

Obama Directive Offers Relief To Certain Unauthorized Immigrants

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Under a new directive from President Obama, unauthorized immigrants who meet specific criteria will not be subject to deportation, and will be eligible to apply for work authorization immediately.

To be eligible for relief, individuals must show, on a case-by-case basis, that they:

- Came to the United States under the age of 16;
- Have continuously lived in the U.S. for at least five years (before June 15) and are now present in the U.S.;
- Are currently in school, have graduated from high school (or received a GED certificate), or have been honorably discharged from the Coast Guard or other armed forces; -
- Have not been convicted of a felony, a significant misdemeanor or multiple misdemeanors, and do not otherwise present a threat to national security or public safety; and
- Are not over 30.

The [Hispanic Pew Center](#) has estimated that up to 1.4 million people could be affected by this directive, representing approximately 12 percent of the approximately 11.2 million unauthorized immigrants in the United States.

Predictably, reaction has been divided along party lines, with Democrats praising President Obama's actions while Republicans claim that the President's directive violates current immigration law and point to the directive as another example of the President circumventing Congress to implement policy. Last year, legislation meant to overhaul immigration policy (known as the DREAM Act) died in Congress.

In any event, this directive can have a significant effect on an employer's workforce, especially those who employ a substantial number of immigrant workers.

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