



IMMIGRATION

# The Dream and Promise Act Could Put 2.1 Million Dreamers on Pathway to Citizenship

By [Nicole Prchal Svajlenka](#) | Posted on March 26, 2019, 9:02 am



Getty/Robert Alexander

A father walks hand in hand with his daughter as they enjoy a Fourth of July holiday event in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

During its first [two years](#) in office, the Trump administration has worked to dismantle major aspects of the U.S. immigration system. Of particular note are its attempts to [terminate](#) the [legal protections](#) relied upon by multiple groups of immigrants who have lived in the United States for decades. These groups include recipients of [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals](#) (DACA); those who hold [Temporary Protected Status](#) (TPS); and beneficiaries of [Deferred Enforced Departure](#) (DED).

[Poll after poll](#) shows that Americans are united in support of legislation that would offer a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers—undocumented immigrants who came to the United States years ago as children. Yet despite [multiple congressional attempts](#) to pass the Dream Act since its first introduction in [2001](#), such a bill has never been signed into law.

Introduced this month, the [American Dream and Promise Act of 2019](#) offers a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers as well as immigrants eligible for TPS and DED. An estimated [2.5 million immigrants](#) could be permanently protected under the bill.

---

For state-by-state demographic and occupational data regarding TPS holders, please see the Center for American Progress' recent column, "[What Do We Know About Immigrants With Temporary Protected Status?](#)"

---

Title I of the Dream and Promise Act includes provisions that would extend Conditional Permanent Resident (CPR) status to Dreamers who meet the following criteria:

- They have lived in the United States for at least four years prior to the bill's enactment date.
- They were under age 18 upon their arrival in the United States.
- They are enrolled in or have completed high school, an equivalent program, or an industry-recognized credential program.
- They pass a background check.

Up to [2.1 million Dreamers](#) are eligible to apply for CPR status under the bill. This number includes the 1.8 million Dreamers who are eligible now, as well as the 300,000 Dreamers who will become eligible as they enroll in or complete the education requirement.

## **For Dreamers, the United States is home**

Dreamers are often described as [American in every way save for a piece of paper](#), having lived in the country since childhood and for such significant lengths of time. CAP analysis finds that the average Dreamer came to the United States when they were 8 years old and has lived in the country since 1999. (see Table 1)

More than 5 million individuals live in a household that includes a Dreamer. Indeed, as years pass and Dreamers grow up, they are beginning families of their own: 795,000 U.S.-born children have Dreamer parents who are eligible for protection under the Dream and Promise Act. Dreamers and their families live in communities across the United States; California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois are home to the largest numbers of eligible Dreamers, at more than 100,000 each, while an additional 26 states are home to from 10,000 to 100,000 Dreamers.

**TABLE 1**  
**Arriving as children, Dreamers have lived in the United States for much of their lives**  
 Characteristics of Dreamers, by state

	Number of eligible Dreamers	Average age at arrival	Average year of arrival	Number of individuals living in mixed-status households
Alabama	9,800	8	1999	32,200
Alaska	1,700	11	2000	6,500
Arizona	63,400	7	1998	209,000
Arkansas	10,500	8	2000	35,600
California	562,500	8	1998	2,016,100
Colorado	37,700	8	1999	123,400
Connecticut	18,600	10	2000	55,800
Delaware	3,600	9	1999	12,300
District of Columbia	3,100	10	2000	8,700
Florida	140,700	9	1999	422,400
Georgia	62,700	9	2000	210,300
Hawaii	7,400	9	2000	30,300
Idaho	7,800	7	1998	26,100
Illinois	100,600	9	1998	341,500
Indiana	19,500	9	2001	62,600
Iowa	7,200	8	2000	24,100
Kansas	12,000	7	1999	38,900
Kentucky	8,600	9	2001	25,800
Louisiana	8,900	9	2001	24,700
Maine	1,100	9	2003	2,700
Maryland	37,900	10	2001	123,600
Massachusetts	31,900	9	1999	95,900
Michigan	17,900	8	1999	56,400
Minnesota	17,500	8	2000	60,000
Mississippi	3,400	10	1999	9,700
Missouri	10,300	8	2001	31,800
Montana	< 500	N/A	N/A	800
Nebraska	6,500	6	2000	24,300

