

Obama deportation reprieve expands

The Washington Post

August 8, 2012 Wednesday, Met 2 Edition

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Distribution: Every Zone

Section: A-SECTION; Pg. A15

Length: 437 words

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Body

About 350,000 more illegal immigrants than previously thought could earn an additional two years in the United States when President **Obama**'s new policy takes effect next week, according to the Migration Policy Institute.

Under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, students age 30 or younger who are enrolled in school on the day they apply will be eligible for a two-year **reprieve** from **deportation** if they demonstrate that they came to the United States before their 16th birthday, lived here for the past five years and have not been convicted of certain crimes or pose a national security threat.

Before the new rule was announced last week, the program was to be open to students enrolled in school as of June 15, 2012, or those who have graduated high school or received a high school equivalency or honorably left the armed services, including the Coast Guard.

The program takes effect Aug. 15, when the government will begin accepting applications for deferral.

The application includes a fee of \$465, used to fund the program, although exemptions will be provided for minors, homeless youths, those with chronic disabilities and those who fall below 150 percent of the poverty level.

Applicants who are denied deferral will not have the option to appeal. Those approved will be able to separately apply for work authorization in the United States.

The institute estimated in June that 1.4 million illegal immigrants could benefit from the program. Those estimates included only students who were enrolled in school as of that date.

Speaking Tuesday at a panel at the Carnegie Institution for Science, Doris Meissner, director of the institute's U.S. Immigration Policy Program, said as many as 1.76 million people could now be eligible, based on new guidance released Friday by the Department of Homeland Security.

Jeanne Batalova, an author of the report, said the program is "a powerful incentive to go back to school" for young people who previously were not continuing their education.

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Alejandro Mayorkas, director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, emphasized that the program only serves to delay **deportation** for successful applicants, without excusing "past unlawful presence."

"It does not provide a pathway to permanent residence or citizenship," Mayorkas said.

DHS previously said that it may need to hire more than 1,400 full-time employees, as well as contractors, to handle the volume of requests. Mayorkas said both the number of applications and the pace at which they come in will determine how long it takes service centers throughout the United States to process them.

- Associated Press

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Publication-Type: Newspaper

Subject: IMMIGRATION (90%); CITIZENSHIP (90%); STUDENTS & STUDENT LIFE (90%); HIGH SCHOOLS (90%); **DEPORTATION** (89%); ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS (78%); US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (78%); PUBLIC POLICY (78%); AGENCY RULEMAKING (78%); POOR POPULATION (77%); SPECIAL INVESTIGATIVE FORCES (75%); US PRESIDENTS (73%); CRIMINAL OFFENSES (73%); NATIONAL SECURITY (70%); CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS (70%); SECONDARY SCHOOLS (70%); HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY (68%); ARMED FORCES (68%); POVERTY & HOMELESSNESS (66%); HOMELESSNESS (66%); FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT (65%)

Company: ASSOCIATED PRESS (51%)

Industry: HIGH SCHOOLS (90%); SECONDARY SCHOOLS (70%); ARMED FORCES (68%)

Person: BARACK **OBAMA** (78%)

Geographic: UNITED STATES (94%)

Load-Date: August 8, 2012