

WORK PERMITS FOR ALL!

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[RECORDING HERE](#) and [PHOTOS HERE](#).

Illinois Community Leaders and Elected Officials Respond to President Biden's Immigration Proclamation; Underscore Millions of Long-Term Undocumented are Left Out

Advocates and Elected Officials Emphasize That This is a Step Forward and Stress the Importance of Continuing to Work with the Biden Administration to Secure a Pathway to Citizenship for All Immigrants.

CHICAGO – Today, community leaders, impacted immigrants and elected officials gathered to celebrate the most significant action on immigration since President Obama signed the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) protections 12 years ago.

Thanks to President Biden's [executive order](#), over [500,000 spouses of U.S. citizens](#) will no longer have to leave their families to progress along their path to legal permanent residency and, ultimately, citizenship. In addition, the policy is also expected to benefit an estimated 50,000 immigrant children with a parent married to a U.S. citizen.

This is a historic moment which comes in direct response to the advocacy and organizing in Illinois and by our partners in Washington, D.C. and across the country.

This proclamation comes just weeks after the Illinois General Assembly passed a resolution calling on the President to use his executive authority to extend work permits to long-term undocumented immigrants in Illinois, citing the significant economic benefit of such a move amid prolonged workforce shortages that are stymying economic growth. Also, [state lawmakers](#) continued to call upon the Biden administration to issue work permits for [long-term immigrants](#), [Dreamers ineligible for DACA](#) and spouses of U.S. citizens.

While immigrant and worker rights advocates remain focused on the ultimate goal of comprehensive immigration reform with a meaningful pathway to citizenship, today's announcement is a significant step forward to help and protect hundreds of thousands of families across the country. It is a welcome move, particularly in light of the disappointing border policy announced two weeks ago.

[Please tune in here](#) on Friday, June 21 at 1 p.m. CST, for an English language Q&A and at 2 p.m. CST for a Spanish language Q&A to unpack what we know about this new policy and what comes next.

QUOTES:

"Today, we are hoping for [a] new path forward for 500,000 spouses of U.S. citizens and for Dreamers who can put their degrees to work through opening a system visa program," said **Nana Ouro-Agoro**, President and CEO of [Akwaaba Quad Cities](#). "We believe that the president can and should do more, especially the designation of countries like Haiti, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Cameroon, as well as the designation of TPS for Congo, Mali, and Mauritania. We are ready to continue to advocate for protecting all immigrants."

Giselle Rodriguez, Founder of [Illinois Workers in Action](#) and a Dreamer, said, "Today, I have renewed hope that there may now be a pathway for me, a path to work permits. There's a new hope in hundreds of families like mine and a new hope for Dreamers who go to college without knowing what they can do with their degrees. We have so much work to do to ensure these programs are successful and to continue to expand opportunities for more immigrants."

"My goal is to become a certified public accountant. Yesterday's announcement is bringing hope to a lot of people like myself and will allow me to apply for a work visa" said **Mariana Gutierrez**, [Pilsen Neighbors Community Council](#). "I also want to continue to advocate for my parents who have been living here for the past 22 years as well. They worked in factories and as a truck driver. It has been a struggle to find a good-paying job with benefits. It's clear that Biden has the power to grant us relief, and we are eager to see how his administration can continue to support us."

"This announcement at the White House is important as it's the most significant action taken by the federal government in 12 years since President Obama took action. We have been insisting for almost six years in Congress that we wanted legislation to include everybody. It's not everything we want, but a partial victory demonstrates what is possible. So thank you, and the fight continues." said **U.S. Rep. Jesús "Chuy" García (D-IL)**

