

The National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) is dedicated to ensuring human rights protections and access to justice for all immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

Based in Chicago and with five offices across the country, NIJC provides direct legal services to and advocates for all immigrants through policy reform, impact litigation, and public education. Since its founding more than three decades ago and thanks to the support of thousands of pro bono attorneys from the nation's leading law firms, NIJC has been unique in blending individual client advocacy with broad-based systemic change.

The U Visa

The U Visa was created to keep communities safe by strengthening the ability of law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute cases of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking and other crimes while offering humanitarian protection to victims of such crimes. The U Visa provides a mechanism for victims of certain qualifying crimes to remain in the United States to assist in an investigation/prosecution of those who have perpetrated crimes against them.

Benefits of the U Visa include employment authorization for up to four years. An individual with an approved U Visa may be eligible to apply for legal permanent residency and even naturalization in the future. Additionally, certain qualifying family members of the principal U Visa applicant may be eligible to apply for a U Visa as derivatives.

An immigrant may be eligible for a U Visa if they:

- Have suffered substantial mental or physical harm as a victim of a qualifying crime,
- Possesses information concerning the criminal activity,
- Have been helpful, are being helpful, or are likely to be helpful to law enforcement during the investigation and/or prosecution of the crime; and
- Demonstrate that the qualifying crime violates U.S. federal or state law.

U Visa applicants must be admissible to the United States as a nonimmigrant or obtain a waiver of inadmissibility.

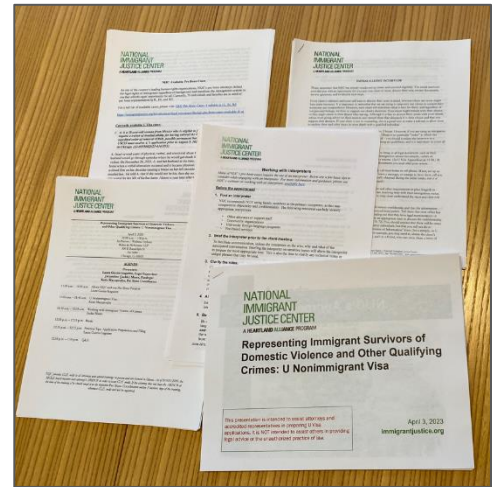
Pro Bono Representation in U Visa Application Involves:

- Direct client engagement including interviewing clients and document collection
- Preparing client affidavit in support of U Visa and waiver of inadmissibility if necessary
- Preparing and filing applications
- Advising the client on future eligibility for legal permanent residency, employment authorization for any derivatives In the United States, and consular processing for any derivatives outside the United States



Our Pro Bono Partnership:

- NIJC pro bono attorneys are expected to:
 - Participate in a training
 - Provide interpretation and/or translation services, as needed
 - Produce a comprehensive application that involves preparing a detailed client affidavit, supporting documentation, and a legal memorandum.
- NIJC provides:
 - Trainings conducted by experts
 - Policy and practice updates regarding any changes within the immigration system that may impact clients
 - Detailed practice manuals, practice advisories, and samples produced
 - Technical support through the life of the case
 - Resources for trauma-informed representation
- Expected number of hours:
 - Due to on-going challenges to immigration law and policy, the length of a case can vary. Pro bono attorneys can expect to dedicate 20 – 40 hours to file the case. Adjudication takes several years. Pro bono attorneys are expected to maintain the case, remain in contact with the client through the final decision, and inform NIJC of any circumstance that affects their ability to stay on the case as soon as it arises.



Project Contact Information:

If you are interested in attending an NIJC U Visa training or accepting a case for representation, please contact Laura Garcia Izaguirre at lgarcia-izaguirre@heartlandalliance.org

We invite you to see all of NIJC's extensive pro bono resources available on our website at <https://immigrantjustice.org/for-attorneys>.

To connect with individuals and families who need legal representation, please see the [current case list](#) available on our web page.

For general information about NIJC Pro Bono Programs please contact Ellen Miller, Pro Bono Manager, at 312.660.1415 or emiller@heartlandalliance.org.

