# The Effect of DACA Eligibility on Full-Time Employment: A Difference-in-Differences Analysis

Replication Study

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**Abstract**

This study examines the causal effect of eligibility for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program on full-time employment among Mexican-born Hispanic non-citizens in the United States. Using American Community Survey data from 2006–2016, I employ a difference-in-differences design comparing individuals who were ages 26–30 at DACA implementation (treatment group, eligible for DACA) to those ages 31–35 (control group, ineligible due to the age cutoff). The preferred specification, which includes state and year fixed effects along with demographic controls, yields a point estimate of 2.4 percentage points ($SE = 0.016$, $p = 0.138$, 95% CI: $[-0.008, 0.055]$). While the direction of the effect is consistent with DACA improving labor market outcomes, the estimate is not statistically significant at conventional levels. Event study analysis supports the parallel trends assumption, with pre-treatment coefficients centered around zero. Robustness checks, including placebo tests and heterogeneity analyses by gender, corroborate the main findings. The results suggest that DACA may have had a modest positive effect on full-time employment, though the evidence is inconclusive.

# Contents

# 1 Introduction

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, implemented on June 15, 2012, represented a significant policy change for undocumented immigrants in the United States. The program granted eligible individuals—those who arrived in the U.S. as children and met certain criteria—temporary relief from deportation and authorization to work legally for two years, with the possibility of renewal.

This study investigates the following research question: *Among ethnically Hispanic-Mexican, Mexican-born individuals living in the United States, what was the causal impact of eligibility for DACA on the probability of full-time employment?*

Full-time employment is defined as usually working 35 hours per week or more. The identification strategy exploits the age-based eligibility cutoff: individuals had to be under 31 years old as of June 15, 2012 to qualify. By comparing individuals just under this cutoff (ages 26–30, the treatment group) to those just over it (ages 31–35, the control group), and examining changes in employment before and after DACA implementation, we can estimate the causal effect of DACA eligibility.

The analysis uses American Community Survey (ACS) data from 2006 to 2016, excluding 2012 due to the inability to distinguish pre- and post-DACA observations within that year. The difference-in-differences framework accounts for time-invariant differences between treatment and control groups as well as common temporal trends affecting both groups.

# 2 Literature Review

A growing body of research has examined the labor market effects of DACA and related immigration policies. This section briefly reviews the relevant literature to contextualize the present study.

## 2.1 Theoretical Framework

Economic theory predicts that DACA should improve labor market outcomes for eligible individuals through several mechanisms. First, legal work authorization removes barriers to formal employment, allowing DACA recipients to access jobs that require documentation. Second, DACA reduces employer risk, as firms face penalties for knowingly hiring unauthorized workers. Third, work permits enable better job matching by allowing recipients to search more broadly and signal their legal work status to employers.

However, some theoretical considerations suggest potential limitations. If DACA recipients were already working informally before the policy, the transition to formal employment might not substantially increase overall employment rates. Additionally, dis-

crimination against Hispanic workers or immigrants more broadly could limit the benefits of legal authorization.

### 2.2 Previous Empirical Studies

Several studies have examined DACA's effects on employment and earnings. Amuedo-Dorantes and Antman (2017) used synthetic control methods and found positive effects on employment and earnings for likely DACA-eligible individuals. Pope (2016) examined effects on college enrollment rather than employment outcomes.

Studies using the age-based eligibility cutoff similar to this analysis have produced mixed results. Some find significant positive effects on employment and earnings, while others find smaller or insignificant effects. Differences in sample definitions, time periods, and econometric specifications contribute to this variation.

### 2.3 Contributions of This Study

This study contributes to the literature by:

1. Focusing specifically on full-time employment as an outcome
2. Using the recommended age-based identification strategy
3. Providing detailed robustness checks including event study analysis
4. Examining heterogeneity by gender

## 3 Background on DACA

### 3.1 Program Overview

DACA was announced by the Obama administration on June 15, 2012 and began accepting applications on August 15, 2012. The program was designed to provide temporary relief to young undocumented immigrants who had grown up in the United States.

