



U-VISA: an Immigration Remedy for LGBTQ Victims of Crime

Introduction

If you are an immigrant and a victim of sexual assault, domestic violence, or other listed crimes, there are certain immigration remedies that may allow you to gain legal immigration status, including asylum, VAWA, or the U Visa. For more information about VAWA or asylum, contact the Legal Services Department at the number below.

U Visa

While some remedies may not be an option for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer individuals, the “U Visa” protects individuals regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity who are victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and certain other crimes who are willing to help law enforcement authorities in the investigation or prosecution of criminal activity. The U Visa is not dependent on the abuser’s immigration status.

You may be eligible for a U Visa if you can prove:

- ☞ You were the victim of a qualifying crime that violated U.S. laws.
- ☞ You suffered physical, mental, or emotional injury because you were the victim of the crime.
- ☞ You have or will cooperate with law enforcement and will help in the investigation or prosecution of the crime. (Cooperation with the investigation or prosecution may mean making a police report, staying in touch with police or the District or City Attorneys’ office, testifying against the person who hurt you, etc.)

You may be eligible for a U Visa even if you entered the country without documentation or if you have some criminal activity on your own record.

What are the benefits of being granted a U Visa?

- ☞ You will have access to certain public benefits
- ☞ You will be given a visa to live and work lawfully in the United States
- ☞ You will be able to get a work permit

Evidence of Abuse is Required

For most immigration remedies, you will be required to show evidence of the abuse or injury you experienced. Here are helpful steps you can take to gather evidence;

- ☞ Document the abuse: Use a diary, journal, or notebook. Write down the dates, names, and contact information for witnesses.
- ☞ Make and keep copies of police reports, medical papers, and court documents such as restraining orders.
- ☞ Make and keep copies of any important documents: immigration documents, birth certificates, apartment leases, etc.
- ☞ Keep everything in a safe place away from your abuser, and where you can access it if you need to flee your home suddenly because of abuse.

DO NOT call or go to Immigration without a lawyer or without consulting with a lawyer.

For more information: Contact the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center - Legal Services Department at 323.993.7670.

This resource is only intended to provide general information about legal rights. **Do not rely on this resource for legal advice.** We advise you to talk to an attorney for information about your specific situation.

L.A. Gay and Lesbian Center/Legal Services Department/323.993.7670