



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS Reaches Milestone for Third Straight Year: 10,000 U Visas Approved in Fiscal Year 2012

U Visa Protects Victims of Crime and Strengthens Law Enforcement Efforts

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WASHINGTON—U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) today marked a significant milestone in its efforts to provide relief to victims of crimes by approving the statutory maximum 10,000 petitions for U nonimmigrant status, also referred to as the U-visa. This is the third straight year USCIS has reached the statutory maximum since it began issuing U-visas in 2008.

Each year, 10,000 U-visas are available for victims of crime who have suffered substantial mental or physical abuse and are willing to help law enforcement authorities investigate or prosecute those crimes. A U-visa petition requires law enforcement certification of assistance in the investigation or prosecution of crimes.

“The U-visa is an important tool aiding law enforcement to bring criminals to justice,” said USCIS Director Alejandro Mayorkas. “At the same time, we are able to provide immigration protection to victims of crime and their families. Both benefits are in the interest of the public we serve.”

In recent years, USCIS has greatly expanded its public education and outreach effort through partnerships with law enforcement agencies and service providers. As part of this effort, USCIS officers have traveled to more than 40 cities, including Denver, New York City, Newark, and San Antonio, to train federal, state and local law enforcement agencies and immigrant-serving organizations on immigration protections available to individuals who are victims of human trafficking, domestic violence and other serious crimes.

The program was created by Congress to strengthen the law enforcement community’s ability to investigate and prosecute cases of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and other crimes while at the same time offering protection to victims. More than 61,000 victims and their family members have received U-visas since the implementation of this program in 2008.

USCIS will continue to accept new petitions as they are received until the end of the current

fiscal year, and will resume issuing U-visas on Oct. 1, 2012, the first day of fiscal year 2013 when new visas are available.

For more information about the U-visa, please see the [Victims of Criminal Activity](#) Web page at www.uscis.gov. From there, you will find a link to Questions and Answers.

For more information on USCIS and its programs, please visit www.uscis.gov or follow us on Twitter ([@uscis](#)), YouTube ([/uscis](#)) and the USCIS blog [The Beacon](#). For more information about DHS efforts to combat human trafficking, visit www.dhs.gov/humantrafficking and www.dhs.gov/humantrafficking.

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