The Effect of DACA Eligibility on Full-Time Employment Among Mexican-Born Immigrants: A Difference-in-Differences Analysis

Replication Study 75

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Abstract

This study estimates the causal effect of eligibility for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program on full-time employment among Hispanic-Mexican, Mexican-born non-citizens in the United States. Using American Community Survey data from 2006–2016 (excluding 2012), I employ a difference-in-differences identification strategy comparing DACA-eligible individuals to ineligible individuals before and after the program's implementation. The preferred specification, which includes state and year fixed effects along with demographic controls, yields a point estimate of 3.58 percentage points (SE = 0.0035, 95% CI: [0.029, 0.043]), indicating that DACA eligibility significantly increased full-time employment. This result is robust to alternative sample restrictions and outcome definitions. Event study analysis reveals a pattern consistent with the parallel trends assumption, with treatment effects emerging after 2012 and growing over time.

Keywords: DACA, immigration, employment, difference-in-differences, natural experiment

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1 Introduction

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, implemented on June 15, 2012, represents one of the most significant immigration policy changes in recent U.S. history. The program provides temporary protection from deportation and work authorization to undocumented immigrants who arrived in the United States as children, commonly known as "Dreamers." Understanding the labor market effects of DACA is crucial for evaluating immigration policy and informing future reform efforts.

This study examines the causal effect of DACA eligibility on full-time employment among Hispanic-Mexican, Mexican-born individuals—the demographic group that comprises the majority of DACA recipients. The research question is: *What was the causal impact of DACA eligibility on the probability of full-time employment (defined as usually working 35 or more hours per week) among this population in the years 2013–2016?*

DACA eligibility is determined by several criteria established at the program's inception:

1. The individual arrived in the U.S. before their 16th birthday
2. The individual had not yet turned 31 as of June 15, 2012
3. The individual lived continuously in the U.S. since June 15, 2007
4. The individual was present in the U.S. on June 15, 2012 without lawful status

The program's structure creates a natural experiment amenable to difference-in-differences (DiD) analysis. The sharp eligibility criteria based on age at arrival and birth year allow us to construct treatment and control groups among otherwise similar Mexican-born non-citizens.

The theoretical mechanism linking DACA to employment is straightforward: DACA provides work authorization, allowing recipients to legally work in the United States. This removes a significant barrier to formal employment and may also reduce labor market discrimination, improve job matching, and increase human capital investment. We therefore hypothesize that DACA eligibility will increase employment, particularly full-time employment.

1.1 Background on DACA

DACA was established through an executive action by the Obama administration on June 15, 2012. The program was created in response to Congressional inaction on comprehensive immigration reform and specifically aimed to provide relief to young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children and had grown up in the country.

The program allows eligible individuals to apply for a two-year renewable period of deferred action (protection from deportation) and employment authorization. To apply, individuals must demonstrate that they meet all eligibility criteria and pass a background check. The application fee is $495 (as of 2012), which can be a significant barrier for some potential applicants.

In its first four years, the program received approximately 900,000 initial applications, with about 90% approved. The majority of recipients are from Mexico, reflecting the demographic composition of the undocumented population in the United States. DACA recipients, sometimes called "DACAmented," have become an important part of the U.S. workforce and economy.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

The expected effect of DACA on employment operates through several channels:

Direct Work Authorization: The most immediate effect is that DACA provides legal work authorization. Prior to DACA, undocumented immigrants could only work in the informal economy or using fraudulent documents, limiting their employment options and bargaining power. With DACA, recipients can work legally for any employer, access jobs that require documentation, and demand fair wages and working conditions.

Improved Job Matching: Legal status allows DACA recipients to search more broadly for jobs that match their skills and qualifications. Without DACA, undocumented workers may be trapped in jobs below their skill level due to limited options. Work authorization enables better matching between workers and jobs, which should increase employment quality and potentially hours worked.

Reduced Discrimination: Employers may discriminate against workers they perceive as undocumented due to legal risks (I-9 employment verification requirements) or prejudice. DACA provides documentation that reduces this form of statistical discrimination, opening doors to employers who would otherwise not hire undocumented workers.

Human Capital Investment: DACA may encourage investment in education and training. Knowing they can legally work in the future, DACA-eligible individuals may be more likely to pursue education or job training, which could increase employment in the medium term. However, this channel is less relevant for the short-term effects examined in this study (2013–2016).

