

Thousands of Immigrants Get Deferrals

By Miriam Jordan

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About 180,000 young illegal immigrants have applied for a two-year reprieve from deportation under a new immigration program, and 4,591 cases have been approved, the Department of Homeland Security said Friday.

The program, known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, opened on Aug. 15 after being put in place by the Obama administration. It protects eligible immigrants from deportation and allows them to apply for a work permit.

But the program doesn't offer legal residency or a path to citizenship, and participants must reapply for authorization every two years.

Among other criteria, applicants must provide documentation showing they arrived in the U.S. before they were 16 years old, are under the age of 31 and have lived continuously in the U.S for the past five years.

Some potential applicants are struggling with documentation—including problems associated with overseas birth certificates—and legal advice, advocates say.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, a unit of Homeland Security, anticipates most cases will take four to six months to decide. Once an application is complete, applicants are fingerprinted and photographed and then a background check is performed before a final decision is made to grant deferred action.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444657804578052904137225898.html>