



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Frequently Asked Questions

FAQs updated September 14, 2012

Over the past three years, this Administration has undertaken an unprecedented effort to transform the immigration enforcement system into one that focuses on public safety, border security and the integrity of the immigration system. As the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) continues to focus its enforcement resources on the removal of individuals who pose a danger to national security or a risk to public safety, including individuals convicted of crimes with particular emphasis on violent criminals, felons, and repeat offenders, DHS will exercise prosecutorial discretion as appropriate to ensure that enforcement resources are not expended on low priority cases, such as individuals who came to the United States as children and meet other key guidelines. Individuals who demonstrate that they meet the guidelines below may request consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals for a period of two years, subject to renewal, and may be eligible for employment authorization.

You may request consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals if you:

1. Were under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012;
2. Came to the United States before reaching your 16th birthday;
3. Have continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007, up to the present time;
4. Were physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012, and at the time of making your request for consideration of deferred action with USCIS;
5. Entered without inspection before June 15, 2012, or your lawful immigration status expired as of June 15, 2012;
6. Are currently in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school, have obtained a general education development (GED) certificate, or are an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States; and
7. Have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, three or more other misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety.

Individuals can call USCIS at 1-800-375-5283 with questions or to request more information on the deferred action for childhood arrivals process or visit www.uscis.gov.

View the Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Process Video



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About Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

Q1: What is deferred action?

A1: Deferred action is a discretionary determination to defer removal action of an individual as an act of prosecutorial discretion. Deferred action does not confer lawful status upon an individual. In addition, although an individual whose case is deferred will not be considered to be accruing unlawful presence in the United States during the period deferred action is in effect, deferred action does not excuse individuals of any previous or subsequent periods of unlawful presence.

Under existing regulations, an individual whose case has been deferred is eligible to receive employment authorization for the period of deferred action, provided he or she can demonstrate “an economic necessity for employment.” DHS can terminate or renew deferred action at any time at the agency’s discretion.

Q2: What is deferred action for childhood arrivals?

A2: On June 15, 2012, the Secretary of Homeland Security announced that certain people who came to the United States as children and meet several key guidelines may request consideration of deferred action for a period of two years, subject to renewal, and would then be eligible for work authorization.

Individuals who can demonstrate through verifiable documentation that they meet these guidelines will be considered for deferred action. Determinations will be made on a case-by-case basis under the guidelines set forth in the Secretary of Homeland Security's memorandum.

Q3: If my removal is deferred pursuant to the consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals process, am I eligible for employment authorization?

A3: Yes. Pursuant to existing regulations, if your case is deferred, you may obtain employment authorization from USCIS provided you can demonstrate an economic necessity for employment.

Q4: Does this process apply to me if I am currently in removal proceedings, have a final removal order, or have a voluntary departure order?

A4: This process is open to any individual who can demonstrate he or she meets the guidelines for consideration, including those who have never been in removal proceedings as well as those in removal proceedings, with a final order, or with a voluntary departure order (as long as they are not in immigration detention). If you are not in immigration detention and want to affirmatively request consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals, you must submit your request to USCIS – not ICE – pursuant to the procedures outlined below. If you are currently in immigration detention and believe you meet the guidelines you should not request consideration of deferred action from USCIS but should identify yourself to your detention officer or contact the ICE Office of the Public Advocate through the Office's hotline at 1-888-351-4024 (staffed 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday – Friday) or by email at EROPublicAdvocate@ice.dhs.gov.

Q5: Do I accrue unlawful presence if I have a pending request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals?

A5: You will continue to accrue unlawful presence while the request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals is pending, unless you are under 18 years old at the time of the request. If you are under 18 years old at the time you submit your request but turn 18 while your request is pending with USCIS, you will not accrue unlawful presence while the request is pending. If your case is deferred, you will not accrue unlawful presence during the period of deferred action. Having action deferred on your case will not excuse previously accrued unlawful presence.

Q6: If my case is deferred, am I in lawful status for the period of deferral?

A6: No. Although action on your case has been deferred and you do not accrue unlawful presence during the period of deferred action, deferred action does not confer any lawful status.

There is a significant difference between “unlawful presence” and “unlawful status.” Unlawful presence refers to a period an individual is present in the United States (1) without being admitted or paroled or (2) after the expiration of a period of stay authorized by the Department of Homeland Security (such as after the period of stay authorized by a visa has expired). Unlawful presence is relevant only with respect to determining whether the inadmissibility bars for unlawful presence, set forth in the Immigration and Nationality Act at Section 212(a)(9), apply to an individual if he or she departs the United States and subsequently seeks to re-enter. (These unlawful presence bars are commonly known as the 3- and 10-Year Bars.)

The fact that you are not accruing unlawful presence does not change whether you are in lawful status while you remain in the United States. Because you lack lawful status at the time DHS defers action in your case, you remain subject to all legal restrictions and prohibitions on individuals in unlawful status.

Q7: Does deferred action provide me with a path to permanent residence status or citizenship?

A7: No. Deferred action is a form of prosecutorial discretion that does not confer lawful permanent resident status or a path to citizenship. Only the Congress, acting through its legislative authority, can confer these rights.

Q8: If my case is deferred, will I be eligible for premium tax credits and reduced cost sharing through Affordable Insurance Exchanges starting in 2014?