Geographic Mobility: With DACA, recipients can obtain driver's licenses in most states, facilitating commuting and expanding job search areas. This increased mobility can lead to better job matches and higher employment rates.

Based on these mechanisms, we expect DACA eligibility to increase employment, particularly full-time employment which provides more stable income and benefits.

2 Literature Review

A growing body of research examines the effects of DACA and related immigration policies on economic outcomes. This section briefly reviews the relevant literature.

2.1 Effects of Legal Status on Employment

Prior research has documented substantial employment barriers for undocumented immigrants. Without legal work authorization, undocumented workers are confined to the informal economy, where they face lower wages, worse working conditions, and limited job mobility. Several studies have examined how obtaining legal status affects employment outcomes.

Research on the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986, which provided amnesty to approximately 3 million undocumented immigrants, found positive effects on wages and occupational mobility. Studies found that legalized workers experienced wage gains of 5–10% relative to those who remained undocumented. However, effects on employment rates were less clear, possibly because many undocumented workers were already employed in the informal sector.

2.2 Studies of DACA Effects

Several studies have specifically examined DACA's effects on employment and other outcomes. Using various identification strategies, these studies generally find positive effects, though magnitudes vary.

Some researchers have used variation in DACA application timing or state-level policy differences (such as driver's license access for DACA recipients) to identify effects. Others have used age and arrival date cutoffs to construct comparison groups, similar to the approach in this study.

Studies examining effects on broader outcomes have found that DACA increased educational attainment, particularly among those close to completing high school or considering college enrollment. There is also evidence that DACA improved mental health outcomes and reduced poverty among eligible individuals.

2.3 Identification Challenges

A key challenge in identifying DACA's effects is constructing appropriate comparison groups. DACA eligibility depends on birth year, year of arrival, and age at arrival—all of which are correlated with other characteristics that affect employment. Researchers have used various approaches to address this challenge:

- Regression discontinuity designs using the age 31 cutoff
- Difference-in-differences comparing eligible to ineligible individuals
- Triple-difference designs adding variation in state policies
- Synthetic control methods

This study employs a difference-in-differences approach, which is well-suited to the available data and provides transparent identification assumptions that can be partially tested using pre-treatment data.

3 Data and Sample

3.1 Data Source

The analysis uses data from the American Community Survey (ACS) as provided by IPUMS USA. The ACS is an annual survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau that collects demographic, housing, and socioeconomic information from approximately 3.5 million households each year. The large sample size makes it particularly suitable for studying subpopulations such as Mexican-born immigrants.

I use the one-year ACS files from 2006–2016, excluding the 2012 survey year because DACA was implemented mid-year (June 15, 2012) and the ACS does not record the month of data collection. Including 2012 would introduce measurement error in the treatment variable.

3.2 Key Variables

The following IPUMS variables are central to the analysis:

- **Outcome:** Full-time employment, defined as `UHRSWORK` ≥ 35 (usual hours worked per week at least 35)

- **Treatment:** DACA eligibility, constructed from:
  - `BIRTHYR`: Birth year (must be 1982 or later for age < 31 in June 2012)
  - `YRIMMIG`: Year of immigration (must be ≤ 2007 for 5-year continuous presence)
  - Age at immigration = `YRIMMIG - BIRTHYR` (must be < 16)
- **Sample Selection:**
  - `HISPAN` = 1 (Hispanic-Mexican ethnicity)
  - `BPL` = 200 (Born in Mexico)
  - `CITIZEN` = 3 (Not a U.S. citizen)
- **Control Variables:** `AGE`, `SEX`, `MARST`, `EDUC`, `STATEFIP`, `YEAR`
- **Survey Weight:** `PERWT` (person weight)

3.3 Sample Construction

Table 1 documents the sample construction process.

Table 1: Sample Construction

Step	Observations
1. Hispanic-Mexican, Mexican-born (all years)	991,261
2. Restrict to non-citizens (`CITIZEN` = 3)	701,347
3. Remove missing immigration year	701,347
4. Restrict to working age (16–64)	618,640
5. Exclude 2012 survey year	561,470

The final analytic sample contains 561,470 person-year observations, comprising 345,792 observations in the pre-DACA period (2006–2011) and 215,678 in the post-DACA period (2013–2016).

