

## **U.S. Immigration Relief for Survivors of Domestic Violence and Other Crimes**

### **U Visa**

Through the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (VTVPA), noncitizen survivors of qualifying crimes, including domestic violence and sexual assault, and have been helpful in a criminal investigation or prosecution may qualify for a U nonimmigrant visa. Through the U visa application process, individuals may receive employment authorization. After U visa approval individuals may have the ability to apply for lawful permanent resident (green card) in the future. U visa benefits may be available for undocumented individuals and/or individuals who entered without inspection.

The U.S. immigration status of the abuser does not matter for U visa purposes, nor does it matter if the U visa applicant is married to the abuser or not.

For further information, please see the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) website on [Victims of Criminal Activity: U Nonimmigrant Status](#) and/or speak with an immigration attorney or a non-profit organization that assists immigrants to learn more about the eligibility requirements, application process, and timeline: [Free or Low-Cost Legal Immigration Services Handout](#)

### **Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)**

VAWA provides a legal pathway to lawful U.S. immigration status for domestic violence survivors who are lawfully married to a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident.

VAWA allows eligible noncitizen survivors of abuse or extreme cruelty to self-petition for lawful permanent residence status (a “green card”) in the United States without the abusive spouse’s knowledge or consent. Through an approved VAWA application, individuals can receive employment authorization, and access public benefits. VAWA self-petition benefits may be available for undocumented individuals and/or individuals who entered without inspection.

Please note that people of any gender identity that meet the eligibility requirements for VAWA may apply.

For further information, please see the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) website on [Green Card for VAWA Self-Petitioner](#) and/or speak with an immigration attorney or a non-profit organization that assists immigrants to learn more about the eligibility requirements, application process, and timeline: [Free or Low-Cost Legal Immigration Services Handout](#)