"I'm grateful to be here, and I'm also a bit emotional—mixed emotions in many ways. But I want to start by acknowledging that we live in a country where we're still pitted against each other constantly. Immigrants against immigrants. Black against Latino, Asian Americans against Black. It is important to remember that today is also a very special day, as we acknowledge that today is Juneteenth. The commemoration of the day enslaved black people in Texas received the long, long-awaited good news of emancipation from slavery. On Second Independence Day, I want to say that we join our Black neighbors in joyous celebration and affirm our shared responsibility to realize that racial justice uplifts our black and our brown communities together because our liberation is an intertwined liberation of each other," said **U.S. Rep. Delia C. Ramirez (D-IL)**. "The Biden administration announcement means that mixed-status families like mine can have extended protections and apply to be able to stay together. Many people don't know that when you marry a U.S. citizen, it's not automatic. You don't automatically become a U.S. citizen. In many cases, you are here for 23 years, married for 15 or 20 years, and you're still undocumented. Yesterday's announcement is a huge step forward, but we know we have much more to do."

"We are proud and happy that President Biden is using his authority to grant work permits and protection to mixed-status families and open up visas for Dreamers," said **Eréndira Rendón**, vice president of Immigrant Justice at [The Resurrection Project](#). "The Resurrection Project

and our partners are ready to continue to advocate for more executive actions to expand work permits for the long-term undocumented. This is only the beginning. We urge community members who believe they may be eligible to seek ethical, legal advice and follow [The Resurrection Project](#) for updates.”

“I have to say that I am so inspired by you, by all of you, by our community, by those who stand with us in the struggle for humane solutions that help our immigrant community to have safety and security,” said **Sylvia Puente, President and CEO of the [Latino Policy Forum](#)**.

“Yesterday was proof of the tremendous power as we continue to use our collective voice and keep pushing until we finally have comprehensive immigration reform so that all in our community live with security and dignity. Our communities deserve this and more, and we cannot stop. Although this is a great step, we cannot and will not stop until everyone has the peace of mind and stability of lawful immigration status.”

“The Chicago Workers Collaborative encounters workers every day who are suffering abuse in the workplace because of their immigration status. They endure this abuse in silence because they feel that they could face deportation if they push back at all. That leaves immigrant workers to choose between enduring unending abuse or running the risk of being torn away from their families and their communities,” said **Andrew Herrera, lobbyist for the [Chicago Workers Collaborative](#)**. “When we passed the Work Permits for All resolution, it resonated across the country because it was no longer ‘just’ the Latino community speaking up, or even the broader immigrant community, it was the entire State of Illinois formally calling for protections for its immigrant workforce. With the backing of the state, our message was heard, and we have now won the first major policy change on this issue in over a decade. While many of our workers were left out of this deal, we are energized by the victory and committed to continuing the fight until all immigrants have a pathway to citizenship.”

“We have organized to deliver a significant win for hundreds of thousands of mixed-status families and DREAMers who have been here for decades. This would not have been possible if it wasn't for the tireless organizing groups like the Resurrection Project, the American Business Immigration Coalition (ABIC), Unite Here Local One, the Illinois Restaurant Association, electors in every level of government in Illinois, and the hundreds who organized to push the Biden administration in the face of some very harmful and aggressive border policy,” said **40th Ward Alderperson Andre Vazquez**. “While we are grateful for this historic accomplishment, we also recognize that it doesn't go far enough. When we say work permits for all, we mean it, and we reject any of the manufactured division that has been perpetuated between those who have been here for years and those who have just gotten here. We know that many have been here for decades and aren't married to citizens, just as we know some have been here less than a decade but will continue to be a part of the fabric of this nation.”

Jaime di Paulo, Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and American Business Immigration Coalition, said, “Thank you, President Biden, this is the first step. The Illinois Hispanic Chamber represents about 120,000 Latino businesses in the state of Illinois, and many workers are undocumented and deserve to be legal and deserve to be paid minimum wage. We were happy about this, and hopefully, we will be fighting immigration reform, *para todos*.”