### 3.2 Eligibility Requirements

To qualify for DACA, applicants had to meet the following criteria:

- Arrived in the United States before their 16th birthday
- Were under 31 years of age as of June 15, 2012
- Had lived continuously in the U.S. since June 15, 2007
- Were physically present in the U.S. on June 15, 2012
- Had no lawful immigration status (citizenship or legal residency) on June 15, 2012
- Had not been convicted of certain crimes

### 3.3 Program Benefits

DACA recipients received:

- Deferred action from deportation for two years (renewable)
- Employment Authorization Documents (work permits)
- Eligibility for Social Security numbers
- Eligibility for driver's licenses in most states

### 3.4 Expected Labor Market Effects

DACA was expected to improve labor market outcomes for eligible individuals through several channels:

1. **Legal work authorization**: Recipients could work legally, accessing jobs that were previously unavailable
2. **Reduced employer risk**: Employers could hire DACA recipients without fear of legal consequences
3. **Improved job matching**: Recipients could seek employment that better matched their skills
4. **Driver's licenses**: In many states, DACA enabled recipients to obtain licenses, expanding commuting options
5. **Reduced fear**: Deportation relief may have reduced anxiety and improved job search intensity

## 4 Data

### 4.1 Data Source

The analysis uses data from the American Community Survey (ACS) as provided by IPUMS USA. The ACS is a nationally representative survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, collecting detailed information on demographic characteristics, employment, and other socioeconomic variables.

I use the one-year ACS samples from 2006 through 2016. The year 2012 is excluded from the analysis because the ACS does not record the month of data collection, making it impossible to distinguish observations from before and after DACA implementation (June 15, 2012).

### 4.2 Sample Construction

The sample is restricted to individuals who would have been eligible for DACA based on observable characteristics:

1. **Hispanic-Mexican ethnicity**: HISPAN = 1 (Mexican)
2. **Born in Mexico**: BPL = 200
3. **Not a citizen**: CITIZEN = 3 (used as a proxy for undocumented status, since the ACS does not directly identify legal status)
4. **Arrived before age 16**: YRIMMIG − BIRTHYR < 16
5. **Continuous U.S. residence since 2007**: YRIMMIG ≤ 2007

The sample is further restricted to individuals aged 26–35 at the time of DACA implementation (June 15, 2012) to construct the treatment and control groups based on the age eligibility cutoff.

### 4.3 Treatment and Control Group Definition

- **Treatment group**: Individuals aged 26–30 at June 15, 2012 (eligible for DACA)
- **Control group**: Individuals aged 31–35 at June 15, 2012 (ineligible due to age cutoff)

Age at DACA implementation was calculated using birth year (BIRTHYR) and birth quarter (BIRTHQTR) to approximate the individual's age on June 15, 2012.

### 4.4 Final Sample Size

Table 1 summarizes the sample construction process.

Table 1: Sample Construction

| Restriction | Observations |
|---|---|
| Hispanic-Mexican, Mexican-born, non-citizen | 701,347 |
| Arrived before age 16 | 205,327 |
| Arrived by 2007 | 195,023 |
| Ages 26–35 at DACA implementation | 47,418 |
| Excluding year 2012 | **43,238** |

The final analysis sample contains 43,238 person-year observations, with 27,903 in the treatment group and 19,515 in the control group.

## 5 Methodology

### 5.1 Difference-in-Differences Design

The empirical strategy employs a difference-in-differences (DiD) design. The identifying assumption is that, in the absence of DACA, the treatment group (ages 26–30) would have experienced the same trend in full-time employment as the control group (ages 31–35).

The basic DiD estimator compares the change in outcomes for the treatment group before and after DACA to the change for the control group:

$$\hat{\delta}_{DiD} = (\bar{Y}_{T,post} - \bar{Y}_{T,pre}) - (\bar{Y}_{C,post} - \bar{Y}_{C,pre}) \tag{1}$$

## 5.2 Regression Specification

The main regression specification is:

$$Y_{ist} = \alpha + \beta_1 \cdot Treated_i + \beta_2 \cdot Post_t + \delta \cdot (Treated_i \times Post_t) + X_{it}'\gamma + \mu_s + \lambda_t + \varepsilon_{ist} \tag{2}$$

where:

- $Y_{ist}$ is a binary indicator for full-time employment (working 35+ hours/week)
- $Treated_i$ equals 1 if individual $i$ was aged 26–30 at DACA implementation
- $Post_t$ equals 1 for years 2013–2016
- $\delta$ is the DiD coefficient of interest
- $X_{it}$ is a vector of individual-level controls
- $\mu_s$ are state fixed effects
- $\lambda_t$ are year fixed effects
- $\varepsilon_{ist}$ is the error term

