

Testimonies From the Field: Benefits of DACA for Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence

We asked a number of shelters and organizations that work with survivors of domestic and sexual violence to answer a survey, which included a question that asked them if they had ever helped a survivor of sexual or domestic violence obtain Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. We heard stories from all over the United States. Below, we provide a few of those responses and offer context where appropriate.

Of 34 of those who answered the survey, 17 responded that they had helped a survivor obtain DACA. That is half of the service providers. If 50% of service providers have helped survivors to obtain DACA in the three years the program has been in place, imagine how many other survivors could be helped through Expanded DACA and DAPA.

Takes away the fear of deportation, encouraging victims to come forward:

“DACA provided a sense of peace knowing that she did not have to remain silent when being abused for fear of her immigration status.”

“Providing my client with DACA made her feel safer about her immigration status which contributed to her willingness to seek services and work with law enforcement. U-visas take a long time and many survivors are hesitant to report because they fear deportation. DACA is faster and provides them with that sense of security they need to report and potentially file for a U visa.”

DACA has helped take away the financial dependence on the abuser:

“The survivor was able to obtain a driver’s license which helped her obtain insurance so that she is not longer an uninsured driver. She was also able to get a job with her work authorization and is now able to support her children.”

“DACA helps survivors feel secure and stable so that they can rebuild their lives and be economically self-sufficient.”

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DACA provides peace of mind for survivors:

“Reduce her anxiety and thus allowed the person to explore avenues of hope and advocacy.”

“DACA provides work authorization and the removal of the fear of imminent deportation—two things that my clients need to feel free to leave their abusive partners. DACA enables my clients to leave abusive relationships by providing financial and emotional stability for themselves and their children.”

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