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DE BLASIO ADMINISTRATION LAUNCHES EDUCATION INITIATIVE FOR DACA-ELIGIBLE IMMIGRANTS

New program will help immigrants complete educational requirement needed for DACA eligibility

DACA can transform lives by providing temporary protection from deportation, as well as access to work authorization

NEW YORK—The de Blasio Administration and the City University of New York today announced the launch of the ActionNYC DACA Education Initiative. The program will provide classes through nine community-based education providers to assist immigrant New Yorkers in fulfilling DACA’s educational requirement. DACA, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals – a federal program that offers temporary protection from deportation and access to work authorization, among other benefits – will increase opportunities for social and economic mobility for immigrants across New York City.

“New York City is home to nearly half a million undocumented immigrants. They are our neighbors, colleagues, friends, and family. We launched a major effort to help these New Yorkers come out of the shadows with ActionNYC, and now we’re going a step further. Our new education initiative will provide immigrants with an invaluable opportunity to obtain the sense of security needed to transform their lives,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

Despite the success of DACA, thousands of potentially eligible New Yorkers have not applied because they do not yet meet the education requirement for the program. To meet the education requirement for DACA, immigrants must demonstrate graduation from high school, or current enrollment in a qualifying educational program, like those supported by the DACA Education Initiative. Those who were honorably discharged from the U.S. military may also be eligible.

Educational services such as English literacy and high school equivalency classes will be provided through nine community-based organizations run by the following partners: BronxWorks, Fifth Avenue Committee, Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement, LaGuardia Community College, Make the Road New York, New York City College of Technology,

Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation, NYU Lutheran Family Health Centers, and Queens Library.

Once enrolled in classes, participants will have the opportunity to work with a case manager who will conduct a needs assessment and set goals with each participant. Case managers will help connect participants to social services and vocational or further educational programs. Through this model, the DACA Education Initiative will allow participants to fulfill the DACA education requirement and also facilitate additional opportunities for social mobility.

“The DACA Education Initiative will build a bridge for New Yorkers to access important DACA benefits that may have otherwise been out of reach,” said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives Richard Buery**. “Now a lack of a formal education will not be a barrier for those seeking DACA.”

“Today the de Blasio Administration is taking an important step to help immigrants enroll in high-quality, community-based education classes that will also help them qualify for the life-changing benefits of DACA,” said **Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs Commissioner Nisha Agarwal**. “We look forward to connecting New Yorkers to the literacy, vocational and educational classes they need to establish their eligibility for DACA.”

“The City University of New York has a long, proud history of opening the doors of educational opportunity to tens of thousands of immigrant students. Through the ActionNYC DACA Education Initiative, CUNY is very pleased to partner with the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs to enhance the economic, civic and linguistic integration of New York City’s DACA population,” said **Donna Linderman, University Dean for Student Success Initiatives and Executive Director of Accelerated Study in Associate Programs**.

The DACA Education Initiative is the latest effort by the de Blasio Administration to work with a wide range of partners to inform New York City immigrants about the benefits of DACA and help make the program more accessible:

- In 2016, MOIA, with the support of the New York State Health Foundation, embarked on a DACA Health Care Access ad campaign, which reached more than 300,000 immigrants through targeted advertising to inform New Yorkers about DACA’s benefits, including access to health care.
- In 2014, MOIA, together with the New York City Young Men’s Initiative, ran a public advertising campaign about DACA, which was the first mass marketing campaign by the City targeting immigrants to make them aware of available immigration relief.

Although the implementation of the President’s 2014 executive actions on immigration remains halted due to litigation, immigrants can continue to apply for the original DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) program, which recently celebrated its fourth anniversary on August 15.

DACA is a powerful program that has already provided life-changing benefits to over 725,000 immigrants nationwide, including over 36,000 New York State residents. Under DACA, eligible undocumented immigrants with significant ties to the United States can obtain temporary protection from deportation and access to work authorization and a Social Security number, as well as access to a driver's license and, in New York State, access to health care for income-eligible immigrants.

Immigrant New Yorkers who think they may be eligible for the ActionNYC DACA Education Initiative and would like to enroll should call 311 and say "ActionNYC." For more information on DACA, immigrant New Yorkers should call 311 and say "DACA." All immigrant New Yorkers can call 311 and say "ActionNYC" to get free, safe immigration legal help.

"DACA continues to transform the lives of our New York Dreamers -and through this new ActionNYC educational initiative, our City is promising to remove barriers to this opportunity. We are doing more than encouraging individuals to apply for DACA, we are giving them the tools they need to successfully apply and thrive in this City as DACA recipients. I thank the local education service providers and the teachers for their invaluable service to our community and I commit to continue fighting for additional resources for adult literacy services that help lift entire communities of working families in New York City," said **Council Member Carlos Menchaca, Chair of the Committee on Immigration.**

"ActionNYC's new DACA Education Initiative will help protect many undocumented New Yorkers by connecting them with work authorization and preventing deportation," said NYC Council Member Daniel Dromm (D-Jackson Heights, Elmhurst). "This initiative truly demonstrates our city's commitment to the well-being of our immigrant families. I will continue to work with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to implement and development programs that improve the quality of life for immigrants and all people who call our city home," said **Council Member Daniel Dromm, Chair of the Committee on Education.**

