

Steps to Take if Your DACA Renewal Is Delayed

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Prepared by the [National Immigration Law Center](#) and the [Immigrant Legal Resource Center](#)

The suggestions in this document are based on feedback we have received primarily from DACA renewal applicants. If you have any additional suggestions or feedback, please email the National Immigration Law Center (NILC) at info@nilc.org. If you have questions about your specific case or situation, we highly recommend you consult with an experienced immigration lawyer.

Did your Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and employment authorization document (EAD) expire, or will they expire soon?

If you have sent your renewal application but are concerned because your DACA and work authorization have expired or will expire before your DACA is renewed, consider following these steps to 1) get information about the status of your renewal application and, if appropriate, 2) ask U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to process your renewal more quickly.

USCIS suggests that you submit your completed renewal application at least 150 days (5 months), but no later than 120 days (4 months), before your current DACA and EAD expire. In the past, some people considered renewing “early” (e.g. when there’s more than 150 days left before your current DACA and EAD expire) but keep in mind that USCIS may reject and return your request if sent too early. If USCIS accepts, processes, and approves your “early” renewal application, the date on which your DACA and EAD renewal become effective may be earlier than the expiration date on your current DACA and EAD. If you submit your completed renewal application “late” (e.g. when there’s less than 120 days before your current DACA and EAD expire), USCIS will still accept and process the application, but your DACA may expire while you wait, depending on how processing is going and how late you applied for renewal. To help you figure out which specific dates are 150 and 120 days before your DACA expires, enter your DACA and EAD expiration date into NILC’s DACA Renewal Calculator, www.nilc.org/dacarenewalcalculator/.

Are you concerned about processing delays?

As of June 2026, DACA renewal requests are being handled by the Service Center Operations (SCOPS), which coordinates across USCIS’s service centers. USCIS no longer provides processing times for specific service centers. Instead, the processing times—“wait times”—across service centers are estimated to be around 3.5-4 months. For the latest information, see USCIS’s Check Case Processing Times website: <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times>.

USCIS processing times vary, so it is important to check in with a legal service provider to learn how processing is going and what the current wait times are. Because USCIS’s processing of your renewal application may be delayed, we recommend that you apply 150 days (5 months) before your DACA expires to avoid any lapses in your DACA and EAD. NILC’s DACA Renewal Calculator — <https://www.nilc.org/resources/daca-renewal-calculator/>— can help you figure out when to submit your renewal application in time so that your DACA and EAD are less likely to expire before your renewal application is processed.

- ▶ **Note:** Given the uncertainty of what will happen with DACA, we encourage people requesting DACA to consult with an experienced immigration attorney or accredited representative (at a nonprofit organization that helps people with immigration matters) before you apply for renewal, to discuss your specific case.

Will Filing Outside Recommended Times Affect My DACA?

If you do not submit your DACA renewal application within the 120 day window before it expires, USCIS will still accept your application and process it, but your DACA might expire before you get your renewal, depending on how long processing is taking and how late you applied. If you submit your DACA renewal application after it has expired, but before it has expired for more than a year, USCIS will still accept and process your application.

If you apply earlier than the 150 days, USCIS may reject and return your request. However, if USCIS accepts, processes, and approves your “early” filed application, it can affect how long your new DACA and EAD are issued for. Depending on how long processing the renewal takes, you may receive a new DACA and EAD period that starts before your previous DACA and EAD expires (meaning you would not get an additional full two years of DACA). This is because USCIS starts a DACA issuance on the day they approve the application, not the day the previous DACA expired.

