

City and County of San Francisco
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION



Theresa Sparks
Executive Director

Edwin M. Lee
Mayor

COMMISSIONERS July 15, 2013

Michael Sweet
Chair

Honorable Mayor Edwin M. Lee
City Hall, Room 201
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

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Sheryl Evans Davis
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Faye Woo Lee
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Nazly Mohajer
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Richard Pio Roda

Members of the Board of Supervisors
City Hall, Room 244
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Honorable Mayor Lee and Members of the Board of Supervisors:

This year the San Francisco Human Rights Commission - Equity Advisory Committee, one of two citizen advisory committees charged with providing advice and assistance to the Commission, has prioritized supporting eligible undocumented youth and young adults in applying for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals ("DACA") Program as one of its main issue focuses.

On June 15, 2012, the Obama Administration via the Department of Homeland Security announced the implementation of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, which officially began on August 15, 2012. This program offers access to work permits and specific protections from deportations to immigrants who were brought to the United States as children and who meet other specific requirements as indicated by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Some of the requisites for completing an application include providing proof of enrollment in school, graduation from high school or completion of a general education development certificate ("GED"), entrance to the country prior to 16-years of age, residency in the country for a continuous 5-years prior to June 15, 2012, and having been present in the country on June 15, 2012.

To apply for Deferred Action, there are multiple lengthy forms that are necessary to fill out which also require \$465.00 in application fees. "Notarios" (fraudulent immigrant consultants) operating in Spanish-speaking communities and hiding under the guise of travel agencies, translation services and other businesses have been offering to help undocumented immigrants navigate the process of applying for relief under the President's program, but can charge hefty fees for services that are unnecessary or that they are not legally authorized to provide.

Last year, the San Francisco Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs ("OCEIA") and the Department of Children, Youth, & Their Families ("DCYF") adopted a memorandum of understanding ("MOU") agreeing to work collaboratively to inform and assist the City's potential applicants for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.



This MOU established a grants program administered by OCEIA to fund community-based organizations to provide legal services, culturally and linguistically competent application assistance, outreach and education, and other services to eligible applicants for DACA.

Despite initial successes in recruiting and serving significant numbers of eligible applicants, many of these legal service providers have recently expressed a growing underutilization of their services from potential applicants.

Over the last six months, the San Francisco Human Rights Commission ("SF HRC") Equity Advisory Committee, the San Francisco Youth Commission and the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs have been working with the San Francisco Unified School District ("SFUSD") to support with publicizing and connecting eligible SFUSD students with the grant-funded legal services and application assistance services for DACA.

As a result of the efforts from this partnership, the San Francisco Unified School District has developed a centralized online platform that streamlines the process for San Francisco youth and young adults who are applying for the DACA program. Additionally, these organizations successfully persuaded SFUSD to waive all fees associated with obtaining official documentation for Deferred Action in light of the \$465.00 in application fees already required by USCIS.

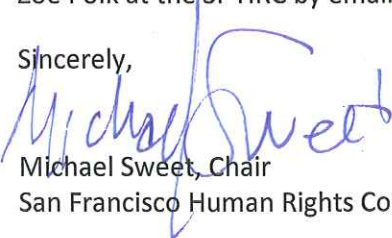
Furthermore, this spring the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, the San Francisco Immigrant Rights Commission, and the San Francisco Youth Commission, each respectively passed a mirrored resolution urging the San Francisco Unified School District to coordinate efforts with City departments to support greater student and youth participation in the DACA program.

To assist more DACA eligible youth and young adults in applying to the federal program, the SF HRC - Equity Advisory Committee, the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs and the San Francisco Youth Commission are currently working to encourage that Mayor Edwin Lee and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors proclaim a day at the beginning of the academic school year as "DACA Day" in celebration of the one-year anniversary of the DACA program. "DACA Day" would comprise a press event to bring attention to the program and to advertise the free legal services being offered by the City. Additionally, using volunteers from the legal service provider agencies organized by the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs with the support of the HRC – Equity Advisory Committee and the San Francisco Youth Commission "DACA Day" would sponsor DACA eligibility screenings at targeted SFUSD and City College school sites throughout the City.

By unanimous vote of Commissioners present at the July 11, 2013 meeting, this letter respectfully serves to express the Human Right's Commissions formal support of aforementioned organizations' efforts to encourage that Mayor Edwin Lee and Members of the Board of Supervisors recognize a "DACA Day," at the beginning of the academic school year, on September 4, 2013

We gratefully thank you for your consideration. If there are any questions or concerns, please contact Ms. Zoe Polk at the SF HRC by email zoe.polk@sfgov.org or by phone to 415-252-2517.

Sincerely,



Michael Sweet, Chair
San Francisco Human Rights Commission