A8: No. The Departments of Health and Human Services and the Treasury intend to conform the relevant regulations to the extent necessary to exempt individuals with deferred action for childhood arrivals from eligibility for premium tax credits and reduced cost sharing. This is consistent with the policy under S. 3992, the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act of 2010.

Q9: Can I be considered for deferred action even if I do not meet the guidelines to be considered for deferred action for childhood arrivals?

A9: This process is only for individuals who meet the specific guidelines announced by the Secretary of Homeland Security. Other individuals may, on a case-by-case basis, request deferred action from USCIS or ICE in certain circumstances, consistent with longstanding practice.

Q10: Will the information I share in my request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals be used for immigration enforcement purposes?

A10: Information provided in this request is protected from disclosure to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for the purpose of immigration enforcement proceedings unless the requestor meets the criteria for the issuance of a Notice To Appear or a referral to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement under the criteria set forth in USCIS's Notice to Appear guidance (www.uscis.gov/NTA). Individuals whose cases are deferred pursuant to the consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals process will not be referred to ICE. The information may be shared with national security and law enforcement agencies, including ICE and CBP, for purposes other than removal, including for assistance in the consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals request, to identify or prevent fraudulent claims, for national security purposes, or for the investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense. The above information sharing policy covers family members and guardians, in addition to the requestor.

This policy, which may be modified, superseded, or rescinded at any time without notice, is not intended to, does not, and may not be relied upon to create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by law by any party in any administrative, civil, or criminal matter.

Q11: If my case is referred to ICE for immigration enforcement purposes or if I receive an NTA, will information related to my family members and guardians also be referred to ICE for immigration enforcement purposes?

A11: If your case is referred to ICE for purposes of immigration enforcement or you receive an NTA, information related to your family members or guardians that is contained in your request will not be referred to ICE for purposes of immigration enforcement against family members or guardians. However, that information may be shared with national security and law enforcement agencies, including ICE and CBP, for purposes other than removal, including for assistance in the consideration of the deferred action for childhood arrivals request, to identify or prevent fraudulent claims, for national security purposes, or for the investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense.

This policy, which may be modified, superseded, or rescinded at any time without notice, is not intended to, does not, and may not be relied upon to create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by any party in any administrative, civil, or criminal matter.

Q12: Does this Administration remain committed to comprehensive immigration reform?

A12: Yes. The Administration has consistently pressed for passage of comprehensive immigration reform, including the DREAM Act, because the President believes these steps are critical to building a 21st century immigration system that meets our nation's economic and security needs.

Q13: Is passage of the DREAM Act still necessary in light of the new process?

A13: Yes. The Secretary of Homeland Security's June 15th memorandum allowing certain people to request consideration for deferred action is the most recent in a series of steps that DHS has taken to focus its enforcement resources on the removal of individuals who pose a danger to national security or a risk to public safety. Deferred action does not provide lawful status or a pathway to citizenship. As the President has stated, individuals who would qualify for the DREAM Act deserve certainty about their status. Only the Congress, acting through its legislative authority, can confer the certainty that comes with a pathway to permanent lawful status.

Q14: Can I request consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals under this process if I am currently in a nonimmigrant status (e.g. F-1, E-2, H-4) or have Temporary Protected Status (TPS)?

A14: No. You can only request consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals under this process if you currently have no immigration status and were not in any lawful status on June 15, 2012.

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Guidelines for Requesting Consideration of Deferred Action For Childhood Arrivals

Q1: What guidelines must I meet to be considered for deferred action for childhood arrivals?

A1: Pursuant to the Secretary of Homeland Security's June 15, 2012 memorandum, in order to be considered for deferred action for childhood arrivals, you must submit evidence, including support documents, showing that you:

1. Were under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012;
2. Came to the United States before reaching your 16th birthday;
3. Have continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007, up to the present time;
4. Were physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012, and at the time of making your request for consideration of deferred action with USCIS;
5. Entered without inspection before June 15, 2012, or your lawful immigration status expired as of June 15, 2012;
6. Are currently in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school, have obtained a General Education Development (GED) certificate, or are an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States; and;
7. Have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, three or more other misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety.

These guidelines must be met for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals. USCIS retains the ultimate discretion on whether deferred action is appropriate in any given case.

Q2: How old must I be in order to be considered for deferred action under this process?

A2:

- If you have never been in removal proceedings, or your proceedings have been terminated before your request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals, you must be at least 15 years of age or older at the time of filing and meet the other guidelines.
- If you are in removal proceedings, have a final removal order, or have a voluntary departure order, and are not in immigration detention, you can request consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals even if you are under the age of 15 at the time of filing and meet the other guidelines.
- In all instances, you cannot be the age of 31 or older as of June 15, 2012, to be considered for deferred action for childhood arrivals.

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Education

Q1: Does “currently in school” refer to the date on which the request for consideration of deferred action is filed?

A1: To be considered “currently in school” under the guidelines, you must be enrolled in school on the date you submit a request for consideration of deferred action under this process.

Q2: Who is considered to be “currently in school” under the guidelines?

A2: To be considered “currently in school” under the guidelines, you must be enrolled in:

- a public or private elementary school, junior high or middle school, high school, or secondary school;

- an education, literacy, or career training program (including vocational training) that is designed to lead to placement in postsecondary education, job training, or employment and where you are working toward such placement; or
- an education program assisting students either in obtaining a regular high school diploma or its recognized equivalent under state law (including a certificate of completion, certificate of attendance, or alternate award), or in passing a General Educational Development (GED) exam or other equivalent state-authorized exam.

