

## **U VISA: IMMIGRATION STATUS FOR CRIME VICTIMS**

If you are in the U.S. without legal immigration status, and have been the victim of a crime, you and your family members may be eligible for temporary legal status -- the U Visa -- and, eventually, lawful permanent resident status (a “green card”).

### **WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR U STATUS?**

Victims of certain crimes are eligible for U status if (1) they have suffered physically or mentally as a result of being a crime victim in the U.S.; (2) they have information about the crime; and (3) they are, have been, or will be helpful to legal authorities investigating or prosecuting the crime. The law lists many qualifying crimes, including but not limited to: domestic violence, rape, abusive sexual contact, abduction, blackmail, felony assault, and criminal restraint – or similar activities. A lawyer or legal worker can help you determine if you qualify.

### **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF U STATUS? WHAT ABOUT MY FAMILY?**

Persons who are approved for U status will receive authorization to work. They can live legally in the U.S. in U status for four years, and this time period may be extended in some limited circumstances. After three years, U status recipients may apply for lawful permanent residence (a “green card”).

The spouse and children (under 21) of U status applicants are eligible to receive U status as well. If the U status applicant is under age 21, his or her spouse, children, parents and any unmarried siblings under age 18 at the time of application, also are eligible to receive U status.

### **HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?**

There is no fee for the U status application itself. There are other fees, but people who cannot afford the fees may apply for a fee waiver.

### **CAN I APPLY FOR U STATUS NOW?**

Yes. There are special application forms to use to apply for U status for the crime victim and for his or her qualifying family members. There is also a special form to use to obtain the required certification from a law enforcement agency to support the application.

### **WHAT IF MY CASE IS IN IMMIGRATION COURT?**

Your removal (deportation) case can be put on hold while your U status application is pending. You will not be deported if your U status application is approved.

**SEEK LEGAL COUNSELING FROM A COMPETENT IMMIGRATION  
LAWYER OR LEGAL SERVICES WORKER BEFORE APPLYING!!  
REMEMBER – IMMIGRATION LAW IS COMPLICATED!  
DO NOT RELY ON THE ADVICE OF A FRIEND OR AN UNAUTHORIZED  
COUNSELOR OR “NOTARIO”**