

# *DACA-eligible immigrants and characteristics: 2021, Washington*

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President Joe Biden announced April 13, 2023, that his administration plans to extend Medicaid and ACA health coverage to recipients of the Deferred Action Childhood Arrival (DACA) program.<sup>1</sup>

DACA is a federal program created to protect immigrants without documents who were brought to the U.S. by their parents. The program has specific eligibility criteria, including an individual's earliest or latest entry date, age at entry, schooling or education attainment and no legal status. To facilitate the understanding of the DACA population in Washington, we analyzed the 2021 American Community Survey and present the following estimates on immigrants who reside in Washington and are considered eligible for DACA. Note that our estimates represent DACA-eligible immigrants, not DACA recipients. Based on estimates from the Migrant Policy Institute, DACA recipients account for approximately half of DACA-eligible immigrants in Washington and in the U.S. as well.<sup>2</sup>

## **One tenth of undocumented immigrants are estimated to be eligible for DACA.**

In 2021, there were approximately 303,500 undocumented immigrants residing in Washington. Of these immigrants, we estimated 30,300, or roughly 10%, were eligible for DACA.

## **Most DACA-eligible immigrants are between 19-39 years old, male, not married, employed, have an education beyond high school, in families with income**

## **below 400% of the federal poverty level, and are covered by health insurance.**

Of the 30,300 DACA eligible immigrants, the oldest was 39 years in 2021 and nearly 90% were between 19 and 39 years old. Slightly more than half were male (55.6%). Two-thirds were not married (64.7%). Over 80% spoke a language other than English at home. More than half (53%) had an education beyond high school. Three out of four (77%) were employed. Slightly over half (53%) had a family income below 400% of the federal poverty level. One third (33.6%) had no health insurance coverage.

## **Slightly over 10,000 DACA-eligible immigrants would potentially qualify for Medicaid or ACA coverage under the Biden administration's plan.**

There were a total of 11,600 DACA eligible immigrants who had no health insurance or had only individual plans they purchased on their own. Of these immigrants, we estimated that approximately 4,000 would qualify for Medicaid and another 6,500 would qualify for the ACA coverage (Qualified Health Plan run by the state's Exchange) when the Biden administration's plan is implemented. This means approximately one third of the DACA-eligible immigrants may be qualified. However, the actual numbers of DACA eligible immigrants qualifying for Medicaid or the ACA coverage depend on the share of the DACA eligible immigrants eventually enrolled in the DACA program at the time when the Biden administration's plan is implemented.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/04/13/fact-sheet-fact-sheet-president-biden-announces-plan-to-expand-health-coverage-to-daca-recipients/>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca-profiles>.

Figure 1. Undocumented immigrants and DACA-eligible immigrants: Washington, 2021  
(total undocumented immigrants= 303,500)

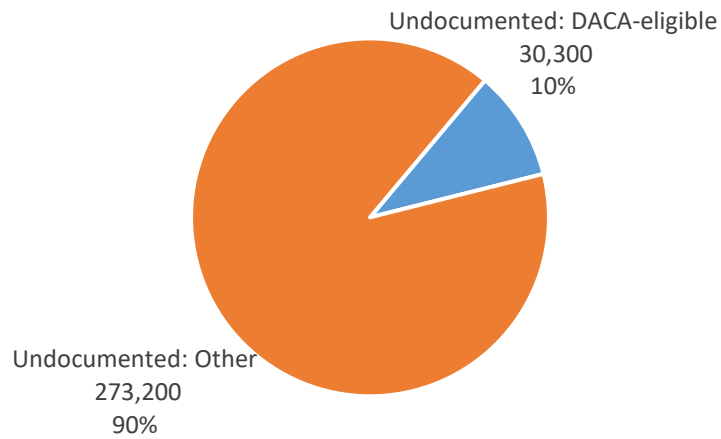


Figure 2. Age, sex, marital status and language at home (in percentage): DACA-eligible immigrants, Washington, 2021