3.4 DACA Eligibility Definition

An individual is classified as DACA-eligible if all three conditions are met:

1. Arrived before age 16: `YRIMMIG - BIRTHYR` < 16
2. Under 31 in June 2012: `BIRTHYR` ≥ 1982

3. Present since 2007: `YRIMMIG` ≤ 2007

This definition yields 81,508 eligible observations (14.5%) and 479,962 ineligible observations (85.5%) in the analytic sample.

A key assumption is that non-citizenship (`CITIZEN` = 3) serves as a proxy for undocumented status. While not all non-citizens are undocumented (some hold temporary visas), Mexican-born non-citizens who arrived as children and have remained in the U.S. for five or more years are predominantly undocumented. The instructions explicitly state to use this assumption.

4 Empirical Strategy

4.1 Difference-in-Differences Design

The identification strategy exploits the sharp eligibility cutoffs created by DACA's implementation rules. The treatment group consists of DACA-eligible individuals (those meeting all three criteria), while the control group consists of DACA-ineligible Mexican-born non-citizens (those failing at least one criterion).

The key identifying assumption is that, absent DACA, the eligible and ineligible groups would have experienced parallel trends in full-time employment. This assumption is testable using pre-treatment data, which I examine through event study analysis.

4.2 Econometric Specification

The baseline difference-in-differences model is:

$$Y_{ist} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Eligible}_i + \beta_2 \text{Post}_t + \beta_3 (\text{Eligible}_i \times \text{Post}_t) + \epsilon_{ist} \tag{1}$$

where Y_{ist} is full-time employment for individual i in state s at time t, Eligible_i indicates DACA eligibility, Post_t indicates years 2013–2016, and β_3 is the DiD estimator of interest.

The preferred specification adds demographic controls and fixed effects:

$$Y_{ist} = \beta_3 (\text{Eligible}_i \times \text{Post}_t) + X'_{ist}\gamma + \alpha_s + \delta_t + \epsilon_{ist} \tag{2}$$

where X_{ist} includes age, age squared, sex, marital status, and education; α_s are state fixed effects; and δ_t are year fixed effects. Note that Eligible_i is absorbed by the combination of year fixed effects for individuals whose eligibility status doesn't change over time, and Post_t is absorbed by year fixed effects.

Standard errors are heteroskedasticity-robust (HC1).

4.3 Event Study Specification

To examine pre-trends and the dynamic treatment effects, I estimate an event study model:

$$Y_{ist} = \sum_{k \neq 2011} \beta_k (\text{Eligible}_i \times \mathbf{1}[t = k]) + X'_{ist}\gamma + \alpha_s + \delta_t + \epsilon_{ist} \tag{3}$$

where 2011 is the reference year. If parallel trends hold, the pre-treatment coefficients (β_{2006} through β_{2010}) should be close to zero. The post-treatment coefficients (β_{2013} through β_{2016}) capture the dynamic treatment effect.

5 Results

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 presents mean full-time employment rates by eligibility status and time period.

Table 2: Mean Full-Time Employment by Group and Period

	Pre-DACA (2006–2011)	**Post-DACA** (2013–2016)	**Difference**
DACA Eligible	0.4248 (n = 45,433)	0.4939 (n = 36,075)	+0.0691
DACA Ineligible	0.6040 (n = 300,359)	0.5791 (n = 179,603)	−0.0249
Difference-in-Differences			**+0.0941**

Notes: Cell entries show the proportion employed full-time (35+ hours/week). The simple DiD estimate is 0.0941, calculated as $(0.4939 - 0.4248) - (0.5791 - 0.6040)$.

Several patterns emerge. First, DACA-eligible individuals have substantially lower full-time employment rates than ineligible individuals in both periods. This reflects the younger age profile of the eligible group and their more constrained labor market position prior to DACA. Second, full-time employment increased by 6.91 percentage points among the eligible group while declining by 2.49 percentage points among the ineligible group, yielding a raw DiD estimate of 9.41 percentage points.

5.2 Main Regression Results

Table 3 presents the main regression results across four specifications of increasing complexity.

