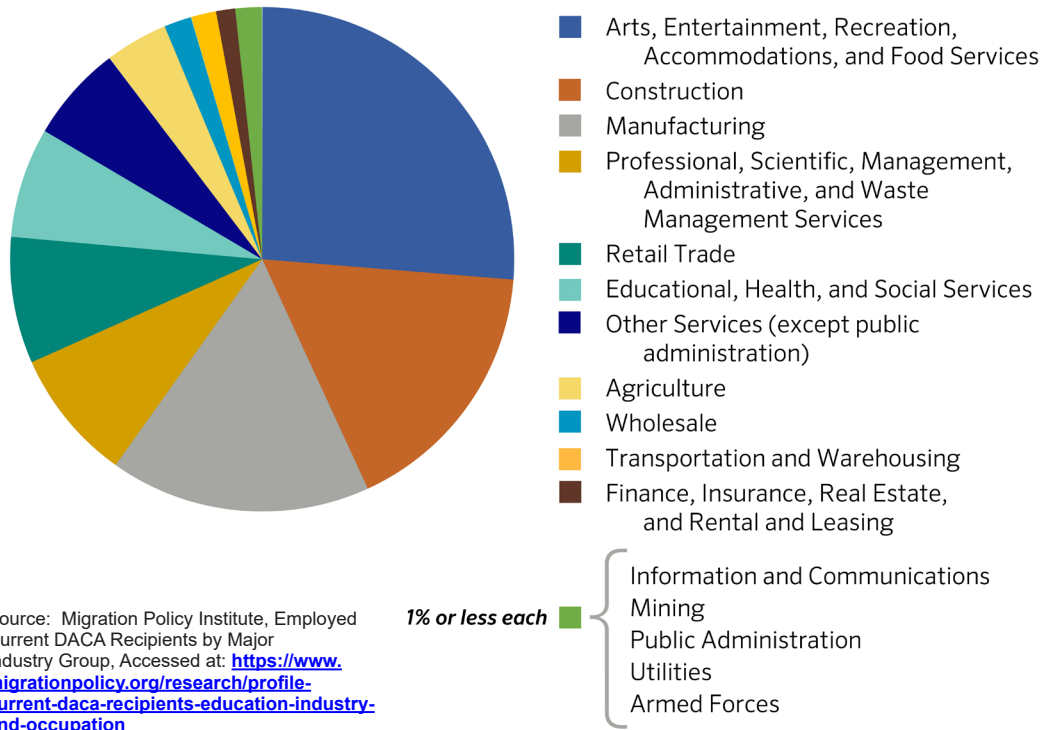
Immigrants and children of immigrants are making a contribution to the growth of the labor force and in turn the economy. Young immigrants are an increasingly important part of the workforce in North Carolina, particularly in many communities where the native-born population is aging or declining.⁴ Recent analysis by the Pew Research Center found that the country’s working age-population would decline by 2035 absent projected immigration, both legal and unauthorized.⁵

High levels of labor force participation from immigrants and the opportunities to build skills to match employers’

needs and pursue entrepreneurial endeavors can strengthen the economy for everyone in our state.⁶ Providing immigrants who arrive here as children with status to work and study will integrate them into the country’s economic engine and help boost the wages of everyone. First, increasing the wages of DREAMers means more consumer demand and more jobs. Second, helping DREAMers to access jobs in the formal economy means employers are less able to depress wages across the board by preying on the vulnerability of undocumented workers.

4 Johnson, James H. and Stephen J. Arnold, April 2014. Demographic and Economic Impacts of International Migration to North Carolina. Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise: UNC Chapel Hill, NC. Accessed at: <http://www.kenan-flagler.unc.edu/~media/Files/kenaninstitute/ImmigrantEconomicImpact.pdf>
5 Passel, Jeffrey, Pew Research Center. Accessed at: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/03/08/immigration-projected-to-drive-growth-in-u-s-working-age-population-through-at-least-2035/>
6 McHugh, Patrick, June 2015. Smart Choices in an Era of Migration. BTC Report: NC Justice Center, Raleigh, NC. Accessed at: <http://www.ncjustice.org/?q=budget-and-tax/btc-report-smart-choices-era-migration>

