



Law Enforcement Leaders Support New USCIS Policy Update for U Visa Petitioners

WASHINGTON, D.C. — On Monday, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced a [new policy](#) that will improve access to work permits and deferred action for immigrant crime victims with pending U visa cases.

Currently, U visa petitioners wait about five years before having their U visas adjudicated, but can receive deferred action and work authorization while their U visa petitions are pending. The new policy will streamline this process for bona fide U visa applicants who are contending with existing backlogs. The changes, which could impact tens of thousands of U visa applicants, will speed up the issuance of employment authorization documents, encouraging immigrant crime victims to cooperate with and assist law enforcement investigations and prosecutions.

"The U visa program is an important tool for law enforcement to build trust with immigrant communities," said **Chelsea, Massachusetts Police Chief Brian Kyes**. "These recent changes to the program will help immigrant victims of crime as they await the decision of their petition and will encourage victims of crime to come forward, regardless of their immigration status."

"The recent changes to the U visa program are a step in the right direction," said **Fresno County, California, Sheriff Margaret Mims**, co-chair of the Law Enforcement Immigration Task Force. "Providing immigrant crime victims with work permits and deportation relief while their cases are pending will strengthen law enforcement's ability to cooperate with immigrant populations and make our communities safer."

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