



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS Reaches Milestone: 10,000 U Visas Approved in Fiscal Year 2010 News Release

U Visa Protects Victims of Crime and Strengthens Law Enforcement Efforts

WASHINGTON – U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) today announced it has approved 10,000 petitions for U nonimmigrant status (also referred to as the “U visa”) in fiscal year 2010, an important milestone for a program that offers immigration protection to victims of crime while also strengthening law enforcement efforts to combat those crimes. This marks the first time that USCIS, through extensive outreach and collaboration, has reached the statutory maximum of 10,000 U visas per fiscal year since it began issuing U visas in 2008.

“Through the U visa, USCIS is able to provide crime victims with critical immigration protection, allowing law enforcement officials to protect victims and bring the perpetrators of crimes to justice,” said USCIS Director Alejandro Mayorkas. “Through our partnership with both law enforcement and service providers, and through the dedicated work of our staff, we were able to reach – and provide this vital benefit to – thousands of deserving individuals.”

USCIS will resume issuing U visas on October 1, 2010, the first day of fiscal year 2011. Until then, USCIS will continue to accept new petitions for U visas and will place conditionally approved petitioners on a waiting list. Conditionally approved petitioners and qualifying family members will be able to legally remain in the United States and request work authorization. This protection also applies to conditionally approved petitioners or any qualifying family members who are in removal proceedings or have a final order of removal.

The U visa was created in the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act, legislation intended to strengthen the ability of law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute cases of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and other crimes while, at the same time, offering protection to victims of such crimes. U visas are set aside for victims who have suffered substantial mental or physical abuse as a result of the criminal activity and are willing to help law enforcement authorities in the investigation or prosecution of the crime. In fiscal year 2009, USCIS approved approximately 6,000 U visa petitions for victims of crime.

For additional information about the U visa waiting list, please see the accompanying Questions & Answers. For more information about the U visa, please see the [Victims of Criminal Activity](#) Web page at www.uscis.gov.

Last updated:07/15/2010