FIGURE 1. DREAMers in NC are concentrated in industries driving the economic recovery



Source: Migration Policy Institute, Employed Current DACA Recipients by Major Industry Group, Accessed at: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/profile-current-daca-recipients-education-industry-and-occupation>

DACA Population Working in Growth Industries in North Carolina

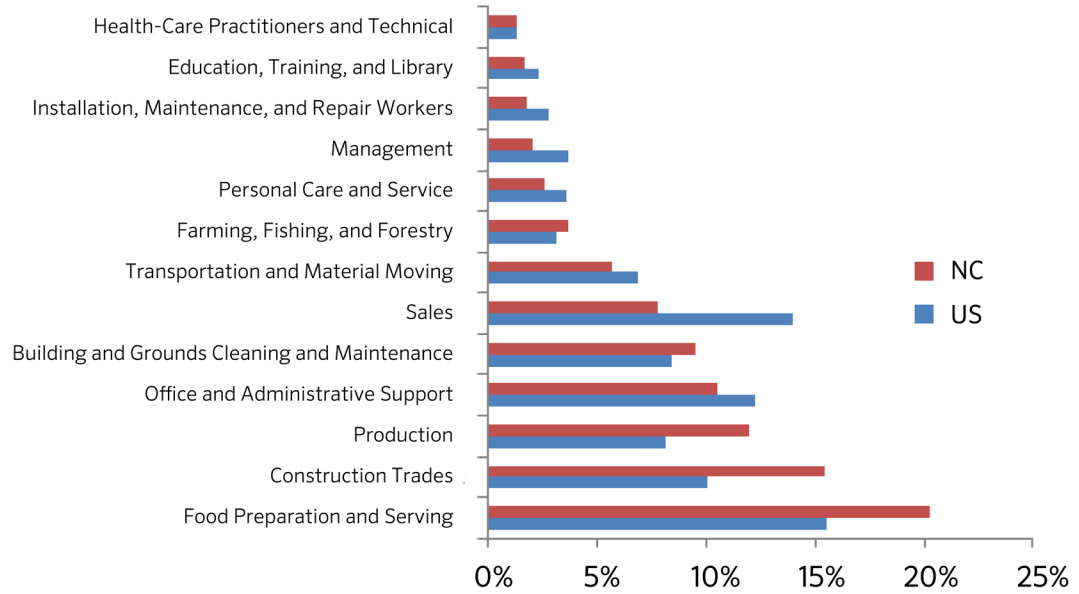
The DACA population is working in industries that are important to the state’s economic health. The greatest concentrations of workers who are DREAMers are in Recreation, Accommodation and Food Service (26 percent), Construction (17 percent) and Manufacturing (17 percent). Construction and Manufacturing are industries that are notable for their provision of higher wages and contributions to additional community benefits such as the provision of housing and infrastructure and the potential connection to local supply chains.

DACA Population Concentrated in Key Jobs Serving North Carolina Communities

In addition to identification of the industries where DREAMers are working in the greatest concentrations, it is also valuable to review the jobs or occupations that DREAMers are working in. The Migration Policy Institute notes that their analysis of this data for the DACA population shows the important reality of their education in the U.S. educational system and the additional training opportunities available through DACA status.

Notably in North Carolina, DREAMers’ work includes personal care and services, health care, office administration, production and transportation, as well as already noted roles in

FIGURE 2. DREAMers in NC are working in jobs critical to the well-being of North Carolina families and communities



Source: Migration Policy Institute, Employed Current DACA Recipients by Major Industry Group, Accessed at: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/profile-current-daca-recipients-education-industry-and-occupation>

Construction and Food Preparation and Serving. The national research by the Migration Policy Institute finds that DACA can be a means to occupational mobility, with DACA holders more likely than young unauthorized immigrants to hold jobs in middle-wage or professional occupations.⁷

⁷ Capps, Randy, Michael Fix and Jie Zong, August 2017. The Education and Work Profiles of the DACA Population. Migration Policy Institute: Washington, DC. Accessed at: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/education-and-work-profiles-daca-population>