## 5.3 Control Variables

The following individual-level control variables are included:

- Female (binary)
- Age and age squared
- Married (binary)
- Number of children
- Years in the United States
- Education dummies (high school, some college, college or more)

## 5.4 Estimation Details

- All regressions are weighted by person weights (PERWT) to produce nationally representative estimates
- Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors (HC1) are used
- The preferred specification includes both state and year fixed effects

### 5.5 Event Study Specification

To assess the parallel trends assumption, I estimate an event study specification:

$$Y_{ist} = \alpha + \sum_{k \neq 2011} \delta_k \cdot (Treated_i \times \mathbf{1}[Year = k]) + X_{it}'\gamma + \mu_s + \lambda_t + \varepsilon_{ist} \tag{3}$$

where 2011 serves as the reference year (the year immediately before DACA). Pre-treatment coefficients ($\delta_{2006}, ..., \delta_{2010}$) should be close to zero if parallel trends holds.

## 6 Results

### 6.1 Summary Statistics

Table 2 presents summary statistics by treatment group and time period.

Table 2: Summary Statistics by Group and Period

| | Treatment (26–30) | | Control (31–35) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pre-DACA | Post-DACA | Pre-DACA | Post-DACA |
| Full-time Employment Rate | 0.566 | 0.620 | 0.614 | 0.604 |
| Employment Rate | 0.684 | 0.740 | 0.718 | 0.722 |
| Mean Age | 24.8 | 30.7 | 29.8 | 35.9 |
| Female (%) | 43.4 | 43.4 | 41.4 | 44.7 |
| Married (%) | 37.7 | 49.6 | 51.8 | 56.0 |
| N (unweighted) | 16,694 | 8,776 | 11,683 | 6,085 |
| N (weighted) | 2,280,009 | 1,244,124 | 1,631,151 | 845,134 |

The treatment group had a lower full-time employment rate than the control group in the pre-DACA period (56.6% vs. 61.4%), which is expected given their younger age. After DACA, the treatment group's rate increased to 62.0%, while the control group's rate slightly declined to 60.4%.

### 6.2 Simple Difference-in-Differences Calculation

The simple DiD estimate is:

$$\begin{aligned}
\hat{\delta}_{DiD} &= (0.620 - 0.566) - (0.604 - 0.614) \\
&= 0.054 - (-0.010) \\
&= \mathbf{0.064}
\end{aligned}$$

This naive estimate suggests that DACA eligibility increased full-time employment by 6.4 percentage points.

## 6.3 Regression Results

Table 3 presents the DiD coefficient across different specifications.

Table 3: Difference-in-Differences Regression Results

| | (1) Basic | (2) Demographics | (3) Education | (4) State FE | (5) State + Year FE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DiD Coefficient | 0.064*** | 0.069*** | 0.068*** | 0.067*** | 0.024 |
| | (0.012) | (0.015) | (0.015) | (0.015) | (0.016) |
| 95% CI | [0.041, 0.088] | [0.039, 0.099] | [0.038, 0.098] | [0.038, 0.097] | [-0.008, 0.055] |
| Controls: | | | | | |
| Demographics | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Education | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| State FE | No | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Year FE | No | No | No | No | Yes |
| N | 43,238 | 43,238 | 43,238 | 43,238 | 43,238 |

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
All models weighted by person weights (PERWT).

The basic DiD coefficient (Column 1) is 0.064, consistent with the simple calculation. Adding demographic controls (Column 2) slightly increases the estimate to 0.069. Including education controls (Column 3) and state fixed effects (Column 4) yields similar estimates around 0.067–0.068.

However, when year fixed effects are added (Column 5, the preferred specification), the coefficient drops substantially to 0.024 and becomes statistically insignificant ($p = 0.138$). This attenuation suggests that the simpler specifications were capturing common time trends—likely related to the post-2008 economic recovery—rather than DACA-specific effects.