Such education, literacy, or career training programs include, but are not limited to, programs funded, in whole or in part, by federal or state grants. Programs funded by other sources may qualify if they are administered by providers of demonstrated effectiveness, such as institutions of higher education, including community colleges, and certain community-based organizations.

In assessing whether such an education, literacy or career training program not funded in whole or in part by federal or state grants is of demonstrated effectiveness, USCIS will consider the duration of the program's existence; the program's track record in assisting students in obtaining a regular high school diploma or its recognized equivalent, in passing a GED or other state-authorized exam, or in placing students in postsecondary education, job training, or employment; and other indicators of the program's overall quality. For individuals seeking to demonstrate that they are "currently in school" through enrollment in such a program, the burden is on the requestor to show the program's demonstrated effectiveness.

Q3: How do I establish that I am currently in school?

A3: Documentation sufficient for you to demonstrate that you are currently in school may include, but is not limited to:

- evidence that you are enrolled in a public or private elementary school, junior high or middle school, high school or secondary school; or
- evidence that you are enrolled in an education, literacy, or career training program (including vocational training) that is designed to lead to placement in postsecondary education, job training, or employment and where you are working toward such placement, and that the program is funded in whole or in part by federal or state grants or is of demonstrated effectiveness; or
- evidence that you are enrolled in an education program assisting students either in obtaining a regular high school diploma or its recognized equivalent under State law (including a certificate of completion, certificate of attendance, or alternate award), or in passing a General Educational Development (GED) exam or other such state-authorized exam, and that the program is funded in whole or in part by federal or state grants or is of demonstrated effectiveness.

Such evidence of enrollment may include: acceptance letters, school registration cards, letters from school or program, transcripts, report cards, or progress reports showing the name of the school or program, date of enrollment, and current educational or grade level, if relevant.

Q4: What documentation may be sufficient to demonstrate that I have

graduated from high school?

A4: Documentation sufficient for you to demonstrate that you have graduated from high school may include, but is not limited to, a high school diploma from a public or private high school or secondary school, or a recognized equivalent of a high school diploma under state law, including a General Education Development (GED) certificate, certificate of completion, a certificate of attendance, or an alternate award from a public or private high school or secondary school.

Q5: What documentation may be sufficient to demonstrate that I have obtained a General Education Development (GED)?

A5: Documentation sufficient for you to demonstrate that you have obtained a GED may include, but is not limited to, evidence that you have passed a GED exam, or other comparable state-authorized exam, and, as a result, you have received the recognized equivalent of a regular high school diploma under state law.

Q6: If I am enrolled in a literacy or career training program, can I meet the guidelines?

A6: Yes, in certain circumstances. You may meet the guidelines if you are enrolled in an education, literacy, or career training program that is designed to lead to placement in postsecondary education, job training, or employment and where you are working toward such placement. Such programs include, but are not limited to, programs funded by federal or state grants, or administered by providers of demonstrated effectiveness.

Q7: If I am enrolled in an English as a Second Language (ESL) program, can I meet the guidelines?

A7: Yes, in certain circumstances. You may meet the guidelines only if you are enrolled in an ESL program as a prerequisite for your placement in postsecondary education, job training, or employment and where you are working toward such placement. You must submit direct documentary evidence that your participation in the ESL program is connected to your placement in postsecondary education, job training or employment and that the program is one of demonstrated effectiveness.

Q8: Will USCIS consider circumstantial evidence that I have met the education guidelines?

A8: No. Circumstantial evidence will not be accepted to establish that you are currently in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school, or have obtained a general education development certificate. You must submit direct documentary evidence to satisfy that you meet the education guidelines.

Q9: If I am currently in school and USCIS defers action in my case, what will I have to demonstrate if I request that USCIS renew the deferral after two years?

A9: If you are in school at the time of your request and your case is deferred by USCIS, in order to have your request for an extension considered, you must show at the time of the request for renewal either (1) that you have graduated from the school in which you were enrolled and, if that school was elementary school or junior high or middle school, you have made substantial, measurable progress toward graduating from high school, or, (2) you have made substantial, measurable progress toward graduating from the school in which you are enrolled.

If you are currently in an education program that assists students either in obtaining a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent under state law, or in passing a GED exam or other equivalent state-authorized exam, and your case is deferred by USCIS, in order to have your request for an extension considered, you must show at the time of the request for renewal that you have obtained a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent or that you have passed a GED or other equivalent state-authorized exam.

If you are currently enrolled in an education, literacy, or career training program (including vocational training) that is designed to lead to placement in postsecondary education, job training, or employment, and your case is deferred by USCIS, in order to have your request for an extension considered, you must show at the time of the request for renewal that you are enrolled in postsecondary education, that you have obtained the employment for which you were trained, or that you have made substantial, measurable progress toward completing the program.

Specific details on the renewal process will be made available at a later date.

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Travel

Q1: Do brief departures from the United States interrupt the continuous residence requirement?

A1: A brief, casual, and innocent absence from the United States will not interrupt your continuous residence. If you were absent from the United States for any period of time, your absence will be considered brief, casual, and innocent, if it was before August 15, 2012, and:

1. The absence was short and reasonably calculated to accomplish the purpose for the absence;
2. The absence was not because of an order of exclusion, deportation, or removal;
3. The absence was not because of an order of voluntary departure, or an administrative grant of voluntary departure before you were placed in exclusion, deportation, or removal proceedings; and
4. The purpose of the absence and/or your actions while outside the United States were not contrary to law.

