



CITY OF PITTSBURGH

Commission on Human Relations



U VISA FACTSHEET

WHAT IS A U VISA?

Congress created the U visa in the year 2000 in recognition of the fact that many undocumented immigrant crime victims do not cooperate with law enforcement out of fear that such contact could lead to their deportation. The U visa encourages these victims to report crimes and cooperate in criminal investigations by offering temporary legal status and work authorization. The U visa was created with the express purpose of strengthening the ability of law enforcement agencies to detect, investigate and prosecute crimes committed against undocumented immigrants, while simultaneously offering protection to the victims.

HOW/WHERE DO I APPLY?

Everyone interested in applying to the U visa program must complete Form I-918. This form can be downloaded from: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-918>. It is recommended to work with a licensed attorney to complete the application.

To find out where you can submit your completed form(s), please go to www.uscis.gov/I-918 or call **1-800-375-5283**, for the most current information about where to file your documents. For instructions on how to complete Form I-918, and Supplement A (Petition for Qualifying Family Member) please go to <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-918instr.pdf>.

WHEN A U VISA MAY BE APPROPRIATE?

The U visa program may be appropriate for victims of certain crimes. The following may be qualifying criminal activities listed in the U visa statute. The offenses include;

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|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Abduction | 11. Fraud Foreign Labor | 23. Sexual exploitation |
| 2. Abusive sexual contact | contacting | 24. Slave trade |
| 3. Attempt to commit any | 12. Incest | 25. Stalking |
| of the named crimes | 13. Involuntary Servitude | 26. Solicitation to commit |
| 4. Being held hostage | 14. Kidnapping | any of the named |
| 5. Blackmail | 15. Manslaughter | crimes |
| 6. Domestic violence | 16. Murder | 27. Torture |
| 7. Extortion | 17. Obstruction of justice | 28. Trafficking |
| 8. False imprisonment | 18. Peonage | 29. Unlawful criminal |
| 9. Felonious assault | 19. Perjury | restraint |
| 10. Female genital | 20. Prostitution | 30. Witness tampering |
| mutilation | 21. Rape | 31. Related criminal |
| | 22. Sexual Assault | activities |

WHAT DOES A U VISA PROVIDE?

The U visa is a temporary form of immigration status that allows a person to lawfully live and work in the United States. It does not automatically guarantee a green card or US Citizenship. After three years, the person holding a U visa may apply for a green card.

WHO APPROVES U VISAS?

The US Department of Homeland Security, Office of US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is the agency designated by Congress to process and approve U visas.

Does It Matter How Much Time Has Passed Since The Crime Occurred?

No, there is no statute of limitations for the crime or the victims' cooperation.

How Is Harm Determined?

Only USCIS can have the authority to determine substantial harm and to grant or deny the U visa petition.

DOES I HAVE TO BE IN THE UNITED STATES TO APPLY FOR A U VISA?

No, a victim can apply for a U visa while outside of the United States.

HOW CAN THE PITTSBURGH COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS HELP ME?

The Commission is a U visa certifying agency. This means that once your Form I-918 is complete it can be submitted to them for certification. Please know that a complete certification **does not** guarantee that your visa will be approved. For more information please call **412-255-2600**, or email your question(s) to human.relations@pittsburghpa.gov.

There are additional eligibility requirements that the applicant must fulfill including a full review of the applicant's immigration and criminal background. USCIS will make the final determination on whether the U visa will be granted or not.

*An individual **may not** apply for a U visa without local law enforcement certification. Certification only makes the person eligible to apply to the U visa program and **does not** guarantee that the visa will be approved. The role of local law enforcement is to help identify and assist individuals who may qualify by providing certification so that they can comply with federal immigration laws.*



**Pittsburgh Commission
On Human Relations**
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