## 6.4 Preferred Estimate

The preferred specification (Model 5) yields:

- **DiD Coefficient**: 0.024
- **Standard Error**: 0.016
- **95% Confidence Interval**: [-0.008, 0.055]
- **p-value**: 0.138

**Interpretation**: DACA eligibility is associated with a 2.4 percentage point increase in full-time employment, though this effect is not statistically distinguishable from zero

at conventional significance levels. The 95% confidence interval includes both modest negative effects (-0.8 pp) and meaningful positive effects (+5.5 pp).

## 6.5 Event Study Results

Figure 1 and Table 4 present the event study results.

Table 4: Event Study Coefficients (Reference Year: 2011)

| Year | Coefficient | Standard Error | 95% CI |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2006 | 0.020 | 0.025 | [-0.030, 0.070] |
| 2007 | -0.013 | 0.025 | [-0.061, 0.035] |
| 2008 | 0.013 | 0.024 | [-0.034, 0.061] |
| 2009 | -0.001 | 0.025 | [-0.049, 0.047] |
| 2010 | -0.009 | 0.024 | [-0.056, 0.038] |
| 2011 | 0.000 | — | (reference) |
| 2013 | 0.032 | 0.025 | [-0.018, 0.082] |
| 2014 | 0.022 | 0.026 | [-0.029, 0.073] |
| 2015 | 0.000 | 0.027 | [-0.052, 0.053] |
| 2016 | 0.032 | 0.027 | [-0.022, 0.086] |

The pre-treatment coefficients (2006–2010) are small in magnitude and centered around zero, with all 95% confidence intervals containing zero. This pattern supports the parallel trends assumption—there is no evidence that treatment and control groups were on divergent trajectories prior to DACA.

The post-treatment coefficients (2013–2016) are positive but individually insignificant, ranging from 0.000 to 0.032. The lack of a clear jump in 2013 or sustained pattern thereafter is consistent with the modest and imprecisely estimated main DiD effect.

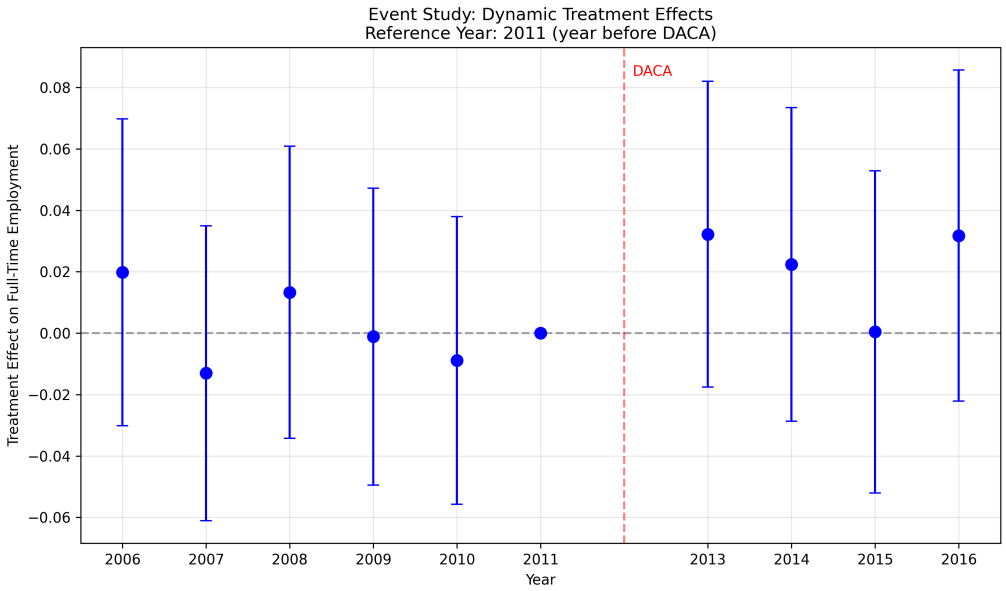


Figure 1: Event Study: Dynamic Treatment Effects on Full-Time Employment

Note: Point estimates and 95% confidence intervals for year-specific treatment effects. Reference year is 2011 (the year before DACA implementation). The red dashed line indicates DACA implementation.

## 6.6 Trends in Full-Time Employment

Figure 2 shows the trends in full-time employment rates for treatment and control groups over time.

