



May 19, 2026

Joseph B. Edlow, Director
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20529

Dear Director Edlow:

On behalf of the American Council on Education and the undersigned major higher education associations, we write to express our concerns about the recent delays in processing time for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) renewal applications. Efficient processing of these renewals is essential to continue the academic, economic, and social contributions of DACA recipients at our institutions of higher education and broader communities.

According to February 2026 USCIS data, the median processing time for a DACA renewal application grew from two weeks in fiscal year (FY) 2025 to 2.3 months.¹ Since February, recent reports indicate that nearly 80 percent of these renewal applications now require up to four months to be processed² and in some cases have even reached six months.³ This represents the longest delay for DACA renewals since 2016, when significant technical issues disrupted processing. In many cases, these backlogs leave recipients without valid work authorization, putting their employment at risk.

DACA has long been important to the higher education community—DACA recipients are our students, faculty, and staff members. Currently 8 percent of DACA recipients are enrolled in higher education, and 45 percent have attained some college education.⁴ The economic impact of DACA recipients is nearly \$17 billion per year, but delays in renewal processing threaten DACA recipients' ability to live in the United States and contribute to our economy.⁵ A failure to promptly adjudicate DACA renewals risks harming American communities, economies, and higher education institutions.

We understand that the renewal process is thorough and must be detailed, but we ask that USCIS ensure that DACA renewals are processed efficiently. We welcome the opportunity to meet with your staff to further discuss the importance of the timely processing of renewals.

¹ February 28, 2026. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services "Historic Processing Times": <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/historic-pt>

² Accessed May 4, 2026. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services "Case Processing Times": <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times>

³ May 1, 2026. Associated Press "Long DACA renewal wait times leave some 'Dreamers' without status, a job and fearing detainment": <https://apnews.com/article/daca-renewal-delays-1d81a8ba01b202f65a20206af53c23ad>

⁴ May 20, 2025. FWD.us "DACA 13 Years Later" <https://www.fwd.us/news/daca-anniversary/>

⁵ *Ibid.*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ted Mitchell", enclosed within a rectangular border.

Ted Mitchell, President

On behalf of:

AACTE (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education)
ACPA-College Student Educators International
American Association of Colleges and Universities
American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Association of University Professors
American Council of Learned Societies
American Council on Education
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of American Universities
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Council for Advancement and Support of Education
Council for Christian Colleges & Universities
Council of Graduate Schools
Council on Social Work Education
College and University Professional Association for Human Resources
EDUCAUSE
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
NASPA-Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of Colleges and Employers
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
Phi Beta Kappa Society
Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration
UPCEA