Nevada	36,000	8	1998	120,100
New Hampshire	1,300	10	2000	4,000
New Jersey	77,800	9	2000	261,300
New Mexico	17,700	7	1999	57,000
New York	142,800	10	2000	486,200
North Carolina	52,400	8	2000	180,700
North Dakota	1,200	9	2003	3,400
Ohio	14,300	8	2001	43,800
Oklahoma	18,500	8	2000	62,200
Oregon	23,600	8	1999	79,400
Pennsylvania	24,400	9	2001	76,000
Rhode Island	5,400	9	1999	16,500
South Carolina	13,100	9	2000	42,300
South Dakota	900	7	2000	3,400
Tennessee	20,800	8	2001	68,900
Texas	335,600	8	1999	1,106,700
Utah	19,900	8	1999	68,700
Vermont	< 500	N/A	N/A	900
Virginia	42,700	9	2001	138,100
Washington	49,900	8	2000	165,500
West Virginia	1,400	8	2001	3,500
Wisconsin	18,800	9	1999	60,700
Wyoming	800	7	2000	2,400
<b>United States</b>	<b>2,132,800</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>7,163,100</b>

Sources: Center for American Progress analysis of 2012–2016 5-year American Community Survey microdata. Data accessed via Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, U.S. Census Data for Social, Economic, and Health Research, 2016 American Community Survey: 5-year estimates" (Minneapolis: Minnesota Population Center, 2018), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>. Data record flags that identified undocumented immigrants were prepared by the University of Southern California Domsife Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration.



## Dreamers are crucial to the U.S. workforce and economy

Beyond these long-standing ties to their communities, Dreamers are crucial participants in the U.S. workforce and economy. To be eligible for protection under the Dream and Promise Act, these immigrants must be enrolled in or have completed high school, an equivalent program, or an industry-recognized credential program. Nearly 4 in 5 Dreamers ages 16 and older—79 percent—are enrolled in school or employed. What's more, to earn Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) status, Dreamers have to meet [additional educational and employment benchmarks](#).

Dreamers are employed in nearly every occupation, with an estimated 159,000 working in food preparation and serving, an estimated 147,000 working in sales, an estimated 125,000 working in construction, and an estimated 124,000 working in office and administrative support.

Households that include Dreamers make massive contributions to the U.S. economy. Currently, however, these contributions are under as much threat as Dreamers' futures. Annually, households

that include Dreamers generate \$15.5 billion in federal taxes and \$8.5 billion in state and local taxes, and they hold \$66.4 billion in spending power. Collectively, Dreamers own 144,000 homes and pay \$1.5 billion each year in mortgage payments.

TABLE 2

**Dreamers pay billions of dollars in taxes each year, and their spending power boosts the U.S. economy**  
Annual tax contributions and spending power of households with Dreamers, by state

