

The U Visa Mirage

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As many of you already know, the U Visa is a special visa granted to victims of certain crimes in the US who cooperated with the police and suffered substantial harm. Congress allows 10,000 of these visas to be issued each year. When the U Visa was first established, not many people knew about it, so the 10,000 visa cap was not reached for the first couple years. Those who applied for a U Visa in early 2013 or before were granted their U visas within months of filing, and many have already become legal permanent residents. Unfortunately, now that many more people have become aware of the U visa, there is a backlog so huge that applicants could be waiting for five years or more before they receive their U Visa!



According to USCIS statistics, the total number of pending U Visa applications has multiplied nearly six times from 2009 to 2016, from just 21,138 in 2009 to 121,659 as of March of this year.

If you or someone you know is waiting in line, it may seem like it is a mirage, but don't give up! If you applied for a U Visa, it is likely that it's your only option, and though it is a lengthy process, it is worth the wait. If you were a victim of a crime and have not yet consulted with an attorney, I encourage you to do so to see if you are eligible to apply. Due to these long delays, it's best to get in line as soon as possible!

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