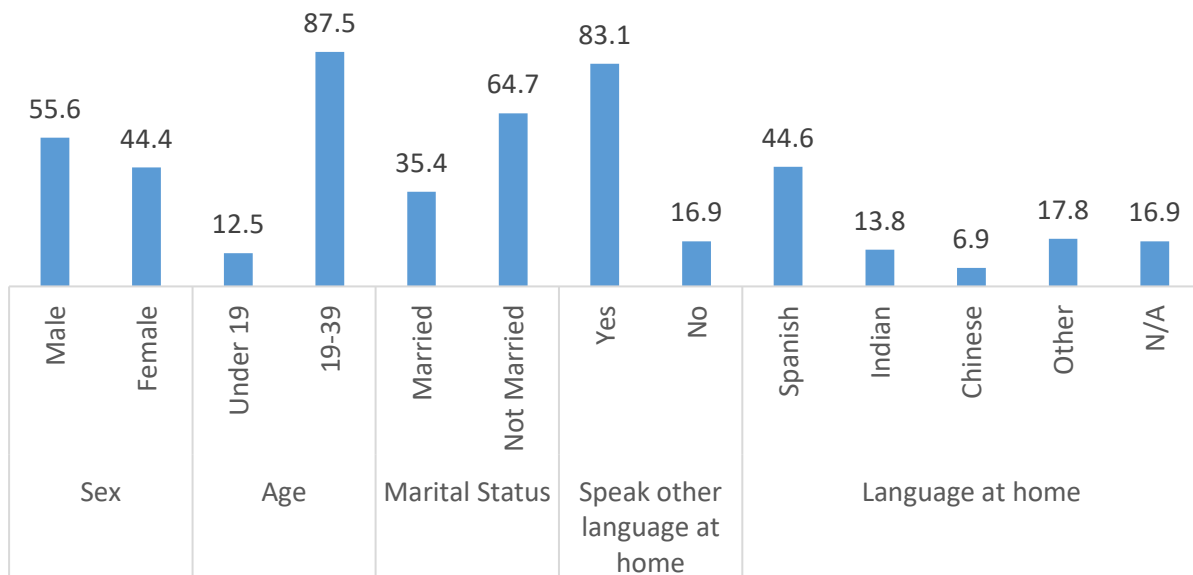
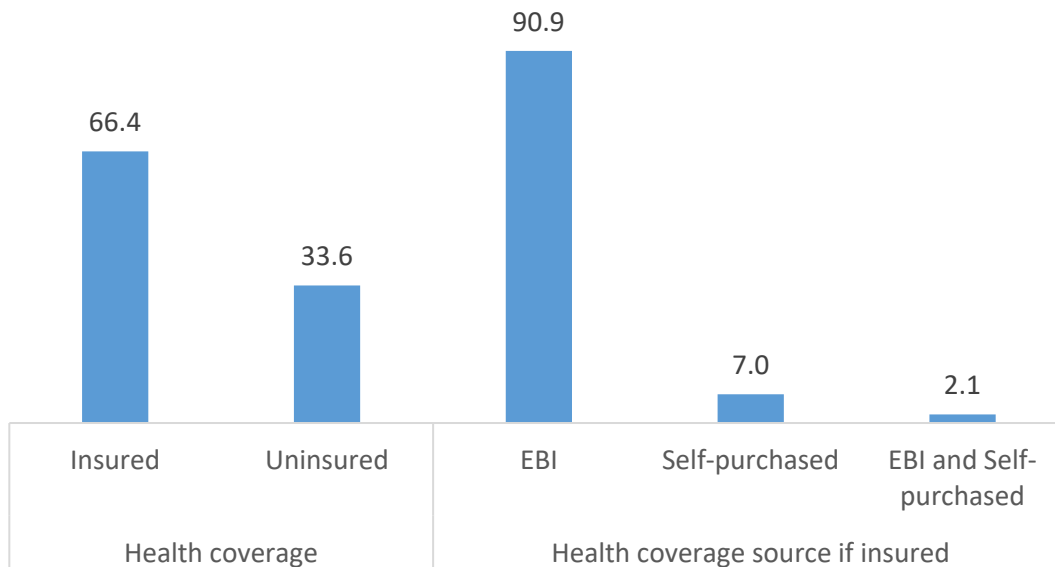