IMPORTANT CONTEXT:

The proclamation, as announced, would help immigrants in three key ways:

- Help certain noncitizen spouses and children apply for lawful permanent residence, a status they are already eligible for, without leaving the country. This action will protect approximately 500,000 spouses of U.S. citizens, and approximately 50,000 noncitizen children under the age of 21 whose parent is married to a U.S. citizen.
- Allow individuals, including Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients and other Dreamers, who have earned a degree at an accredited U.S. institution of higher education in the United States, and who have received an offer of employment from a U.S. employer in a field related to their degree, to more quickly receive work visas.
- Expand the issuance of employment visas to college graduates with a high skilled job offer.

Many undocumented spouses of U.S. citizens are currently entitled to lawful permanent resident status but must apply for status outside of the U.S. if they initially entered without permission. However, upon leaving the country, they are barred from reentering for either three or 10 years. Meaning, they would be forced to wait outside of the U.S., often separated from their families. Today's announcement would allow for undocumented spouses of U.S. citizens to "parole in place" or stay in the U.S., thereby not triggering the three or 10-year bars separating families and removing a significant barrier to finally becoming [Lawful Permanent Residents](#) (LPRs) and, eventually, gain [U.S. citizenship](#).

The executive action is also expected to allow some DACA recipients to apply for work authorization visas and provide a pathway to an employment-based [green card](#). The policy change would allow DACA recipients to have a more stable and permanent immigration status and eventually qualify for and become U.S. citizens.

Only select groups of immigrants will be eligible for the relief announced today by the White House. **It is critical that those who believe they may be eligible for relief consult with a reputable legal agency or private legal counsel *before* submitting any application to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), or any other federal agency.** People must be on high alert because "notarios" and other bad actors will take advantage of the new developments to personally profit. Not seeking legal counsel from an established organization or reputable lawyer could put your case at risk and/or lead to problems as severe as imprisonment or deportation.

BACKGROUND

TRP: [Illinois Advocates and Elected Officials Celebrate New Executive Order on Work Permits as Welcome, Partial, Victory. Pledge Continued Organizing and Advocacy.](#) (June 18, 2024)

ABIC: [On Heels of Asylum Restrictions at the Southern Border, Illinois Elected Leaders and Advocates Call on President Biden to Issue Emergency Work Permits to Strengthen Economy and Build Communities](#) (June 7, 2024)

TRP: [Illinois General Assembly Approves Work Permits for All Resolution](#) (May 28, 2024)

RESOURCES

The Resurrection Project: [Immigration Legal Services](#)

National Immigrant Justice Center: [Other Legal and Social Services Resources](#)

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About The Resurrection Project

The Resurrection Project (TRP) builds trusting relationships to educate and propel individuals, immigrants and families to achieve their social and economic aspirations, stable homes and equitable participation in their community. TRP is a leading provider of affordable housing, financial education and immigration services on Chicago's Southwest side.

During the past three decades, TRP has worked to improve the lives of individuals and families by creating wealth, building assets and engaging residents to be catalysts for change. Rooted in the Pilsen community, TRP's impact now extends across the City of Chicago and throughout the State of Illinois; we are making steady progress towards leveraging and preserving more than \$1 billion in community wealth by 2025. To learn more about our programs and services, visit us at resurrectionproject.org.

About the Latino Policy Forum

The Latino Policy Forum is the only organization in the Chicago area that facilitates the involvement of Latinos at all levels of public decision-making. The Forum conducts analysis to inform, influence and lead. Its goals are to improve education outcomes, advocate for affordable housing, promote just immigration policies and engage diverse sectors of the community, with an understanding that advancing Latinos advances a shared future. For more information, visit latinopolicyforum.org.

[American Business Immigration Coalition \(ABIC\)](#) is a bipartisan coalition of 1,400+ CEOs, business owners, and trade associations across the country. ABIC promotes common sense immigration reform that advances economic competitiveness, provides companies with both the high-skilled and low-skilled talent they need, and allows the integration of immigrants into our economy as consumers, workers, entrepreneurs and citizens.