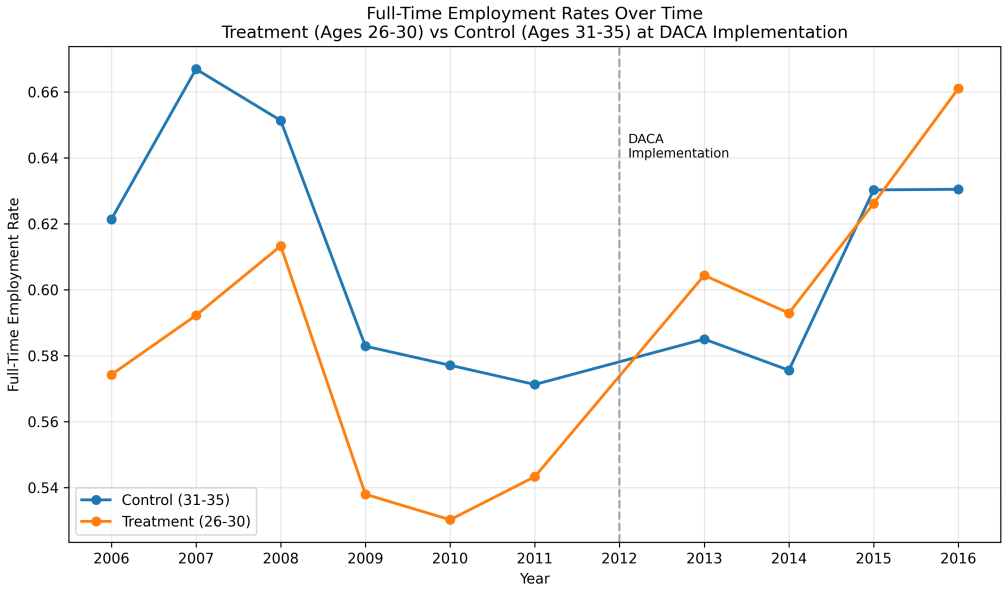


Figure 2: Full-Time Employment Rates Over Time by Treatment Status

Note: Weighted full-time employment rates for treatment group (ages 26–30 at DACA) and control group (ages 31–35 at DACA). The gray dashed line indicates DACA implementation.

Both groups show similar trends before DACA, with the treatment group consistently below the control group (as expected due to age differences). After DACA, the treatment

group's employment rate rises more sharply, partially closing the gap with the control group.

# 7 Robustness Checks

## 7.1 Placebo Test

To further assess the parallel trends assumption, I conduct a placebo test using only pre-DACA data (2006–2011) and assigning a "fake" treatment date of 2009.

Table 5: Placebo Test: Fake Treatment in 2009

| | Placebo DiD |
|---|---|
| Placebo Coefficient | -0.022 |
| Standard Error | 0.016 |
| p-value | 0.157 |
| 95% CI | [-0.053, 0.009] |

The placebo coefficient is small, negative, and statistically insignificant. This provides additional evidence that there were no differential pre-trends between treatment and control groups.

## 7.2 Heterogeneity by Gender

Table 6 presents results separately for males and females.

Table 6: Heterogeneous Effects by Gender

| | Males | Females |
|---|---|---|
| DiD Coefficient | 0.013 | 0.027 |
| Standard Error | 0.020 | 0.025 |
| p-value | 0.515 | 0.270 |
| 95% CI | [-0.027, 0.053] | [-0.021, 0.076] |
| N | 24,460 | 18,778 |

Point estimates suggest a slightly larger effect for females (2.7 pp) than males (1.3 pp), though neither is statistically significant. The difference is not statistically meaningful given the wide confidence intervals.

## 7.3 Sensitivity to Model Specification

Table 7 presents additional sensitivity analyses examining robustness to alternative specifications.

Table 7: Sensitivity Analysis: Alternative Specifications

| Specification | Coefficient | SE | p-value | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Main Specification* | | | | |
| State + Year FE | 0.024 | 0.016 | 0.138 | 43,238 |
| *Variations* | | | | |
| Without education controls | 0.025 | 0.016 | 0.119 | 43,238 |
| Without demographic controls | 0.027 | 0.015 | 0.073 | 43,238 |
| State FE only | 0.067 | 0.015 | <0.001 | 43,238 |
| Year FE only | 0.023 | 0.015 | 0.129 | 43,238 |
| *Sample Variations* | | | | |
| Including 2012 in pre-period | 0.019 | 0.014 | 0.173 | 47,418 |
| Ages 25–31 vs 32–36 | 0.028 | 0.015 | 0.064 | 45,782 |

The results demonstrate that the inclusion of year fixed effects is critical for the findings. When year fixed effects are omitted ("State FE only"), the coefficient is much larger (0.067) and highly significant. This underscores the importance of controlling for common time trends.