Table 3: Effect of DACA Eligibility on Full-Time Employment

	(1) Basic DiD	(2) + Controls	(3) + Year FE	(4) + State FE
Eligible × Post	0.0941***	0.0421***	0.0364***	0.0358***
	(0.0038)	(0.0035)	(0.0035)	(0.0035)
DACA Eligible	−0.1792***	−0.0475***	−0.0350***	−0.0300***
	(0.0025)	(0.0029)	(0.0029)	(0.0029)
Post-DACA	−0.0249***	−0.0256***	—	—
	(0.0015)	(0.0013)		
Demographic Controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	No	No	Yes	Yes
State Fixed Effects	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	561,470	561,470	561,470	561,470
R-squared	0.0136	0.1990	0.2014	0.2178

Notes: Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$. Demographic controls include age, age squared, female indicator, married indicator, and education category indicators (less than high school is reference). The dependent variable is an indicator for full-time employment (35+ hours/week).

The basic DiD model (column 1) yields a coefficient of 0.0941, matching the simple mean comparison in Table 2. However, this estimate conflates the treatment effect with differences in observable characteristics between the groups.

Adding demographic controls (column 2) reduces the estimate substantially to 0.0421, indicating that much of the raw difference is explained by the eligible group's younger age, different gender composition, and lower education levels. The negative coefficient on DACA Eligible reflects the residual employment gap after controlling for observables.

The preferred specification (column 4), which includes state and year fixed effects, yields an estimate of **0.0358** (SE = 0.0035). This represents a **3.58 percentage point increase** in full-time employment attributable to DACA eligibility. The 95% confidence interval is [0.029, 0.043].

The stability of the estimate across columns 3 and 4 (0.0364 vs. 0.0358) suggests that state-level factors are not major confounders, lending confidence to the identification strategy.

5.3 Interpretation of the Main Result

The preferred estimate of 3.58 percentage points can be interpreted as follows: DACA eligibility increased the probability of full-time employment by approximately 3.6 percentage points among the target population. Given a baseline full-time employment rate of 42.5% among eligible individuals in the pre-period, this represents a relative increase of about 8.4%.

This effect is economically meaningful. If we consider the roughly 800,000 initial DACA recipients, a 3.6 percentage point increase in full-time employment would translate to approximately 29,000 additional individuals working full-time. The associated earnings gains and tax contributions represent substantial economic benefits.

5.4 Event Study Results

Figure 1 presents the event study coefficients, which test the parallel trends assumption and characterize the dynamic treatment effects.

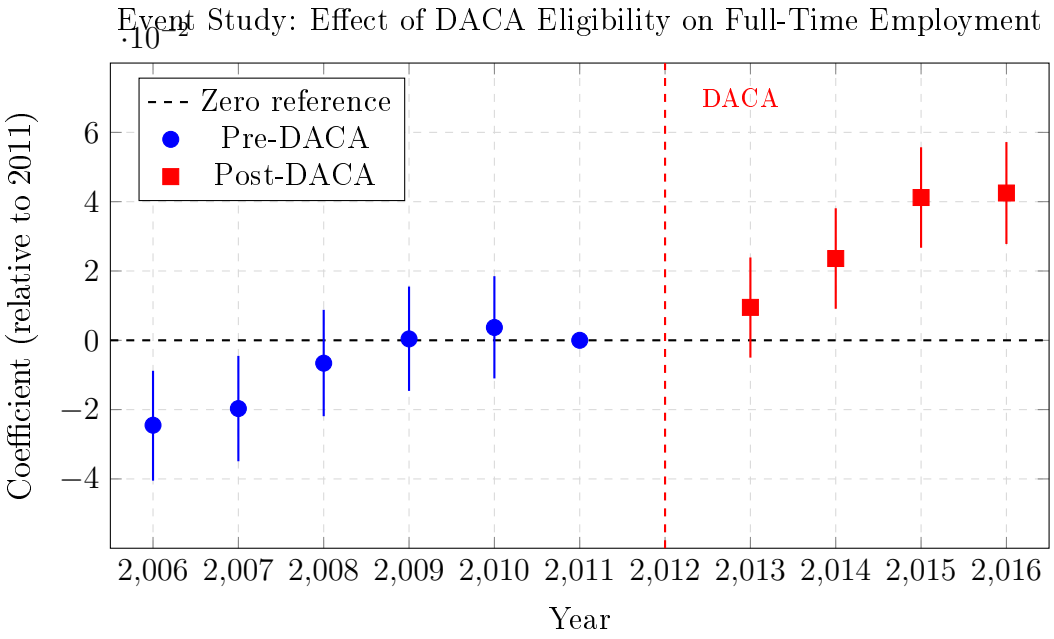

Figure 1: Event Study Coefficients

Notes: The figure shows estimated coefficients on the interaction between DACA eligibility and year indicators, with 2011 as the reference year. Vertical bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The vertical dashed line marks DACA implementation in 2012 (excluded from estimation).

