

U-Visa & T-Visa Information

U Visa Information – Law Enforcement Certifications

What is a U Nonimmigrant Visa (also known as a U Visa)?

The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (VTVPA) of 2000 was enacted to strengthen the ability of law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute serious crimes and trafficking in persons, while offering protections to victims of such crimes without the immediate risk of being removed from the country. A U-Visa is a temporary visa issued by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to victims of certain crimes, providing temporary legal status and eligibility to work in the United States for up to 4 years.

Who is eligible for a U Visa?

USCIS may find an applicant eligible for a U Visa if the applicant:

- Is the direct or indirect victim of qualifying criminal activity;
- Has suffered substantial physical or mental abuse as a result of having been a victim of criminal activity;
- Has been helpful, is helpful, or is likely to be helpful to a Federal, State, or local prosecutor, to a Federal or State judge, to USCIS, or to other Federal, State, or local authorities investigating or prosecuting criminal activity; and

- The criminal activity violated the laws of the United States or occurred in the U.S. or the territories and possessions of the United States.

Additional information, including applicable forms, may be found through U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Qualifying Criminal Activities

The following are qualifying criminal activities: Rape; torture; trafficking; incest; domestic violence; sexual assault; abusive sexual conduct; prostitution; sexual exploitation; female genital mutilation; being held hostage; peonage; involuntary servitude; slave trade; kidnapping; abduction; unlawful criminal restraint; false imprisonment; blackmail; extortion; manslaughter; murder; felonious assault; witness tampering; obstruction of justice; perjury; fraud in foreign labor contracting; stalking; any similar activity where the elements of the crime are substantially similar; or the attempt, conspiracy, or solicitation to commit any of the above and other related crimes. Additionally, crimes that are “substantially similar” to those listed above may also qualify.

Submitting U Visa Certifications (USCIS Form I-918, Supplement B) to the Will County Sheriff's Office.

Please follow the following procedures prior to submitting a U-Visa Certification request to the Will County Sheriff's Office:

- Verify that the case in question was handled by the Will County Sheriff's Office. If the case was not investigated by the Joliet Police Department, then we are not the correct office to handle your certification request. You may wish to request a copy of the police report and/or investigative report through the Freedom of Information Act.
- Verify that you or your client was a victim of a qualifying crime. See 8 CFR §214.14 (a)(9).

- Verify that you or your client was helpful in the prosecution of the case, specifically, your client has not refused to provide information reasonably requested by law enforcement and/or the respective Prosecutor's office.

What is a T Nonimmigrant Visa (also known as a T-Visa)?

T nonimmigrant status is a temporary immigration benefit that enables certain victims of a severe form of human trafficking to remain in the United States for up to 4 years if they have assisted law enforcement in an investigation or prosecution of human trafficking. T nonimmigrant status is also available for certain qualifying family members of trafficking victims. T nonimmigrants are eligible for employment authorization and certain federal and state benefits and services. T nonimmigrants who qualify may also be able to adjust their status and become lawful permanent residents (obtain a Green Card).

Congress created this status (commonly referred to as a T visa) in October 2000 as part of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act. Human trafficking, also known as trafficking in persons, is a form of modern-day slavery in which traffickers use force, fraud, or coercion to compel individuals to provide labor or services, including commercial sex. Traffickers often take advantage of vulnerable individuals, including those lacking lawful immigration status. T visas offer protection to victims and strengthen the ability of law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute human trafficking.

Under federal law, a "severe form of trafficking" is:

- **Sex trafficking:** When someone recruits, harbors, transports, provides, solicits, patronizes, or obtains a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, where the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or the person being induced to perform such act is under 18 years of age; or
- **Labor trafficking:** When someone recruits, harbors, transports, provides, or obtains a person for labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of involuntary

servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery. Additional information, including applicable forms, may be found through U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Submitting U Visa Certifications (USCIS Form I-918, Supplement B) and T Visa Declarations (USCIS Form I-914, Supplement B) to the Will County Sheriff's Office.

To submit a request for a T or U Visa certification to the Will County Sheriff's Office, please forward your request in writing with all supporting documentation to:

Will County Sheriff's Office
Att: U-Visa Certification
16911 W. Laraway Rd.
Joliet, IL. 60433
815-727-4738

To avoid a delay in processing your request, U-Visa or T-Visa Law Enforcement Certification Requests must be mailed to the Will County Sheriff's Office with all supporting documentation including case report number if known. Supporting documentation includes but is not limited to:

- Name of Victim of Qualifying Crime
- Name of Arrestee/Defendant(s)
- Date of Birth and Identifiers for Arrestee/Defendant(s)
- Will County Court Case (docket) number if known
- Address of Incident
- Date of Incident
- Victim/Client's Name and Identifiers

- A copy of the Police Report (obtainable through FOIA) will assist in processing the certification request
- Return Addressed Envelope with pre-paid postage affixed should be included with the submission