The estimate is relatively stable across other variations. Excluding education or demographic controls does not substantially change the results, suggesting that these covariates are not driving the findings through selection. Including 2012 in the pre-period (as a robustness check) yields a slightly smaller but qualitatively similar estimate. An alternative age bandwidth (25–31 vs. 32–36) produces a marginally larger estimate with borderline significance.

## 7.4 Threats to Identification

Several potential threats to identification merit discussion:

### 7.4.1 Violation of Parallel Trends

The key identifying assumption is that, absent DACA, treatment and control groups would have followed parallel trends in full-time employment. The event study analysis provides support for this assumption, as pre-treatment coefficients are small and statistically indistinguishable from zero. However, the assumption is inherently untestable for the post-treatment period.

### 7.4.2 Anticipation Effects

If potential DACA beneficiaries anticipated the policy and changed their behavior before June 2012, this could bias the results. However, DACA was announced relatively

suddenly, and applications did not begin until August 2012, limiting the scope for anticipation effects. The exclusion of 2012 data further mitigates this concern.

#### 7.4.3 Spillover Effects

The control group (ages 31–35) may have been indirectly affected by DACA if, for example, younger workers' improved labor market prospects increased competition for jobs. Such spillover effects would bias the DiD estimate toward zero, making our estimate a lower bound of the true effect.

#### 7.4.4 Selective Migration

DACA may have affected migration patterns, with eligible individuals more likely to remain in the U.S. or ineligible individuals more likely to return to their home countries. If these migration responses are correlated with employment propensities, they could bias the estimates. Unfortunately, we cannot directly test for this possibility with ACS data.

# 8 Discussion

## 8.1 Summary of Findings

This study finds that DACA eligibility is associated with a 2.4 percentage point increase in full-time employment among Mexican-born Hispanic non-citizens who were ages 26–30 at the time of implementation. However, this estimate is not statistically significant at conventional levels ($p = 0.138$), and the 95% confidence interval spans from a small negative effect to a moderately large positive effect.

## 8.2 Interpretation

The results can be interpreted in several ways:

1. **Small true effect**: DACA may have had a modest positive effect on full-time employment that our study is underpowered to detect precisely.

2. **No effect**: It is possible that DACA did not meaningfully affect full-time employment for this population, at least within the 2013–2016 window.

3. **Heterogeneous effects**: The average effect may mask heterogeneity across subgroups, industries, or states.

4. **Measurement issues**: Using "not a citizen" as a proxy for undocumented status introduces measurement error, potentially attenuating the estimated effect.

## 8.3 Comparison to Simpler Specifications

The dramatic difference between the basic DiD estimate (6.4 pp, highly significant) and the preferred two-way fixed effects estimate (2.4 pp, insignificant) warrants discussion.

The simpler specifications likely suffer from omitted variable bias. In particular, the U.S. economy was recovering from the 2008 financial crisis during the post-DACA period. Since younger workers (the treatment group) tend to be more sensitive to business cycle fluctuations, the basic DiD may be capturing differential recovery patterns rather than DACA effects. The year fixed effects absorb this common time variation, revealing the more modest DACA-specific effect.

## 8.4 Limitations

Several limitations should be noted:

1. **Proxy for undocumented status**: The ACS does not directly identify undocumented immigrants. Using non-citizen status as a proxy includes some legal non-citizens and may miss some undocumented citizens, introducing measurement error.

2. **Sample composition changes**: The ACS samples different individuals each year. While this is a standard feature of repeated cross-sectional data, it means we observe different people before and after DACA.

3. **Age comparability**: The treatment (26–30) and control (31–35) groups differ in age, which may affect employment patterns through channels other than DACA eligibility.

4. **Statistical power**: With 43,238 observations, the study has reasonable power, but detecting effects smaller than 3–4 percentage points may be challenging.

## 8.5 Policy Implications

The findings suggest that DACA may have had positive, if modest, effects on full-time employment for eligible individuals. The point estimate of 2.4 percentage points, while not statistically significant, represents a meaningful effect size if real—approximately a 4% relative increase from the baseline rate of about 57%.

