THEDREAM.US

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FLORIDA DREAMERS FACT SHEET MARCH 2025

On Meet the Press in December 2024, President Trump said: *"We have to do something about the Dreamers, because these are people that have been brought here at a very young age, and many of these are middle-aged people now, they don't even speak the language of their country. I will work with the Democrats on a plan. They were brought into this country many years ago."*

Who are Dreamers?

Dreamers are young immigrants who grew up in Florida after coming to the U.S. as children, typically at age six. They attended local schools, participated in community life, and contributed to Florida's economy. Although they are in limbo status due to inaction of the U.S. Congress, they strive to earn college degrees and fill critical workforce gaps. For many, higher education is not just a steppingstone—it's a requirement for potential legal status under any future Dream Act legislation.

What They've Accomplished with the Out-of-State Tuition Waiver

Since the waiver's enactment in 2014, thousands of Dreamers have pursued higher education, filling critical jobs in STEM, healthcare, and education. TheDream.US has graduated 600 Florida students from state colleges who are now putting their degrees to work in Florida. Currently, 614 TheDream.US Scholars are enrolled in Florida higher ed institutions. Without the waiver, their tuition would triple or quadruple, making college completion virtually impossible.

THE REAL COST FOR FLORIDA IS ELIMINATING THE TUITION WAIVER

- **Dreamers pay full tuition**—they do not qualify for Bright Futures scholarships or federal aid.
- **Florida colleges and universities could lose nearly $26.7 million** if tuition waivers are revoked, worsening enrollment declines that have persisted since 2011.
- **PolitiFact** debunked the claim in-state tuition "costs" Florida millions, calling it "mostly false," and noting the waiver "does not technically cost the state money" and that repealing the waiver will "likely cause colleges and universities to lose revenue."
- **Florida's workforce and economy will lose critical workers**. Dreamers help fill job gaps, pay taxes, and contribute to the economy.
- **Job market realities:** Florida's job openings nearly doubled from **268,453 in 2014** to **532,000 in 2024,** while unemployment fell from **6% to 3.4%.**
- Denying Dreamers a college education would **worsen labor shortages in critical fields** like healthcare, education, and STEM, while also **increasing high school dropout** rates and limiting workforce participation.
- **Higher education leads to higher earnings and tax revenue:** Floridians with a bachelor's degree earn nearly **double** those with only a high school diploma **($62,662 vs. $32,921 annually).**

THE ASK: A GRANDFATHER CLAUSE

Please **"grandfather in" the 6,000 Dreamers** who will be forced out of college after July 1, 2025. These students worked hard and deserve the chance to complete their education. Florida has already invested in their K-12 education and some of their college education. Let's not waste that investment—let them graduate and contribute to the state's future.

Who is TheDream.US?

TheDream.US is the nation's largest college and career success program for first-generation immigrant students. It has awarded over 11,000 scholarships nationwide, supporting students at nearly 80 partner colleges across 20+ states and Washington, DC. Investing in Dreamers' education benefits both Florida and the nation, ensuring they graduate, build meaningful careers, and contribute to their communities.

A SNAPSHOT OF THEDREAM.US - FLORIDA SCHOLARS

- **1,600+ Scholarships awarded to Dreamers in FL**
  - 600+Graduates
  - 600+ Scholars currently enrolled across 8 Florida colleges and universities
- **Median Age of Arrival to the US: 6 years old**
- **First in their family to attend college: 67%**
- **Academic focus and Outcomes for all TheDream.US Scholars:**
  - First-Year Persistence: 91%
  - Graduation Rates: 75%
- **Top Fields of Study for Scholars currently enrolled in college:**
  - Science, Math, and Technology: 32%
  - Business: 23%
  - Health and Medicine: 19%
  - Social Sciences: 16%

President Donald J. Trump Voices his Support of Dreamers

> *You graduate from a college, I think you should get automatically, as part of your diploma, a green card to be able to stay in this country." (June 2024, All-in Podcast)*

> *We are going to take care of DACA. We are going to take care of Dreamer(s) ... you will be, I think, very happy over the course of the next year, because I feel the same way as you do about it." (October 2020, NBC town hall in Miami)*

Bottom Line

- Florida Dreamers have earned their spots in college and are critical to the state's economy. The in-state tuition waiver is not a handout—it is a return on investment.
- Without this waiver, Dreamers will be locked out of higher education, and Florida will lose out on a skilled workforce and the economic benefits they bring.

DON'T SHUT THE DOOR ON FLORIDA'S FIRST-GENERATION IMMIGRANT STUDENTS.
LET THEM GRADUATE. LET THEM GIVE BACK.