



Many immigrants are fearful of admitting that they have been a victim of a crime in part because they believe they will be removed (deported) from the United States if they report the crime. Officials such as police officers, healthcare providers, judges, and prosecutors are often the first



to see the signs of violence and are therefore in a unique position to provide information and assistance to those who have been victims. This brochure is designed to assist front-line workers in this endeavor.



U.S. law provides several protections for legal and undocumented immigrants who have been victims of a crime. Often victims are unaware of such protections, thus frontline workers serve as a critical link for immigrant victims. There are specific protections for victims of domestic violence, victims of certain crimes, and victims of human trafficking.

All agencies within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), including USCIS, are legally prohibited from disclosing that a victim has applied for VAWA, T, or U immigration benefits.

**Victims are not required to be in legal immigration status, but they must:**

- Be a victim of a severe form of trafficking in persons,
- Be physically present in the United States on account of the trafficking,
- Comply with any reasonable requests for assistance in the investigation or prosecution (or be under the age of 18), and
- Suffer extreme hardship involving unusual and severe harm if removed from the United States.

To apply for a T nonimmigrant status, applicants must file Form I-914, Application for T Nonimmigrant Status. Qualifying family members may also be eligible to apply for benefits.

Visit the "Humanitarian" section of the USCIS website  
[www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)

Law Enforcement Officials and  
 Representatives of Record  
 contact USCIS at **1 802 527 4888**  
 All others should call **1 800 375 5283**



## Immigration Options for Victims of Crimes

Information for Law Enforcement, Healthcare Providers, and Others

Violence Against Women Act  
 U Nonimmigrant Status  
 T Nonimmigrant Status



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

## Violence Against Women Act

(VAWA) Self-Petitioners



Some immigrants may be afraid to report acts of domestic violence to the police or to seek other forms of assistance. Such fear causes many immigrants to remain in abusive relationships.

Victims of domestic violence who are the child, parent, or current/former spouse of a United States citizen or a permanent resident (green card holder) and are abused by the citizen or permanent resident may be eligible to apply for a green card themselves without needing the abuser to file for immigration benefits on their behalf. This provision of the law was created under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

### Victims must establish that they:

- Have or had a qualifying relationship with the abuser spouse, or, are the parent or child of the abuser,
- Reside or resided with the abuser,
- Have good moral character, and
- Have been victims of battery or extreme cruelty.

VAWA provisions apply equally to men and women.

Victims of domestic violence, whether a spouse, child, or parent of the abuser, may self-petition by filing Form I-360, Petition for Widow(er)s, Amerasians, and Special Immigrants. This form is available on USCIS' website, [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

### U Nonimmigrant Status

U nonimmigrant status (or U visa) offers immigration protection for victims and is also a tool for law enforcement. To obtain U status, the victim must obtain a certification from law enforcement, however, law enforcement officials should note that providing a certification does not grant a benefit—only USCIS has the authority to grant or deny this benefit.

### Victims are not required to be in legal immigration status, but they must:

- Be a victim of qualifying criminal activity and have suffered substantial physical or mental abuse as a result of the crime,
- Possess credible and reliable information about the qualifying criminal activity,
- Be, have been, or are likely to be helpful to the investigation and/or prosecution of that qualifying criminal activity, and
- Be a victim of criminal activity that violated a U.S. law.



### Victims of the following crimes may be eligible for a U nonimmigrant visa:

Abduction	Manslaughter
Abusive Sexual Contact	Rape
Blackmail	Murder
Domestic Violence	Obstruction of Justice
Extortion	Witness Tampering
False Imprisonment	Prostitution
Female Genital Mutilation	Sexual Assault
Perjury	Slave Trade
Felonious Assault	Torture
Hostage Taken	Trafficking
Incest	Sexual Exploitation
Peonage	Unlawful Criminal Restraint
Involuntary Servitude	Other Related Crimes
Kidnapping	

To apply for U nonimmigrant status, the victim must file Form I-918, Petition for U Nonimmigrant Status. Law enforcement official must certify Form I-918, Supplement B. Qualifying family members may also be eligible to apply for benefits.

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### T Nonimmigrant Status

Trafficking in persons—also known as "human trafficking"—is a form of modern-day slavery. Traffickers prey on many types of people, often including individuals who are poor, unemployed, underemployed, or who lack the safety and protection of strong social networks. Victims are often lured under the false pretenses of good jobs and better lives, and then forced to work under brutal and inhumane conditions. Many believe that human trafficking is a problem that only occurs in other countries—but human trafficking also happens in the United States.

The T nonimmigrant status (or T visa) provides immigration protection to victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons who assist law enforcement in the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking cases.