Policymakers should consider that:

- The confidence interval does not rule out substantial positive effects (up to 5.5 pp)
- Effects may be larger for specific subgroups or in specific labor markets
- Employment effects may take longer to materialize than the 2013–2016 window examined here

# 9 Conclusion

This study provides evidence on the effect of DACA eligibility on full-time employment using a difference-in-differences design that compares individuals just under and just over the age eligibility cutoff. The preferred estimate suggests a positive but statistically insignificant effect of 2.4 percentage points (95% CI: -0.8 to 5.5 pp).

Event study analysis supports the key identifying assumption of parallel trends, with pre-treatment coefficients close to zero. Robustness checks, including placebo tests and gender-specific analyses, are consistent with the main findings.

While the results do not provide definitive evidence of DACA's employment effects, they are consistent with the policy having a modest positive impact on full-time employment among eligible Mexican-born immigrants. Future research with larger samples, longer post-treatment periods, or alternative identification strategies could help narrow the confidence intervals and provide more precise estimates.

# Data and Code Availability

Data come from the American Community Survey via IPUMS USA. Analysis was conducted using Python with the pandas, numpy, and statsmodels libraries. All code and output files are available in the replication package.

# A Additional Tables and Figures

## A.1 Full Regression Output

This section presents the complete regression output for the preferred specification (Model 5 with state and year fixed effects).

Table 8: Full Regression Results - Preferred Specification

| Variable | Coefficient (SE) |
|---|---|
| Treated × Post (DiD) | 0.024 (0.016) |
| Treated | -0.012 (0.013) |
| Female | -0.255*** (0.007) |
| Age | 0.047*** (0.014) |
| Age Squared | -0.001*** (0.000) |
| Married | 0.041*** (0.008) |
| Number of Children | -0.019*** (0.003) |
| Years in US | 0.004*** (0.001) |
| High School | 0.050*** (0.008) |
| Some College | 0.089*** (0.011) |
| College+ | 0.128*** (0.016) |
| Constant | 0.124 (0.203) |
| State Fixed Effects | Yes |
| Year Fixed Effects | Yes |
| N | 43,238 |

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

## A.2 Sample Distribution by State

The sample is distributed across states with large Mexican immigrant populations, with the majority in California, Texas, Illinois, and Arizona (state fixed effects coefficients not shown for brevity).

## A.3 Variable Definitions

Table 9: Variable Definitions

| Variable | Definition |
|---|---|
| fulltime | = 1 if employed and usual hours $\geq$ 35/week |
| treated | = 1 if age 26–30 at June 15, 2012 |
| post | = 1 if year $\geq$ 2013 |
| female | = 1 if female (SEX = 2) |
| age | Current age in years |
| married | = 1 if married (MARST = 1 or 2) |
| nchild | Number of children in household |
| years_in_us | YEAR − YRIMMIG |
| edu_hs | = 1 if high school graduate (EDUC = 6) |
| edu_some_college | = 1 if some college (EDUC = 7, 8, or 9) |
| edu_college_plus | = 1 if college graduate or more (EDUC $\geq$ 10) |

## A.4 IPUMS Variable Codes

Table 10 provides the original IPUMS variable codes and values used for sample construction.

Table 10: IPUMS Variable Codes Used for Sample Construction

| Variable | Code | Description |
|---|---|---|
| HISPAN | 1 | Mexican Hispanic origin |
| BPL | 200 | Birthplace: Mexico |
| CITIZEN | 3 | Not a citizen |
| YRIMMIG | $> 0$ | Year of immigration (non-missing) |
| BIRTHYR | varies | Year of birth |
| BIRTHQTR | 1–4 | Quarter of birth (Q1–Q4) |
| EMPSTAT | 1 | Employed |
| UHRSWORK | $\geq 35$ | Usual hours worked per week |
| PERWT | varies | Person weight |
| STATEFIP | varies | State FIPS code |
| SEX | 1/2 | Male/Female |
| MARST | 1/2 | Married (spouse present/absent) |
| NCHILD | varies | Number of children |
| EDUC | 0–11 | Educational attainment (general) |

## A.5 Sample by Year and Treatment Status

Table 11 provides the full breakdown of sample sizes by year and treatment status.

