

Proposal to the ASOSU Student Advisory Board

From HTS and DBB Student Leadership

October 14, 2020

Student members of Here to Stay (HTS) and the Dreaming Beyond Borders Resource Center (DBB) have been diligently working for the last two years to create and build institutional frameworks of support for undocumented students, DACA recipients, Temporary Protection Status holders, and students with mixed-status families. Due to the evolving political climate, the lives of non-U.S. citizens have been threatened and upheaved. The immigration process in this country is fraught and unpredictable, which forces communities to protect themselves and adapt quickly with whatever resources are available. We are asking to collaborate with ASOSU to expand the legal services available to all OSU students to include comprehensive immigration screening and support with DACA renewal for students who are eligible.

Background

Our campus has always met the critical legal needs of its students, and those needs now include comprehensive immigration screening and support with DACA renewal. The immigration process is emotionally, financially, and time-draining, especially for students in higher education who balance multiple commitments. HTS and DBB saw a need and have worked together with community partners on gathering funds for DACA renewals. In doing this work, we have identified the need to support immigration relief screening for any OSU student, and to support DACA renewals.

Maintaining immigration status improves a student's college experience in numerous ways by reducing anxiety and concern, and opening opportunities to professional development. By providing comprehensive immigration screening and DACA renewal services, ASOSU will provide an invaluable resource at a time when these services are needed urgently.

According to the DBB Resource Center's 2020 estimates, the population of undocumented students at OSU is approximately 250 students, and of that population, approximately 20 students have DACA status.¹ In the Fall and Winter terms of 2019 collectively, the DBB Resource Center helped 12 students with DACA renewal application fees. Between the number of students served in two terms the DBB estimates that 20 OSU students each year would benefit from support for DACA renewal.

¹ DBB does not maintain a list or accounting of students based on status, so this calculation relies on estimates. Nationally, approximately 8% of undocumented immigrants receive DACA status.

Students need both financial and legal support for immigration processes, including DACA renewals. In 2020, the federal government began to require DACA renewal every year instead of every two years (in addition to prohibiting new DACA applications). We project that at least 12 students will be eligible for renewal in Winter and Spring of 2021, and that 20 students will be eligible annually.

Proposal

Meeting the needs of all OSU students includes offering a comprehensive immigration screening, and for those eligible, support with DACA renewal. Comprehensive immigration screening opens up additional pathways for students who qualify for permanent status. For those eligible, DACA allows work authorization, meaning that students are able to launch their careers upon graduation. The DACA renewal form is seven pages long and asks for legal information, including “Criminal, National Security, and Public Safety Information” and “Removal Proceedings Information.” The way that students answer these questions may determine whether they are allowed to remain in the United States and work legally upon completing their degrees.

Until now, students have been completing these forms on their own, or with assistance from friends. Some students travel to Salem or Eugene to meet with attorneys, taking time away from their studies. To ensure that the legal needs of all OSU students are met, we propose expanding the legal services offered on campus to include specific, comprehensive services for people who are eligible for DACA renewal. In consultation with service providers and our partners, we identified the following legal services as important supports for DACA renewal:

- Screening for all kinds of immigration relief
- Counseling on DACA renewal options
- Research regarding potential issues with DACA renewal
- Completing DACA application with student present
- Sending DACA application certified mail
- Tracking receipt and processing
- Counseling student on result
- Planning for subsequent renewals

In consultation, we determined that an experienced attorney can typically complete a comprehensive immigration screening in 40 minutes, and that an initial screening would cost \$150 per student. We anticipate that approximately one hundred students would seek an initial screening. Those who are not eligible for DACA may independently seek to retain counsel to pursue other forms of relief. For students who are eligible for DACA, the standard rate for routine renewal is \$1,250. Based on these estimates, we anticipate that 100 students would seek

consultation (\$15,000) and of those, 20 would need support for renewal (\$25,000). Since consultation fees are waived for students who do complete renewal, the annualized cost of the services proposed is \$37,000 (see table 1 for breakdown of FY21 and FY22 costs).

To deliver these critical services, we hope to partner with ASOSU’s Student Legal Services provider, which currently provides valuable advice and referral to students regarding immigration issues, but does not provide the full range of services detailed above. It is our goal to create a partnership between HTS, DBB, and Student Legal Services so that students are able to renew their status with as few barriers as possible. If necessary, we may also explore options for service delivery with other community partners.

Conclusions

ASOSU has offered legal services since the 1970s, meeting the evolving needs of students. In the past, this has included issues such as housing and legal issues related to alcohol and drug use. To meet the needs of our generation, we ask that ASOSU adapt its legal services to expand support for students with various kinds of status. This commitment furthers Oregon State University’s strategic mission to provide an education accessible for all.

As we have developed this proposal, we are mindful of the dynamic nature of federal immigration policies that have changed since we began our research. While it is possible that subsequent shifts in federal policy may impact the urgency to provide these services, we have concluded that we must respond to the policy realities we currently face in order to best support all students.

Table 1

	FY21 Contingency	FY22
Consultation	7,500	15,300
Renewal (less consultation)	11,000	22,440
Total	18,500	37,740