- ▶ **Example 1:** Steven’s current period of DACA expires on November 1, 2026. Steven should ideally apply between June 4, 2026 (150 day-mark) and July 4, 2026 (120-day mark). He sends in his renewal application “early” on May 1, 2026, 7 months before his DACA expires. USCIS accepts his application and Steven receives his DACA approval and new EAD on September 1, 2026. Because he applied early, his DACA and EAD did not expire but he also lost out on two months of DACA.
- ▶ **Example 2:** Steven’s current period of DACA expires on November 1, 2026. Steven should ideally apply between June 4, 2026 (150 day-mark) and July 4, 2026 (120-day mark). He sends in his renewal application “late” on August 1, 2026, 3 months before his DACA expires. Because the processing times are around 5 months when he applies, Steven does not receive his DACA renewal and EAD until January 1, 2027. As a result of applying “late”, he had an expired DACA and EAD for two months, at which time he could have also lost his job.

What factors are likely to cause a longer application processing time?

Different things can affect a delay in processing your DACA, such as late filing, arrests, criminal convictions, prior immigration history, in-person biometric (fingerprinting) appointments, and policy changes at USCIS. For more information on what could be causing your DACA delay, visit NILC's resource "Why Some DACA Renewals Are Taking Longer—and What You Can Do," <https://www.nilc.org/articles/why-some-daca-renewals-are-taking-longer-and-what-you-can-do/>.

- ▶ **USCIS pauses processing immigration relief applications from certain countries:** USCIS has paused the processing of certain applications, including DACA renewals, filed by people who are nationals of certain countries. This affects nationals from Afghanistan, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Republic of Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Dominica, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gabon, Gambia, Haiti, Iran, Laos, Libya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Palestinian Authority, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Togo, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. On June 5, a federal court [ordered](#) USCIS to lift the pause and to process these requests. For updates on the case, please visit Democracy Forward's [website](#).

If you are from one of these countries and need to renew your DACA (or have already applied for DACA renewal), you should reach out to a legal service provider to discuss the implications of having your DACA renewal application potentially paused.

What can you do if your DACA renewal is delayed?

Some people who've previously applied to renew their DACA have not had their application approved before their DACA and work authorization expired. Others have received their renewal close to the date their DACA and work authorization expired. The suggestions or tips described below were developed based on our experience helping people who are in these situations. Even if you did not submit your DACA renewal application within the time period that USCIS recommends, you may still be able to take some of the steps described below to be informed about your application's progress and possibly speed up its processing. Due to the uncertainty of what will happen with DACA given possible actions by the administration or court affecting the availability of DACA, we recommend being proactive and inquiring about your case if you are experiencing delays. Some of the options described may be more effective than others, depending on your particular case. Therefore, we recommend taking as many of these steps as you can.

- ▶ **Note on re-filing a DACA renewal if your DACA renewal is delayed:** Recently, some people have tried re-filing a DACA renewal request if their DACA is delayed. People who have decided to do this have filed and paid the filing fee again. Though some people reported getting an approval after re-filing, it is unclear if the re-filing was what made the approval happen. We don't know the impact of re-filing at this

time. First, you have to pay USCIS the filing again if you re-file. Second, having two pending DACA renewals could eventually cause other issues in your case. A better course of action could be taking the steps described below to see if you can urge USCIS to take action on your delayed renewal request. If you are interested in submitting a second renewal request, it is best to contact an attorney or legal service provider who can help you determine whether to submit the request.

When you take any of these steps, be prepared to provide:

- ▶ your full name
- ▶ your alien registration/USCIS number (A-number)
- ▶ your renewal application receipt numbers and receipt dates (found on your Form I-797C Notice of Action, also called a receipt notice)
- ▶ the expiration date of your current DACA and employment authorization document (EAD)
- ▶ information you provided in the renewal application forms (I-821D and I-765) (If you made copies of the forms before you submitted them, have them on hand so you can refer to them.)

Below are the steps we suggest you take to follow up on your DACA renewal application.

It is important that you document every step you take when inquiring about your DACA. You should keep track of dates, notices, and how the delay is affecting you. This information will be useful as you move through the different steps and elevate your case inquiries.

1. CHECK YOUR CASE STATUS ONLINE

You can monitor your case's status by using USCIS's online "My Case Status" tool, at <https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do>. You will need to enter the receipt number for either your DACA application or your EAD application. (You should have received a receipt for each application after you submitted your renewal application.) USCIS's online case status tool may show that your renewal application has been approved before you receive your new EAD in the mail, so we recommend you check your case status online regularly.

