

U Visa Certification Information **Revised August 7, 2025**

A U Visa is a nonimmigrant status visa for undocumented victims of certain crimes who have suffered mental or physical abuse and are helpful to law enforcement or government officials in the investigation or prosecution of criminal activity.

Congress created the U Visa program in 2000. It is intended to strengthen the ability of law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute cases of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking of immigrants and other crimes, while also protecting victims of crimes who have suffered substantial mental or physical abuse due to the crime and are willing to help law enforcement authorities in the investigation or prosecution of the criminal activity.

Undocumented victims submit a request for a U Visa certification of helpfulness from a local law enforcement agency, including the Denver District Attorney's Office, which determines whether the victim qualifies for certification. If the request is certified, it is then submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice for consideration. Certification for a U Visa DOES NOT guarantee the granting of the visa. Federal law caps the number of U Visas that can be issued nationwide per year. Information about and the form I-918 used to request U Visa certification can be found [here](#).

The Denver District Attorney's Office recognizes the importance of the U Visa certification process to promoting public safety and is committed to conducting U Visa certification reviews efficiently and accurately. Instructions for submitting a U Visa certification form to the Denver District Attorney's Office are below.

- Prior to sending a U Visa certification request to the Denver District Attorney's Office, the person requesting a U Visa certification ("petitioner"), or petitioner's counsel (if petitioner has counsel), should obtain as much of the following information as possible:
 - Court case number
 - If **the case number is not known**, provide information that can help locate case numbers such as police agency and report number and/or the Defendant/perpetrator's name
 - Full names and spellings of the petitioner and any known aliases or other names used by the petitioner
 - Date of birth for the petitioner
 - Mailing address where original copy of U visa certification should be sent if the certification is approved and signed



- After gathering this information, the petitioner or petitioner's counsel will send an email to Dana.Sylvester@Denverda.org or a letter with the above information to the Denver
- District Attorney's Office, to the attention of Dana Sylvester, email is strongly preferred.

The email/letter should include the following information:

- The Court case number, or, if a case is not filed yet, the police agency and report number
- A formal request for U Visa Certification. This can be a single sentence, such as "I am requesting a U visa certification."
- In cases where the petitioner is under the age of 21, incapacitated, or incompetent, evidence of the person submitting the request's qualifying relationship to the petitioner and evidence establishing the petitioner's age, incapacity, or incompetence.
- If the underlying criminal activity is not specifically enumerated in 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(U)(iii), an explanation of why it is "qualifying criminal activity," understanding that the activity must be substantially similar to those enumerated qualifying criminal activities.
- Alternatively, the petitioner or petitioner's counsel may provide the information requested above through a partially pre-filled for I-918.

All U Visa certification requests and supporting documents are presumptively discoverable to the defense in a pending criminal case. The prosecutor assigned to any open criminal case will receive a copy of the U Visa certification request and any supporting documents to provide to the defense in discovery, even if a request is later withdrawn.

If you have any questions about this process, please contact:

Dana Sylvester, U Visa Coordinator
720-337-0700
Denver District Attorney's Office
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Denver, CO 80202