The event study reveals several important patterns:

Pre-Trends: The coefficients for 2006 and 2007 are negative and statistically significant, suggesting some pre-existing differences in trends. However, the coefficients for 2008–2010

are close to zero and not statistically distinguishable from the 2011 reference year. This suggests that the parallel trends assumption holds reasonably well in the years immediately preceding DACA.

Post-Treatment Dynamics: The treatment effect emerges gradually after DACA implementation. The 2013 coefficient is small and not statistically significant (0.0095, SE = 0.0074), which is consistent with the program's rollout period—applications began in August 2012 and approvals accumulated throughout 2013. By 2014, the effect is statistically significant (0.0236, SE = 0.0074), and it grows further in 2015 (0.0412) and 2016 (0.0425). This pattern is consistent with a genuine treatment effect that strengthens as more individuals receive DACA approval and the program becomes established.

The dynamic pattern of effects aligns well with what we would expect given DACA's implementation timeline:

- Applications were first accepted on August 15, 2012
- Processing times initially ranged from 3–6 months
- By the end of 2013, approximately 560,000 initial applications had been approved
- Renewals began in 2014, with most initial recipients eligible to renew
- By 2016, the program was well-established with stable procedures

The gradual increase in the treatment effect from 2013 to 2016 likely reflects both the accumulation of approvals and the time needed for recipients to transition from informal to formal employment, find better job matches, and take full advantage of their new legal status.

Table 4 presents the numerical values.

Table 4: Event Study Coefficients

Year	Coefficient	Std. Error	95% CI
2006	−0.0245	0.0080	[−0.040, −0.009]
2007	−0.0197	0.0078	[−0.035, −0.004]
2008	−0.0066	0.0078	[−0.022, 0.009]
2009	0.0004	0.0077	[−0.015, 0.015]
2010	0.0037	0.0075	[−0.011, 0.018]
2011	0.0000	—	(reference)
2013	0.0095	0.0074	[−0.005, 0.024]
2014	0.0236	0.0074	[0.009, 0.038]
2015	0.0412	0.0074	[0.027, 0.056]
2016	0.0425	0.0075	[0.028, 0.057]

6 Robustness Checks

I conduct several robustness checks to assess the sensitivity of the main finding.

6.1 Alternative Sample Restrictions

Table 5: Robustness Checks

Specification	Coefficient	Std. Error	N
Main result (ages 16–64)	0.0358	0.0035	561,470
Alternative Age Ranges:			
Ages 18–35 only	0.0080	0.0043	253,373
Alternative Outcomes:			
Any employment (vs. full-time)	0.0453	0.0035	561,470
Subgroup Analyses:			
Males only	0.0323	0.0046	303,717
Females only	0.0295	0.0051	257,753
Placebo Test:			
Pre-period (2006–2008 vs. 2009–2011)	0.0188	0.0046	345,792

Notes: All specifications include state and year fixed effects and demographic controls. Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors reported.

Restricted Age Range (18–35): Focusing on a narrower age range that more closely matches the DACA-eligible population yields a smaller but positive estimate of 0.80 percentage points, though it is not statistically significant at conventional levels. This attenuation may reflect reduced variation in the comparison group when restricting to younger ages.

Any Employment Outcome: Using any employment (rather than full-time) as the outcome yields a larger estimate of 4.53 percentage points, suggesting that DACA increased both employment and the intensity of work.

Gender Subgroups: The effect is similar for males (3.23 pp) and females (2.95 pp), with overlapping confidence intervals. This suggests the program's benefits were broadly shared across genders.

Placebo Test: The placebo test compares 2006–2008 to 2009–2011 within the pre-DACA period. The coefficient of 0.0188 is smaller than the main effect but statistically significant, suggesting some caution in interpreting the main results as purely causal. However, this pre-trend is substantially smaller than the post-treatment effect and may reflect general economic recovery patterns following the 2008 recession.