Figure 3. Education, employment and family income (in percentage): DACA-eligible immigrants, Washington, 2021

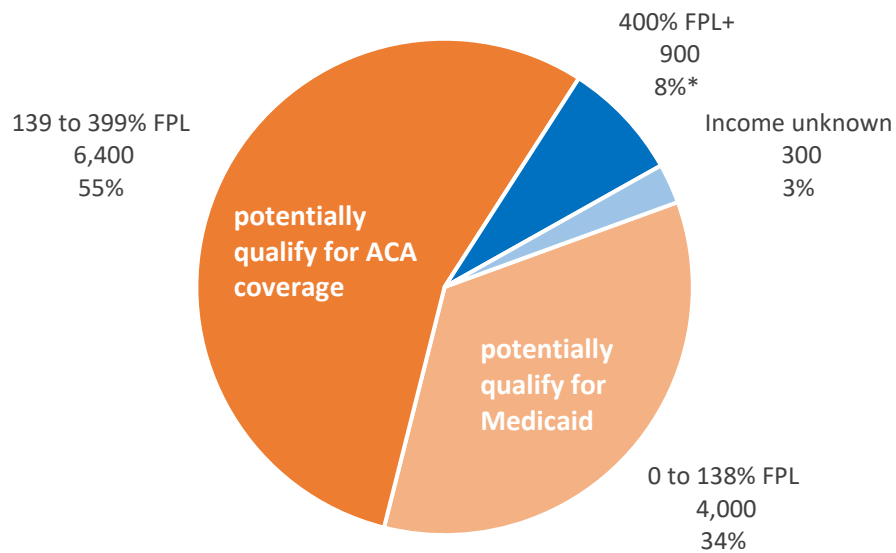


Figure 4. Health coverage status and coverage source (in percentage): DACA-eligible immigrants, Washington, 2021



(EBI=employment-based insurance)

Figure 5. DACA-eligible immigrants potentially qualifying for Medicaid and ACA health coverage (FPL=federal poverty level)



(\*A small number of individuals with income above 400% FPL may qualify for enhanced ACA coverage subsidies)

### Our data source and method for analyzing the data

We generated the estimates in this fact sheet by using the 2021 American Community Survey 1-year Public Use Microdata Sample file. The ACS is a survey that the U.S. Census Bureau conducts. We adjusted the 2021 ACS sample weights to account for ACS' under-report of Medicaid enrollment in Washington.<sup>3</sup>

Our estimation of DACA-eligible immigrants involved two processes. The first was to assign the non-citizens' legal immigration status in the ACS file.<sup>4</sup> The second process was to assign DACA eligibility status of those designated as 'undocumented immigrants' in the ACS file. We approximated the official DACA eligibility criteria in assigning the eligibility status:

- Entry into U.S. on June 15, 2007, or later (we used the year 2007 as proxy) but before June 15, 2012 (we used the year 2012 as proxy).
- Younger than 16 at entry.
- Under age 40 in 2021.
- Lived in U.S. since entry (we used residency information for 2020 as proxy).
- Currently in school/college or obtained at least a high school diploma/GED in education.

<sup>3</sup> For the adjustment to the ACS weights, see [https://ofm.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/legacy/healthcare/healthcoverage/pdf/undercount\\_medicaid.pdf](https://ofm.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/legacy/healthcare/healthcoverage/pdf/undercount_medicaid.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> For method on imputing legal immigrant status in the ACS file, see "Data Source and Notes" in <https://ofm.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/dataresearch/researchbriefs/brief090.pdf>.