***New* - Q2: May I travel outside of the United States before USCIS has determined whether to defer action in my case?**

A2: No. After August 15, 2012, if you travel outside of the United States, you will not be considered for deferred action under this process. If USCIS defers action in your case, you will be permitted to travel outside of the United States only if you apply for and receive advance parole from USCIS.

Any travel outside of the United States that occurred before August 15, 2012, will be assessed by USCIS to determine whether the travel qualifies as brief, casual and innocent (see below).

Note: If you have been ordered deported or removed, and you then leave the United States, your departure may result in your being considered deported or removed, with potentially serious future immigration consequences.

Travel Guidelines

Travel Dates	Type of Travel	Does it Affect Continuous Residence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • brief • casual • innocent 	No
Before August 15, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For an extended time • Because of an order of exclusion, deportation, or removal • To participate in criminal activity 	Yes
After August 15, 2012, and before you have requested deferred action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any 	Yes.
After August 15, 2012, and after you have requested deferred action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any 	Yes. You cannot travel while your request is under review. You cannot apply for advance parole unless and until DHS has determined whether to defer action in your case.

New - Q3: If my case is deferred pursuant to the consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals process, will I be able to travel outside of the United States?

A3: Not automatically. If USCIS has decided to defer action in your case and you want to travel outside the United States, you must apply for advance parole by filing a [Form I-131, Application for Travel Document](#) and paying the applicable fee (\$360). USCIS will determine whether your purpose for international travel is justifiable based on the circumstances you describe in your request. Generally, USCIS will only grant advance parole if you are traveling for humanitarian purposes, educational purposes, or employment purposes. You may not apply for advance parole unless and until USCIS defers action in your case pursuant to the consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals process. You cannot apply for advance parole at the same time as you submit your request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals. All advance parole requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If USCIS has deferred action in your case under the deferred action for childhood arrivals process after you have been ordered deported or removed, you may still request advance parole if you meet the guidelines for advance parole described above. However, once you have received advance parole, and before you actually leave the United States, you should seek to reopen your case before the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) and obtain administrative closure or termination of your removal proceeding. Even after you have asked EOIR to reopen your case, you should not leave the United States until after EOIR has granted your request. If you depart after being ordered deported or removed, and your removal proceeding has not been reopened and administratively closed or terminated, your departure may result in your being considered deported or removed, with potentially serious future immigration consequences. If you have any questions about this process, you may call the ICE Office of the Public Advocate through the Office's hotline at 1-888-351-4024 (staffed 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday – Friday) or by email at EROPublicAdvocate@ice.dhs.gov.

National Security and Public Safety

Q1: If I have a conviction for a felony offense, a significant misdemeanor offense, or multiple misdemeanors, can I receive an exercise of prosecutorial discretion under this new process?

A1: No. If you have been convicted of a felony offense, a significant misdemeanor offense, or three or more other misdemeanor offenses not occurring on the same date and not arising out of the same act, omission, or scheme of misconduct, you will not be considered for deferred action under the new process except where DHS determines there are exceptional circumstances.

Q2: What offenses qualify as a felony?

A2: A felony is a federal, state, or local criminal offense punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year.

Q3: What offenses constitute a significant misdemeanor?

A3: For the purposes of this process, a significant misdemeanor is a misdemeanor as defined by federal law (specifically, one for which the maximum term of imprisonment authorized is one year or less but greater than five days) and that meets the following criteria:

1. Regardless of the sentence imposed, is an offense of domestic violence; sexual abuse or exploitation; burglary; unlawful possession or use of a firearm; drug distribution or trafficking; or, driving under the influence; or,
2. If not an offense listed above, is one for which the individual was sentenced to time in custody of more than 90 days. The sentence must involve time to be served in custody, and therefore does not include a suspended sentence.

The time in custody does not include any time served beyond the sentence for the criminal offense based on a state or local law enforcement agency honoring a detainer issued by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Notwithstanding the above, the decision whether to defer action in a particular case is an individualized, discretionary one that is made taking into account the totality of the circumstances. Therefore, the absence of the criminal history outlined

above, or its presence, is not necessarily determinative, but is a factor to be considered in the unreviewable exercise of discretion. DHS retains the discretion to determine that an individual does not warrant deferred action on the basis of a single criminal offense for which the individual was sentenced to time in custody of 90 days or less.

Q4: What offenses constitute a non-significant misdemeanor?

A4: For purposes of this process, a non-significant misdemeanor is any misdemeanor as defined by federal law (specifically, one for which the maximum term of imprisonment authorized is one year or less but greater than five days) and that meets the following criteria:

1. Is not an offense of domestic violence; sexual abuse or exploitation; burglary; unlawful possession or use of a firearm; drug distribution or trafficking; or, driving under the influence; and
2. Is one for which the individual was sentenced to time in custody of 90 days or less. The time in custody does not include any time served beyond the sentence for the criminal offense based on a state or local law enforcement agency honoring a detainer issued by ICE.

Notwithstanding the above, the decision whether to defer action in a particular case is an individualized, discretionary one that is made taking into account the totality of the circumstances. Therefore, the absence of the criminal history outlined above, or its presence, is not necessarily determinative, but is a factor to be considered in the unreviewable exercise of discretion.