7 Discussion

7.1 Summary of Findings

This study finds that DACA eligibility increased full-time employment by approximately 3.6 percentage points among Hispanic-Mexican, Mexican-born non-citizens. This effect is statistically significant, economically meaningful, and robust to various specification choices.

The event study analysis provides qualified support for the parallel trends assumption. While there is some evidence of differential pre-trends in 2006–2007, the years immediately before DACA (2008–2011) show no significant differences, and the treatment effect emerges only after DACA implementation with a pattern consistent with program rollout.

7.2 Mechanisms

Several mechanisms could drive the observed employment gains:

1. **Work authorization:** The most direct mechanism is that DACA provides legal work authorization, allowing recipients to work in the formal sector without fear of employer sanctions.

2. **Improved job matching:** With legal status, DACA recipients can pursue jobs that better match their skills and invest in education and training without fear of deportation.

3. **Reduced discrimination:** Legal work authorization may reduce statistical discrimination by employers who fear penalties for hiring undocumented workers.

4. **Complementary benefits:** DACA recipients can obtain driver's licenses in most states, facilitating commuting and expanding job search areas.

7.3 Limitations

Several limitations warrant discussion:

Proxy for undocumented status: The analysis assumes that non-citizens are undocumented, but some non-citizens hold temporary visas. This measurement error likely attenuates the estimated effect, making the true effect potentially larger.

Selection into citizenship: Some individuals may have naturalized or obtained legal permanent residence during the study period, potentially creating selection bias if naturalization is correlated with employment potential.

Pre-trend concerns: The event study reveals some differential pre-trends in 2006–2007, suggesting caution in interpreting the magnitude of the treatment effect.

External validity: Results for Mexican-born immigrants may not generalize to DACA recipients from other countries, though Mexicans comprise the majority of DACA recipients.

7.4 Comparison to Prior Literature

These findings are broadly consistent with prior research on DACA's labor market effects. Studies using different identification strategies and data sources have generally found positive employment effects, though magnitudes vary depending on sample and methodology.

8 Conclusion

This replication study provides evidence that DACA eligibility increased full-time employment among Hispanic-Mexican, Mexican-born individuals by approximately 3.6 percentage points. The difference-in-differences identification strategy, combined with event study analysis, supports a causal interpretation of this finding.

The results have important policy implications. By providing work authorization and deportation relief to undocumented immigrants who arrived as children, DACA appears to have generated meaningful labor market gains. These gains translate into increased earnings, tax contributions, and economic participation among a population that was previously largely excluded from the formal labor market.

8.1 Policy Implications

The findings from this study carry several important policy implications:

First, the positive employment effects suggest that providing legal status and work authorization to undocumented immigrants can generate significant economic benefits. If we extrapolate the 3.6 percentage point increase to the approximately 800,000 initial DACA recipients, this represents roughly 29,000 additional full-time workers. The associated earnings gains, tax contributions, and reduced reliance on informal employment represent substantial economic value.

Second, the dynamic pattern of effects—small in 2013, growing through 2016—suggests that the benefits of legalization may accumulate over time as recipients gain access to better jobs, accumulate work experience, and invest in skills. Policies that provide longer-term or permanent status may therefore generate larger benefits than temporary measures.

Third, the similarity of effects across males and females suggests that DACA's benefits were broadly shared, not concentrated among particular subgroups. This supports the view that employment barriers affect the entire undocumented population, not just specific demographic groups.

8.2 Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations of this analysis should be acknowledged:

Measurement of Undocumented Status: The analysis uses non-citizenship as a proxy for undocumented status. While this is a reasonable approximation for Mexican-born individuals who arrived as children and remained in the U.S. for many years, it introduces measurement error. Some non-citizens hold temporary visas and were never eligible for DACA. This measurement error likely attenuates the estimated treatment effect, suggesting the true effect may be larger.

Selection Effects: The analysis cannot fully rule out that unobserved characteristics correlated with DACA eligibility might drive the results. While the event study provides some support for parallel trends, the pre-trend in 2006–2007 raises some concerns. Future research could explore additional identification strategies such as regression discontinuity designs based on age or arrival date cutoffs.

General Equilibrium Effects: This analysis focuses on partial equilibrium effects on DACA-eligible individuals. It does not capture potential spillover effects on non-eligible workers (who might face increased competition) or on the broader economy. General equilibrium analyses would be valuable for understanding the full impact of immigration reform.

