



September 14, 2017

Elaine Duke
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Acting Secretary Duke:

We write on behalf of the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., (CLINIC), Catholic Charities USA and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Office of Migration and Refugee Services (USCCB/MRS) to highlight the needs of certain Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients in the wake of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. In light of the terrible devastation wrought by these hurricanes, we urge you to provide impacted youth applying for DACA renewals with an extension of the filing deadline and an opportunity to qualify for fee waivers.

The U.S. Catholic Bishops and Catholic Charities USA have [long supported](#) DACA youth and have worked through the national Catholic Charities ministry to assist eligible young people file their applications and renewals. CLINIC's network of over 300 legal services providers have assisted tens of thousands of DACA applicants. Since 2012, we have done this work in partnership with the Department of Homeland Security, promoting public engagement and education on DACA and also helping to prevent incidents of notario fraud. This work has been rooted in our faith. As Catholics, we believe that the dignity of every human being, particularly that of our children and youth, must be protected.

With some of the largest populations of DACA youth living in Texas and Florida, we know that these individuals were among those whose lives were upended by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. These hurricanes, which brought with them torrential rainfall and winds over 130mph, wrought heartbreaking devastation upon Texas, Florida, Louisiana, Georgia, and South Carolina. Initial [estimates](#) suggest that the storms caused \$150 to \$200 billion worth of damage to homes, furnishings, vehicles, real estate, and public infrastructure. USCCB, Catholic Charities USA and local Catholic Charities agencies have been working heroically to raise resources, build response teams and assist the impacted communities. However, it will likely take months, if not years, to rebuild and replace what was lost.

In the [September 5, 2017 memorandum](#) on the rescission of the 2012 DACA program, the Administration determined that current DACA recipients whose status is set to expire between September 5, 2017 and March 5, 2018 may apply for a two-year renewal of DACA. The filing deadline for such applications was set for October 5, 2017. In light of the substantial devastation

caused by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, however, we request a three-month extension of the filing deadline for renewal-eligible DACA youth living in areas impacted by the hurricanes. These young people were among those evacuated and among those who returned to find their homes flooded and their personal belongings destroyed. Like many others, the current focus for these DACA youth is - as it should be - on restoring basic stability to their lives. As such, a short filing extension is warranted and ensures that they will not be unduly disadvantaged.

Additionally, we request that you provide the ability for impacted DACA youth to apply for fee waivers for their renewal applications. The economic toll of the hurricanes was massive; for many, their savings will need to be spent rebuilding homes and replacing basic necessities. DACA youth who do not have the means to pay \$495 filing fee due to the hurricane however, are not less deserving of the opportunity to renew their status and we request you evaluate fee waivers in certain demonstrable hurricane devastation-related situations.

In the wake of great tragedy, we must come together as a nation to support all those whose lives have been upended. We respectfully ask for a short extension of the renewal filing deadline and limited fee waiver opportunities for DACA youth impacted by the hurricanes. We strongly believe that doing so would be both the humane and the just course of action. We appreciate your consideration of our requests and would welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you may have or meet with you on these and other issues related to DACA.

Sincerely,



William Canny
Executive Director
Migration and Refugee Services
U.S. Conference of Catholic
Bishops



Sister Donna Markham OP,
PhD
President and CEO
Catholic Charities USA



Jeanne M. Atkinson, Esq.
Executive Director
Catholic Legal Immigration
Network Inc. (CLINIC)