"As a city that values the contributions of its immigrant communities, the ActionNYC DACA Education Initiative goes further to support individuals who are potentially eligible for DACA so they may remain here with their families. Working with community-based organizations that well know the communities they serve is a keen approach to reaching individuals who are missing out on the opportunity to remain here with protected status. I applaud Mayor de Blasio, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and CUNY for rising to the occasion and supporting New York City's immigrant families," said **Council Member Julissa Ferreras-Copeland.**

"Since its implementation four years ago, the DACA program has had an enormously positive impact on the lives of hundreds of thousands of hard working immigrants living here in America. The new initiative will ensure that immigrants who are otherwise DACA-eligible but do not have a high school education receive educational opportunities through community-based providers who will assist them accessing this outstanding immigrant benefit. I commend the de Blasio administration for continuing to take actions that uplift immigrant families and individuals striving to fulfill the American Dream in New York City," said **Council Member Mathieu Eugene, 40th District, Brooklyn.**

"DACA has already impacted tens of thousands of New Yorkers, but we know that some are being left behind because they lack the education necessary to qualify. The DACA Education initiative not only provides the educational courses needed to qualify for DACA, but also provides legal and vocational counseling—taken together, it's a holistic approach to the needs of the immigrant community and one that I believe will benefit thousands more New Yorkers in the years to come," said **Council Member Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.**

"DACA assistance is one of the most common issues my office faces from new immigrants. While there is never a simple solution to the many pitfalls plaguing our country's immigration process, the DACA Education Initiative will greatly help to provide applicants with essential tools to navigate the system," said **Council Member Peter Koo.**

"The Academy of Medical & Public Health Services (AMPHS) is excited to partner with MOIA on the DACA Education Program as an outreach partner. AMPHS works to provide healthcare access to the underserved in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, a largely immigrant community, where many are undocumented or new to the country. Day in and day out, we see people who are eligible to receive DACA (and hence, health insurance), but do not take advantage of it because they are afraid to do so or because they do not have the resources to complete the education requirements to apply for the program. We look forward to working with MOIA to open the doors to new opportunities for our immigrant neighbors," said **Mon Yuck Yu, Executive Vice President & Chief of Staff, Academy of Medical & Public Health Services.**

"We at BronxWorks are pleased to participate in this important initiative," said **John Weed, assistant executive director of BronxWorks.** "Working with the immigrant population of New York City is at the core of the BronxWorks' mission."

"Fifth Avenue Committee couldn't be more proud to be part of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs' DACA Education Initiative. As a country and a city, we rely on the hard work and moral compass of our immigrant population. Fifth Avenue Committee will continue to fight to bring this vital population out of the shadows and provide them the legal and academic support they deserve and for which they have worked so hard," said **Executive Director Michelle de la Uz.**

"Riis Settlement is grateful for the opportunity to partner with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and CUNY on the ActionNYC Education Initiative. There is a high need for education and case management services among DACA-eligible residents of Western Queens and we are thrilled to have been chosen as a collaborator in this vital project to expand opportunity to *all* New Yorkers," said **Christopher Hanway, executive director, Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement.**

"This grant will enable us to expand our educational pathways for youth who qualify for deferred action and want to make better lives for themselves in the US, and we're delighted to partner with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs on this important program," said **LaGuardia Community College President Gail O. Mellow.**

"The ActionNYC DACA Education Initiative is yet another significant investment that our City is making in its immigrant communities. Without this program, many otherwise eligible immigrant New Yorkers would not be able to access life-changing immigration relief. We applaud our City for creating educational opportunities for immigrant New Yorkers and thereby strengthening our City," said **Theo Oshiro, Deputy Director, Make the Road New York.**

“We are delighted to be a part of the new and exciting DACA Education Initiative that will provide students the opportunity to enroll in classes to improve their English language skills, prepare for work and careers, obtain a high school diploma, attend college, or pursue other educational options. Offering flexible schedules and individual case management, we are confident that students will be able to set achievable goals leading to greater social and economic outcomes,” said **Gil Gerena, Director of CUNY Language Immersion Program and Adult Education Programs at New York City College of Technology.**

“NMIC is excited to expand its partnership with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to bring highly needed legal and educational services to New York City's low-income immigrant communities. Helping these individuals to achieve their educational and career goals, free from the fear of deportation or recrimination, is vital to NMIC's mission and to ensuring the health of New York City's vibrant immigrant population that enriches our City's history and culture,” said **Maria Lizardo, executive director of the Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation.**

“The ESOL classes will also offer DACA-eligible participants opportunities for social and economic mobility both through its educational programming and connections to workforce development and case management services,” said **Kathy Hopkins, vice president of Community-Based Programs, NYU Lutheran Family Health Centers.** “NYU Lutheran Family Health Centers is a proud supporter of family strengthening services. In doing so, our network continues to bridge gaps in care and maximize a positive impact for all families, including the growing number of young adults in the community.”

“Many of our library customers are exactly those ActionNYC seeks to help,” said **Queens Library President and CEO Dennis M. Walcott.** “The mission of our institution is to provide educational, technological and, increasingly, economic opportunities for everyone who comes through our doors, and we are very happy to join with MOIA to make it possible for these immigrant New Yorkers to stay here and realize their dreams.”

ActionNYC is a \$8.5 million initiative, funded as part of the FY17 Adopted Budget in partnership with the City Council. Visit nyc.gov/ActionNYC for more information on the program.

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