Q5: If I have a minor traffic offense, such as driving without a license, will it be considered a non-significant misdemeanor that counts towards the “three or more non-significant misdemeanors” making me unable to receive consideration for an exercise of prosecutorial discretion under this new process?

A5: A minor traffic offense will not be considered a misdemeanor for purposes of this process. However, your entire offense history can be considered along with other facts to determine whether, under the totality of the circumstances, you warrant an exercise of prosecutorial discretion.

It is important to emphasize that driving under the influence is a significant misdemeanor regardless of the sentence imposed.

Q6: Will offenses criminalized as felonies or misdemeanors by state immigration laws be considered felonies or misdemeanors for purpose of this process?

A6: No. Immigration-related offenses characterized as felonies or misdemeanors by state immigration laws will not be treated as disqualifying felonies or misdemeanors for the purpose of considering a request for consideration of deferred action pursuant to this process.

Q7: Will DHS consider my expunged or juvenile conviction as an offense making me unable to receive an exercise of prosecutorial discretion?

A7: Expunged convictions and juvenile convictions will not automatically disqualify you. Your request will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine whether, under the particular circumstances, a favorable exercise of prosecutorial discretion is

warranted. If you were a juvenile, but tried and convicted as an adult, you will be treated as an adult for purposes of the deferred action for childhood arrivals process.

Q8: What qualifies as a national security or public safety threat?

A8: If the background check or other information uncovered during the review of your request for deferred action indicates that your presence in the United States threatens public safety or national security, you will not be able to receive consideration for an exercise of prosecutorial discretion except where DHS determines there are exceptional circumstances. Indicators that you pose such a threat include, but are not limited to, gang membership, participation in criminal activities, or participation in activities that threaten the United States.

Q9: If I am not in removal proceedings but believe I meet the guidelines for an exercise of deferred action under this process, should I seek to place myself into removal proceedings through encounters with CBP or ICE?

A9: No. If you are not in removal proceedings but believe that you meet the guidelines you should submit your request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals to USCIS under the process outlined below.

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Filing Process

Q1: How do I request consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals?

A1: To request consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals from USCIS, you must submit [Form I-821D, Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals](#) to USCIS. This form must be completed, properly signed and accompanied by a [Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization](#), and a [Form I-765WS, Worksheet](#), establishing your economic need for employment. If you fail to submit a completed Form I-765 (along with the accompanying filing fees for that form, totaling \$465), USCIS will not consider your request for deferred action. Please read the form instructions to ensure that you submit all the required documentation to support your request.

You must file your request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals at the USCIS Lockbox. You can find the mailing address and instructions on www.uscis.gov/i-821d. After your Form I-821D, Form I-765, and Form I-765 Worksheet have been received, USCIS will review them for completeness, including submission of the required fee, initial evidence and supporting documents. If it is determined that the request is complete, USCIS will send you a receipt notice. USCIS will then send you an appointment notice to visit an Application Support Center (ASC) for biometric services. Please make sure you read and follow the directions in the notice. Failure to attend your biometrics appointment may delay processing of your request for consideration of deferred action, or may result in a denial of your request. You may also choose to receive an email and/or text message notifying you that your form has been accepted by completing a [Form G-1145, E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance](#).

Each request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals will be reviewed on an individual, case-by-case basis. USCIS may request more information

or evidence from you, or request that you appear at a USCIS office. USCIS will notify you of its determination in writing.

Note: All individuals who believe they meet the guidelines, including those in removal proceedings, with a final removal order, or with a voluntary departure order (and not in immigration detention), may affirmatively request consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals from USCIS through this process. Individuals who are currently in immigration detention and believe they meet the guidelines may not request consideration of deferred action from USCIS but may identify themselves to their detention officer or to the ICE Office of the Public Advocate through the Office's hotline at 1-888-351-4024 (staffed 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday – Friday) or by email at EROPublicAdvocate@ice.dhs.gov.

Q2: Will USCIS conduct a background check when reviewing my request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals?

A2: Yes. You must undergo biographic and biometric background checks before USCIS will consider whether to exercise prosecutorial discretion under the consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals process. If you have been convicted of any felony, a significant misdemeanor offense, three or more misdemeanor offenses not occurring on the same date and not arising out of the same act, omission, or scheme of misconduct, or otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety, you will not be considered for deferred action for childhood arrivals except where DHS determines there are exceptional circumstances.

Q3: What do background checks involve?

A3: Background checks involve checking biographic and biometric information provided by the individuals against a variety of databases maintained by DHS and other federal government agencies.

Q4: Can I obtain a fee waiver or fee exemption for this process?

A4: There are no fee waivers available for employment authorization applications connected to the deferred action for childhood arrivals process. There are very limited fee exemptions available. Requests for fee exemptions must be filed and favorably adjudicated before an individual files his/her request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals without a fee. In order to be considered for a fee exemption, you must submit a letter and supporting documentation to USCIS demonstrating that you meet one of the following conditions:

- You are under 18 years of age, homeless, in foster care or under 18 years of age and otherwise lacking any parental or other familial support, and your income is less than 150% of the U.S. poverty level.
- You cannot care for yourself because you suffer from a serious, chronic disability and your income is less than 150% of the U.S. poverty level.
- You have, at the time of the request, accumulated \$25,000 or more in debt in the past 12 months as a result of unreimbursed medical expenses for yourself or an immediate family member, and your income is less than 150% of the U.S. poverty level.

