

U Visa for Victims of Crimes of Violence

What is U visa status?

The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act created U visa status, which is also known as U nonimmigrant status.

It is designed to offer legal status to crime victims who are not citizens and who have helped, are helping, or who want to help the authorities to investigate the crimes committed against them. The main purpose of the U visa is to encourage crime victims who do not have residency documents to help law enforcement agencies (such as the police) to investigate and prosecute crimes without fear of deportation.

U visa status may be available for victims of crimes of violence. Among those crimes are: assault, which includes felonious assault such as stabbing, shooting a person, violent entry into a house with people inside and armed robbery, blackmail, extortion, incest, homicide and murder, manipulation of a jury, female genital mutilation, obstruction of justice, perjury, prostitution or any other form of sexual exploitation that is forced, kidnapping, trafficking in persons, torture, domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, etc.

If you are a victim of a crime and are not a US citizen, **you must meet ALL of these requirements:**

- have a certification from a law enforcement authority or from another agency that can obtain a certification stating that you helped, you are helping, or you are likely to help with the investigation or prosecution of one of the categories of crimes that is on the list of the U visa qualifying crimes;
- show that you have suffered substantial mental or physical abuse due to one the certified crimes;
- demonstrate that you have information regarding the criminal activity, normally explained in the certification; and
- the criminal activity violated US law; or it took place in the US (including Native American territory or military facilities) or in a US territory or possession, also normally explained in the certification.

Immigration laws are complicated and WomensLaw strongly recommends that you check with an immigration lawyer who is familiar with U visas before filing a petition to see if you can be granted a U visa or other forms of immigration relief.

You can find more information about U visas on WomensLaw.org.

Please see the WomensLaw.org [National Organizations – Immigration](#) page for legal referrals. Be sure to ask the lawyer if he/she has experience with U visa cases as they are complex cases. For more help, your lawyer can contact [ASISTA](#).