



NBC NEWS

Immigration Advocates Clear Questions on DACA 3-Year Permits

Don't panic. That's the message immigration advocates are sending Dreamers after some learned that the Department of Homeland Security is asking some recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program to return their three-year work permits.

"There's been a little bit of panic in the last two days," Lorella Praeli, advocacy and policy director of United We Dream, said in a video chat Thursday. "People are saying, 'What's going to happen? I heard that I got a three-year DACA, and they're going to take it away from me.' And what you need to remember is that's actually not true."

The DACA program, first implemented in 2012, gives young undocumented immigrants a work permit and authorizes them to be lawfully present in the United States. Last year President Barack Obama announced he would expand DACA to benefit more immigrants and extend it for a period of three years instead of two. But a federal district court in Texas granted a preliminary injunction on Feb. 16 that temporarily blocked Obama's recent executive actions on immigration.

In a statement to NBCNews.com, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services said it discovered that a group of approximately 2,000 individuals had been "erroneously" issued three-year instead of two-year employment authorization documents (EAD) after the Texas ruling.

"USCIS is notifying these individuals, instructing them to return their three-year EAD, and replacing them with a two-year EAD," USCIS said in a statement.

USCIS also made it clear that DACA recipients aren't being asked to return their three-year work permits if they were issued prior to the district court's preliminary injunction.

Praeli advised DACA recipients to follow instructions if they receive a letter notifying them that they must return their three-year work permit. She also said those who were approved for DACA and received a three-year work permit between Nov. 20 of last year—when Obama announced his immigration executive actions—and Feb. 16 of this year "are fine."

"They should not be sending their cards," she said of DACA recipients who received three-year work permits before Feb. 16. "They should feel really happy that they're lucky and get to have DACA for three years. And everyone else should not panic."

--Griselda Nevarez—NBC

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