Additional information on how to make your request for a fee exemption is available on www.uscis.gov/childhoodarrivals. Your request must be submitted and decided before you submit a request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals without a fee. In order to be considered for a fee exemption, you must

provide documentary evidence to demonstrate that you meet any of the above conditions at the time that you make the request. For evidence, USCIS will:

- Accept affidavits from community-based or religious organizations to establish a requestor's homelessness or lack of parental or other familial financial support.
- Accept copies of tax returns, banks statement, pay stubs, or other reliable evidence of income level. Evidence can also include an affidavit from the applicant or a responsible third party attesting that the applicant does not file tax returns, has no bank accounts, and/or has no income to prove income level.
- Accept copies of medical records, insurance records, bank statements, or other reliable evidence of unreimbursed medical expenses of at least \$25,000.
- Address factual questions through requests for evidence (RFEs).

Q5: Will there be supervisory review of decisions by USCIS under this process?

A5: Yes. USCIS will implement a supervisory review process in all four Service Centers to ensure a consistent process for considering requests for deferred action for childhood arrivals. USCIS will require officers to elevate for supervisory review those cases that involve certain factors.

Q6: Will USCIS personnel responsible for reviewing requests for an exercise of prosecutorial discretion under this process receive special training?

A6: Yes. USCIS personnel responsible for considering requests for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals will receive special training.

***New* - Q7. Must attorneys and accredited representatives who provide pro bono services to deferred action requestors at group assistance events file a Form G-28 with USCIS?**

A7. An attorney or accredited representative who provides pro bono assistance to an individual in a workshop setting and who intends to represent the individual after the workshop must file a [Form G-28](#). An attorney or accredited representative who provides pro bono assistance to an individual in a workshop setting, but who does not intend to represent the individual after the workshop, should assess the extent of the relationship with the individual and the nature and type of the assistance provided. On that basis, the attorney or accredited representative should determine whether to file a Form G-28. If a Form G-28 is not filed, the attorney or accredited representative should determine whether it would be appropriate under the circumstances to provide the individual and USCIS with a letter noting the limited extent of the representation.

***New* - Q8. When must an individual sign a Form I-821D as a preparer?**

A8. If someone other than the requestor prepares or helps fill out the Form I-821D, that individual must complete Part 5 of the Form.

***New* - Q9. How should I fill out question nine (9) on the Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization?**

A9. When you are filing a Form I-765 as part of a Deferred Action Childhood Arrivals request, question nine (9) is asking you to list those Social Security numbers that were officially issued to you by the Social Security Administration.

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Decisions and Renewals

Q1: Can I appeal USCIS's determination?

A1: No. You cannot file a motion to reopen or reconsider, and cannot appeal the decision if USCIS denies your request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals. USCIS will not review its discretionary determinations. You may request a review using the Service Request Management Tool (SRMT) process if you met all of the process guidelines and you believe that your request was denied due to one of the following errors:

- USCIS denied the request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals based on abandonment and you claim that you did respond to a Request for Evidence within the prescribed time; or
- USCIS mailed the Request for Evidence to the wrong address, even though you had submitted a Form AR-11, Change of Address, or changed your address online at www.uscis.gov before the issuance of the Request for Evidence.

Q2: If USCIS does not exercise deferred action in my case, will I be placed in removal proceedings?

A2: If you have submitted a request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals and USCIS decides not to defer action in your case, USCIS will apply its policy guidance governing the referral of cases to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the issuance of Notices to Appear (NTA). If your case does not involve a criminal offense, fraud, or a threat to national security or public safety, your case will not be referred to ICE for purposes of removal proceedings except where DHS determines there are exceptional circumstances. For more detailed information on the applicable NTA policy visit www.uscis.gov/NTA. If after a review of the totality of circumstances USCIS determines to defer action in your case, USCIS will likewise exercise its discretion and will not issue you a Notice to Appear.

Q3: Can I extend the period of deferred action in my case?

A3: Yes. Unless terminated, individuals whose case is deferred pursuant to the consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals process will not be placed into removal proceedings or removed from the United States for a period of two years. You may request consideration for an extension of that period of deferred action. As long as you were not above the age of 30 on June 15, 2012, you may request a renewal after turning 31. Your request for an extension will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Q4: If my period of deferred action is extended, will I need to re-apply for an extension of my employment authorization?

A4: Yes. If USCIS decides to defer action for additional periods beyond the initial two years, you must also have requested an extension of your employment authorization.

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Evidence

The following chart provides examples of documentation you may submit to demonstrate you meet the guidelines for consideration of deferred action under this process. Please see the instructions of [Form I-821D, Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals](#), for additional details of acceptable documentation.