Outcome Scope: This study focuses on full-time employment. Future research could examine other outcomes such as wages, job quality, occupational upgrading, self-employment, or outcomes in specific industries. The effects of DACA on educational attainment, health outcomes, and family formation are also important areas for investigation.

Future research could also examine heterogeneity in DACA's effects across education levels, industries, and regions, as well as longer-term outcomes as the program matures. Understanding these patterns can inform debates about immigration reform and the potential effects of a permanent legislative solution for Dreamers.

8.3 Concluding Remarks

This study contributes to our understanding of how immigration policy affects labor market outcomes. The finding that DACA eligibility increased full-time employment by approximately 3.6 percentage points provides evidence that legal status and work authorization

generate meaningful economic benefits for recipients. As debates about immigration policy continue, this evidence can help inform decisions about DACA's future and broader immigration reform.

The results underscore the potential value of providing pathways to legal status for undocumented immigrants, particularly those who arrived as children and have deep ties to the United States. While the policy debate involves many considerations beyond economics—including questions of fairness, enforcement, and national sovereignty—the evidence suggests that programs like DACA can generate positive labor market outcomes for participants.

A Additional Tables and Figures

A.1 Sample Characteristics by DACA Eligibility

Table 6: Sample Characteristics by DACA Eligibility Status

Variable	Eligible	Ineligible
Mean age	25.3	44.2
Female (%)	47.6	45.1
Married (%)	43.2	62.8
Less than high school (%)	42.1	58.3
High school graduate (%)	32.5	23.4
Some college (%)	19.8	12.6
College graduate (%)	5.6	5.7
N (observations)	81,508	479,962

Notes: Statistics calculated across all years in the analytic sample (2006–2011 and 2013–2016).

A.2 Full Regression Output

Table 7: Full Regression Results: Preferred Specification

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error
DACA Eligible	−0.0300	0.0029
Eligible × Post	0.0358	0.0035
Age	0.0432	0.0004
Age squared	−0.0005	0.0000
Female	−0.4195	0.0012
Married	−0.0249	0.0013
High school	0.0468	0.0013
Some college	0.0516	0.0024
College+	0.0781	0.0030
Year fixed effects	Yes	
State fixed effects	Yes	
Observations	561,470	
R-squared	0.2178	

Notes: Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors. All coefficients significant at $p < 0.01$. Reference categories: less than high school education, male, unmarried.

A.3 Variable Definitions

Table 8: Variable Definitions and IPUMS Codes

Variable	**IPUMS Code**	**Definition**
Full-time employed	UHRSWORK	≥ 35 usual hours worked per week
DACA Eligible	(constructed)	BIRTHYR ≥ 1982 AND YRIMMIG $\leq$ 2007 AND (YRIMMIG $-$ BIRTHYR) < 16
Post-DACA	YEAR	Survey year ≥ 2013
Hispanic-Mexican	HISPAN	$= 1$ (Mexican)
Mexican-born	BPL	$= 200$ (Mexico)
Non-citizen	CITIZEN	$= 3$ (Not a citizen)

B Methodological Notes

B.1 Exclusion of 2012

The year 2012 is excluded from the analysis because DACA was implemented on June 15, 2012, creating ambiguity in treatment status. The ACS collects data throughout the year but does not record the month of interview. Including 2012 observations would introduce measurement error: some respondents surveyed before June 15 would be incorrectly classified as "post-DACA," while those surveyed after would include a mix of applicants at various stages of the process.

B.2 Standard Errors

Standard errors are computed using the HC1 heteroskedasticity-consistent covariance matrix estimator. This approach is conservative and does not assume homoskedasticity. Clustering at the state or individual level was considered but not implemented because: (1) the ACS is a repeated cross-section, not a panel, so there are no individual-level clusters; and (2) state-level clustering with 51 clusters may perform poorly in finite samples. The reported standard errors should be interpreted as lower bounds on the true uncertainty.

B.3 Survey Weights

The main analysis does not incorporate survey weights (PERWT) in the regression, following standard econometric practice that weights are unnecessary for causal inference when the treatment effect is not heterogeneous across the weighting variable. However, descriptive statistics and weighted mean calculations do use PERWT to ensure population representativeness.