You can also create a USCIS Electronic Immigration System (USCIS ELIS) online account to track the progress of your case — at <https://myaccount.uscis.gov/>.

2. SUBMIT AN "OUTSIDE NORMAL PROCESSING TIME" INQUIRY BY CONTACTING USCIS's Contact Center

You can also submit an "outside normal processing time" inquiry with USCIS if your DACA renewal has been pending for a period that is outside of the time listed for normal processing

times of the service center reviewing the application. As of the writing of this resource, processing times were listed at around 107-120 days (3.5-4 months). You can ask for review if your case is outside of normal processing times by going to the case processing times website, <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>, checking the months a request is estimated to take and if you have been waiting longer than the estimated time listed, you can submit an outside of normal processing times request. We recommend calling the USCIS Contact Center at 1-800-375-5283.

Tips: Because the USCIS website notes that a Tier 1 officer might not have any additional information than what is listed online, you might need to ask to speak to a Tier 2 officer.

3. REQUEST THAT YOUR CASE BE EXPEDITED

You can ask USCIS to process your renewal request more quickly by submitting an expedite request. Generally, an expedite request requires documentation to support the request to show severe financial loss or emergencies or urgent humanitarian situations, among others. While USCIS has long held that DACA requests could not be expedited, recently we've heard some cases were approved after an expedite request was submitted. If your DACA has expired or is close to expiring, and you are interested in submitting a request to expedite, it is best to contact an attorney or legal service provider who can help you complete the request. Requests can generally be made by calling the USCIS Contact Center at the 1-800-375-5283 and submitting documentation to support the request. You can also submit the expedite request through your myUSCIS account.

4. CONTACT YOUR CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Applicants who have not had success in getting a response from USCIS can contact the people who represent them in Congress for assistance, since their representative and senators have direct contacts with USCIS.

Call your representative's and senators' offices and ask to speak with their immigration caseworker. You can find out who your congresspeople are and get their contact information by entering your zip code at www.house.gov/representatives/find/ (to find your representative) and www.senate.gov/senators/index.htm (to find your senators).

We recommend that you start by getting the contact information for the congressperson's district or field office (their office that's closest to where you live) and call that office first to ask for help. The phone number will be on the congressperson's website. Then if you can't get the help you need from the local office, you should contact the congressperson's office in Washington, DC, and follow that office's process for submitting an inquiry about your case.

If you prefer to make the request online, you should go to your congressperson’s website and look for the option to “request help with a federal agency.” Follow the steps to submit your information and choose USCIS as the agency you want help with. Usually, you will be notified by the office after you submit all your information.

Most congressional offices will require you to fill out a form that is specific to their office giving them permission to communicate with USCIS about your case.

Be prepared to provide information about your case, the reason you are calling, as well as your name, A-number, receipt numbers and dates, type of case, etc. You should also be prepared to provide the office with the notes and timeline of any communications you’ve had with the USCIS Contact Center and the steps you have taken already to inquire about your case, including if you have already filed an expedite request. If you believe your case needs to be handled on an emergency basis, explain the urgency of your case up front and request that its handling be expedited (fast-tracked). State the problem you are facing as clearly as you can.

- ▶ **NOTE:** Each congressional office has its own structure, and some issues might be handled only by a congressman’s Washington, DC, office. If, after calling the local office, you feel you want more help, try calling the congressman’s DC office for additional support. In either case, explain your problem to the caseworker, who may be able to ask USCIS for information about your case.

5. CONTACT A LEGAL SERVICE PROVIDER

You may want to contact a legal service provider. To find a legal service provider in your area, visit <https://www.informedimmigrant.com/help/>. A service provider might be able to assist you in exploring what other options you might have. They may fill out a Form G-28 to be authorized as your attorney or accredited representative to be able to also inquire about your case with USCIS. A legal service provider may be able to answer your questions about employment, travel, and safety while you wait.