Examples of Documents to Submit to Demonstrate you Meet the Guidelines

Proof of identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passport or national identity document from your country of origin • Birth certificate with photo identification • School or military ID with photo • Any U.S. government immigration or other document bearing your name and photo
Proof you came to U.S. before your 16th birthday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passport with admission stamp • Form I-94/I-95/I-94W • School records from the U.S. schools you have attended • Any Immigration and Naturalization Service or DHS document stating your date of entry (Form I-862, Notice to Appear) • Travel records • Hospital or medical records
Proof of immigration status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form I-94/I-95/I-94W with authorized stay expiration date • Final order of exclusion, deportation, or removal issued as of June 15, 2012 • A charging document placing you into removal proceedings
Proof of Presence in U.S. on June 15, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent receipts or utility bills • Employment records (pay stubs, W-2 Forms, etc) • School records (letters, report cards, etc) • Military records (Form DD-214 or NGB Form 22)
Proof you continuously resided in U.S. since June 15, 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official records from a religious entity confirming participation in a religious ceremony • Copies of money order receipts for money sent in or out of the country

Examples of Documents to Submit to Demonstrate you Meet the Guidelines

Proof of your student status at the time of requesting consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals

- School records (transcripts, report cards, etc) from the school that you are currently attending in the United States showing the name(s) of the school(s) and periods of school attendance and the current educational or grade level
- U.S. high school diploma or certificate of completion
- U.S. GED certificate

Proof you are an honorably discharged veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces or the U.S. Coast Guard

- Form DD-214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty
- NGB Form 22, National Guard Report of Separation and Record of Service
- Military personnel records
- Military health records

Q1: May I file affidavits as proof that I meet the guidelines for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals?

A1: Affidavits generally will not be sufficient on their own to demonstrate that you meet the guidelines for USCIS to consider you for deferred action for childhood arrivals.

However, affidavits may be used to support meeting the following guidelines only if the documentary evidence available to you is insufficient or lacking:

- A gap in the documentation demonstrating that you meet the five year continuous residence requirement; and
- A shortcoming in documentation with respect to the brief, casual and innocent departures during the five years of required continuous presence.

If you submit affidavits related to the above criteria, you must submit two or more affidavits, sworn to or affirmed by people other than yourself, who have direct personal knowledge of the events and circumstances. Should USCIS determine that the affidavits are insufficient to overcome the unavailability or the lack of documentary evidence with respect to either of these guidelines, it will issue a Request for Evidence, indicating that further evidence must be submitted to demonstrate that you meet these guidelines.

USCIS will not accept affidavits as proof of satisfying the following guidelines:

- You are currently in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school, have obtained a general education development certificate, or are an honorably discharged veteran from the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States;
- You were physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012;
- You came to the United States before reaching your 16th birthday;
- You were under the age of 31 on June 15, 2012; and
- Your criminal history, if applicable.

If the only evidence you submit to demonstrate you meet any of the above guidelines is an affidavit, USCIS will issue a Request for Evidence, indicating that you have not demonstrated that you meet these guidelines and that you must do so in order to demonstrate that you meet that guideline.

Q2: Will USCIS consider circumstantial evidence that I have met certain guidelines?

A2: Circumstantial evidence may be used to establish the following guidelines and factual showings if available documentary evidence is insufficient or lacking and shows that:

- You were physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012;
- You came to the United States before reaching your 16th birthday;
- You satisfy the five year continuous residence requirement, as long as you present direct evidence of your continued residence in the United States for a portion of the required five-year period and the circumstantial evidence is used only to fill in gaps in the length of continuous residence demonstrated by the direct evidence; and
- Any travel outside the United States during the five years of required continuous presence was brief, casual, and innocent.

However, USCIS will not accept circumstantial evidence as proof of any of the following guidelines to demonstrate that you:

- Were under the age of 31 on June 15, 2012; and
- Are currently in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school, have obtained a General Education Development (GED) certificate, or are an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States.

For example, if you do not have documentary proof of your presence in the United States on June 15, 2012, you may nevertheless be able to satisfy the guideline circumstantially by submitting credible documentary evidence that you were present in the United States shortly before and shortly after June 15, 2012, which under the facts presented may give rise to an inference of your presence on June 15, 2012 as well. However, circumstantial evidence will not be accepted to establish that you have graduated high school. You must submit direct documentary evidence to satisfy that you meet this guideline.

***New* - Q3. To prove my continuous residence in the United States since June 15, 2007, must I provide evidence documenting my presence for every day, or every month, of that period?**

A3. To meet the continuous residence guideline, you must submit documentation that shows you have been living in the United States from June 15, 2007 up until the time of your request. You should provide documentation to account for as much of the period as reasonably possible, but there is no requirement that every day or month of that period be specifically accounted for through direct evidence. It is helpful to USCIS if you can submit evidence of your residence during at least each year of the period. USCIS will review the documentation in its totality to determine whether it is more likely than not that you were continuously residing in the United States for the period since June 15, 2007. Gaps in the documentation as to certain periods may raise doubts as to your continued residence if, for example, the gaps are lengthy or the record otherwise indicates that you may have been outside the United States for a period of time that was not brief, casual or innocent. If gaps in your documentation raise questions, USCIS may issue a request for evidence to allow you to submit additional documentation that supports your claimed continuous residence.

Affidavits may be submitted to explain a gap in the documentation demonstrating that you meet the five year continuous residence requirement. If you submit affidavits related to the continuous residence requirement, you must submit two or more affidavits, sworn to or affirmed by people other than yourself, who have direct personal knowledge of the events and circumstances during the period as to which there is a gap in the documentation. Affidavits may only be used to explain gaps in your continuous residence; they cannot be used as evidence that you meet the entire five year continuous residence requirement.

***New* - Q4. If I provide my employee with information regarding his or her employment to support a request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals, will that information be used for immigration enforcement purposes against me and/or my company?**

A4. You may, as you determine appropriate, provide individuals requesting deferred action for childhood arrivals with documentation which verifies their employment. This information will not be shared with ICE for civil immigration enforcement purposes pursuant to INA section 274A unless there is evidence of egregious violations of criminal statutes or widespread abuses.