	Federal taxes	State and local taxes	Spending power
Alabama	\$55,600,000	\$30,100,000	\$285,600,000
Alaska	\$20,400,000	\$4,200,000	\$83,100,000
Arizona	\$284,900,000	\$180,800,000	\$1,490,800,000
Arkansas	\$53,600,000	\$37,700,000	\$284,100,000
California	\$4,069,000,000	\$2,184,200,000	\$17,562,400,000
Colorado	\$269,400,000	\$130,500,000	\$1,178,000,000
Connecticut	\$234,100,000	\$124,700,000	\$789,800,000
Delaware	\$35,400,000	\$11,700,000	\$149,900,000
District of Columbia	\$30,100,000	\$15,400,000	\$113,800,000
Florida	\$859,400,000	\$363,700,000	\$3,965,100,000
Georgia	\$391,600,000	\$223,500,000	\$1,800,800,000
Hawaii	\$117,200,000	\$54,900,000	\$366,200,000
Idaho	\$30,400,000	\$19,300,000	\$181,500,000
Illinois	\$739,200,000	\$533,000,000	\$3,203,000,000
Indiana	\$115,100,000	\$74,500,000	\$556,600,000
Iowa	\$48,000,000	\$30,900,000	\$221,100,000
Kansas	\$86,400,000	\$48,600,000	\$358,500,000
Kentucky	\$39,200,000	\$26,700,000	\$196,600,000
Louisiana	\$53,800,000	\$28,600,000	\$237,800,000
Maine	\$4,200,000	\$2,500,000	\$19,400,000
Maryland	\$406,900,000	\$222,200,000	\$1,510,400,000
Massachusetts	\$348,000,000	\$161,600,000	\$1,291,900,000
Michigan	\$140,300,000	\$70,900,000	\$598,200,000
Minnesota	\$126,700,000	\$74,100,000	\$570,600,000
Mississippi	\$13,300,000	\$9,000,000	\$73,000,000
Missouri	\$72,100,000	\$37,400,000	\$316,000,000
Montana	\$4,000,000	\$1,200,000	\$13,500,000
Nebraska	\$37,600,000	\$25,300,000	\$188,800,000
Nevada	\$213,200,000	\$92,600,000	\$1,060,300,000
New Hampshire	\$21,700,000	\$7,100,000	\$78,500,000
New Jersey	\$798,100,000	\$416,100,000	\$2,983,300,000
New Mexico	\$96,800,000	\$53,800,000	\$435,100,000
New York	\$1,410,500,000	\$914,500,000	\$5,099,000,000
North Carolina	\$281,000,000	\$168,200,000	\$1,437,100,000
North Dakota	\$8,300,000	\$3,600,000	\$37,100,000
Ohio	\$102,400,000	\$60,800,000	\$441,100,000
Oklahoma	\$98,600,000	\$67,200,000	\$502,000,000
Oregon	\$141,600,000	\$80,800,000	\$691,700,000
Pennsylvania	\$174,000,000	\$103,800,000	\$729,500,000
Rhode Island	\$35,000,000	\$20,300,000	\$161,400,000

South Carolina	\$73,900,000	\$39,100,000	\$367,100,000
South Dakota	\$10,600,000	\$3,500,000	\$39,500,000
Tennessee	\$116,800,000	\$55,400,000	\$585,300,000
Texas	\$2,032,100,000	\$1,126,000,000	\$9,412,400,000
Utah	\$133,200,000	\$65,400,000	\$614,400,000
Vermont	\$3,400,000	\$2,000,000	\$15,700,000
Virginia	\$468,200,000	\$216,400,000	\$1,737,900,000
Washington	\$412,700,000	\$219,100,000	\$1,673,200,000
West Virginia	\$13,200,000	\$5,500,000	\$47,700,000
Wisconsin	\$131,300,000	\$78,900,000	\$579,900,000
Wyoming	\$1,900,000	\$1,500,000	\$15,100,000
<b>United States</b>	<b>\$15,464,500,000</b>	<b>\$8,528,900,000</b>	<b>\$66,350,400,000</b>

Notes: Spending power is household income that remains after federal, state, and local tax contributions.

Sources: Center for American Progress analysis of 2012–2016 5-year American Community Survey microdata. Data accessed via Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, U.S. Census Data for Social, Economic, and Health Research, 2016 American Community Survey: 5-year estimates" (Minneapolis: Minnesota Population Center, 2018), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>. Data record flags that identified undocumented immigrants were prepared by the University of Southern California Dornsife Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration.



## Conclusion

With the Dream and Promise Act of 2019, Congress once again has the opportunity to permanently protect millions of Dreamers, many of whom have lived in this country for decades. The act would also protect 460,000 TPS holders and DED recipients. Now is the time to pass the bill into law.

*Nicole Prchal Svajlenka is a senior policy analyst of Immigration Policy at the Center for American Progress. She thanks the University of Southern California Dornsife Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration for providing access to its data.*

## Methodology

Unless otherwise cited, the findings presented in this column are based on CAP analysis of 2012–2016 5-year American Community Survey microdata, with tags developed by the [University of Southern California Dornsife Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration](#) in order to identify eligibility for the Dream and Promise Act of 2019. Corresponding detailed congressional district-level data, as well as a methodological discussion, can be found [here](#).

Household tax contributions and spending power estimates are based on methodology developed by [New American Economy](#) and include all households that contain a member who would be eligible for protection under the Dream and Promise Act of 2019, including immigrant youth who will be eligible to apply for CPR status once they enroll in secondary school. Federal tax rates come from the [Congressional Budget Office](#), and state and local tax rates come from the [Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy](#). Spending power is measured as household income after federal, state, and local tax contributions.

# Center for American Progress



© 2019 - Center for American Progress