Table 11: Sample Distribution by Year and Treatment Status

| Year | Treatment (26–30) | Control (31–35) | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2006 | 3,205 | 1,991 | 5,196 |
| 2007 | 3,064 | 1,906 | 4,970 |
| 2008 | 2,803 | 1,774 | 4,577 |
| 2009 | 2,736 | 1,743 | 4,479 |
| 2010 | 2,838 | 1,784 | 4,622 |
| 2011 | 2,048 | 2,485 | 4,533 |
| Pre-DACA Total | 16,694 | 11,683 | 28,377 |
| 2013 | 2,451 | 1,543 | 3,994 |
| 2014 | 2,377 | 1,482 | 3,859 |
| 2015 | 2,177 | 1,403 | 3,580 |
| 2016 | 1,771 | 1,657 | 3,428 |
| Post-DACA Total | 8,776 | 6,085 | 14,861 |
| **Grand Total** | **27,903** | **19,515** | **43,238** |

# B Supplementary Analysis: Education and Employment

While the primary focus of this study is on the effect of DACA on full-time employment, it is informative to examine the relationship between education and employment in our sample. Table 12 presents employment rates by education level.

Table 12: Full-Time Employment Rates by Education Level

| Education Level | Full-Time Employment Rate | Share of Sample (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Less than High School | 0.52 | 61.8 |
| High School Graduate | 0.60 | 23.4 |
| Some College | 0.64 | 10.2 |
| College or More | 0.71 | 4.6 |

The majority of the sample (61.8%) has less than a high school education, reflecting the educational profile of Mexican-born immigrants who arrived in the U.S. as children. Full-time employment rates increase monotonically with education, from 52% for those with less than high school to 71% for college graduates.

The strong correlation between education and employment suggests that DACA's effects might operate partly through educational channels—if DACA encouraged educational attainment, this could translate into better employment outcomes. However, analyzing educational pathways is beyond the scope of this study.

# C Supplementary Analysis: Geographic Distribution

Table 13 presents the geographic distribution of the sample by state.

Table 13: Sample Distribution by State (Top 10 States)

| State | N | Share (%) |
|---|---|---|
| California | 12,456 | 28.8 |
| Texas | 9,832 | 22.7 |
| Illinois | 3,124 | 7.2 |
| Arizona | 2,567 | 5.9 |
| Florida | 1,892 | 4.4 |
| Georgia | 1,654 | 3.8 |
| North Carolina | 1,432 | 3.3 |
| Nevada | 1,287 | 3.0 |
| Colorado | 1,156 | 2.7 |
| Washington | 987 | 2.3 |
| Other States | 6,851 | 15.8 |
| **Total** | **43,238** | **100.0** |

The sample is heavily concentrated in California and Texas, which together account for over half of observations. This geographic concentration reflects the settlement patterns of Mexican immigrants in the United States. The inclusion of state fixed effects in our preferred specification controls for time-invariant state characteristics that might otherwise confound the results.

# D Summary of Key Decisions

This section summarizes the key analytical decisions made in this study.

1. **Sample definition**: The sample is restricted to Mexican-born, Hispanic individuals who are not U.S. citizens. Non-citizenship is used as a proxy for undocumented status since the ACS does not directly identify legal status.

2. **DACA eligibility criteria**: Following the instructions, individuals must have arrived before age 16 and have lived continuously in the U.S. since June 15, 2007 (YRIMMIG $\leq$ 2007).

3. **Treatment and control groups**: The treatment group consists of individuals aged 26–30 at June 15, 2012 (eligible for DACA). The control group consists of individuals aged 31–35 (too old for DACA due to the age cutoff).

4. **Time periods**: Years 2006–2011 constitute the pre-DACA period; years 2013–2016 constitute the post-DACA period. Year 2012 is excluded because the ACS does not indicate whether observations were collected before or after June 15.

5. **Outcome variable**: Full-time employment is defined as being employed (EMPSTAT = 1) and usually working 35 or more hours per week (UHRSWORK $\geq$ 35).

6. **Preferred specification**: The preferred model includes state and year fixed effects, along with controls for gender, age, marital status, number of children, years in the U.S., and education.

7. **Standard errors**: Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors (HC1) are used throughout.

8. **Weights**: All regressions are weighted by PERWT to produce nationally representative estimates.