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Cases in Other Immigration Processes

Q1: Will I be considered to be in unlawful status if I had an application for asylum or cancellation of removal pending before either USCIS or the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) on June 15, 2012?

A1: Yes. If you had an application for asylum or cancellation of removal, or similar relief, pending before either USCIS or EOIR as of June 15, 2012, but had no lawful status, you may request consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals.

Q2: Can I request consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals from USCIS if I am in immigration detention under the custody of ICE?

A2: No. If you are currently in immigration detention, you may not request consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals from USCIS. If you think you may meet the guidelines of this process, you should identify yourself to your

detention officer or contact the ICE Office of the Public Advocate so that ICE may review your case. The ICE Office of the Public Advocate can be reached through the Office's hotline at 1-888-351-4024 (staffed 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday – Friday) or by email at EROPublicAdvocate@ice.dhs.gov

Q3: If I am about to be removed by ICE and believe that I meet the guidelines for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals, what steps should I take to seek review of your case before removal?

A3: If you believe you can demonstrate that you meet the guidelines and are about to be removed, you should immediately contact either the Law Enforcement Support Center's hotline at 1-855-448-6903 (staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or the ICE Office of the Public Advocate through the Office's hotline at 1-888-351-4024 (staffed 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday – Friday) or by email at EROPublicAdvocate@ice.dhs.gov.

Q4: If individuals meet the guidelines for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals and are encountered by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) or ICE, will they be placed into removal proceedings?

A4: This policy is intended to allow CBP and ICE to focus on priority cases. Pursuant to the direction of the Secretary of Homeland Security, if an individual meets the guidelines of this process, CBP or ICE should exercise their discretion on a case-by-case basis to prevent qualifying individuals from being apprehended, placed into removal proceedings, or removed. If individuals believe that, in light of this policy, they should not have been placed into removal proceedings, contact either the Law Enforcement Support Center's hotline at 1-855-448-6903 (staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or the ICE Office of the Public Advocate through the Office's hotline at 1-888-351-4024 (staffed 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday – Friday) or by email at EROPublicAdvocate@ice.dhs.gov.

Q5: If I accepted an offer of administrative closure under the case-by-case review process or my case was terminated as part of the case-by-case review process, can I be considered for deferred action under this process?

A5: Yes. If you can demonstrate that you meet the guidelines, you will be able to request consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals even if you have accepted an offer of administrative closure or termination under the case-by-case review process. If you are in removal proceedings and have already been identified as meeting the guidelines and warranting discretion as part of ICE's case-by-case review, ICE already has offered you deferred action for a period of two years, subject to renewal.

Q6: If I declined an offer of administrative closure under the case-by-case review process, can I be considered for deferred action under this process?

A6: Yes. If you can demonstrate that you meet the guidelines, you will be able to request consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals from USCIS even if you declined an offer of administrative closure under the case-by-case review process.

Q7: If my case was reviewed as part of the case-by-case review process but I was not offered administrative closure, can I be considered for deferred action under this process?

A7: Yes. If you can demonstrate that you meet the guidelines, you will be able to

request consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals from USCIS even if you were not offered administrative closure following review of your case as part of the case-by-case review process.

Q8: How will ICE and USCIS handle cases involving individuals who do not satisfy the guidelines of this process but believe they may warrant an exercise of prosecutorial discretion under the June 2011 Prosecutorial Discretion Memoranda?

A8: If USCIS determines that you do not satisfy the guidelines or otherwise determines you do not warrant an exercise of prosecutorial discretion, then it will decline to defer action in your case. If you are currently in removal proceedings, have a final order, or have a voluntary departure order, you may then request ICE consider whether to exercise prosecutorial discretion under the ICE June 2011 Prosecutorial Discretion Memoranda through any of the established channels at ICE, including through a request to the ICE Office of the Public Advocate or to the local Field Office Director. USCIS will not consider requests for review under the ICE June 2011 Prosecutorial Discretion Memoranda.

Q9: What should I do if I meet the guidelines of this process and have been issued an ICE detainer following an arrest by a state or local law enforcement officer?

A9: If you meet the guidelines and have been served a detainer, you should immediately contact either the Law Enforcement Support Center's hotline at 1-855-448-6903 (staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or the ICE Office of the Public Advocate either through the Office's hotline at 1-888-351-4024 (staffed 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday – Friday) or by email at EROPublicAdvocate@ice.dhs.gov.

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Avoiding Scams and Preventing Fraud

Q1: Someone told me if I pay them a fee, they can expedite my deferred action for childhood arrivals request, is this true?

A1: No. There is no expedited processing for deferred action. Dishonest practitioners may promise to provide you with faster services if you pay them a fee. These people are trying to scam you and take your money. Visit our [Avoid Scams](#) page to learn how you can protect yourself from immigration scams.

Make sure you seek information about requests for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals from official government sources such as USCIS or the Department of Homeland Security. If you are seeking legal advice, visit our [Find Legal Services](#) page to learn how to choose a licensed attorney or accredited representative.

Q2: What steps will USCIS and ICE take if I engage in fraud through the new process?

A2: If you knowingly make a misrepresentation, or knowingly fail to disclose facts, in an effort to have your case deferred or obtain work authorization through this new process, you will be treated as an immigration enforcement priority to the fullest extent permitted by law, and be subject to criminal prosecution and/or removal from the United States.

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