

## Important information about getting help with immigration issues

Many people may tell you that they can assist you with your immigration application. It is important that you make sure that the person or attorney helping you is experienced and understands the immigration process. Once you submit any papers to the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, you are alerting the federal government to your presence in this country. That is why it is important that you only seek the assistance of qualified people in handling your immigration matters.

## What to do if you believe you are eligible for relief

Contact an experienced immigration attorney as soon as possible. If you are unable to locate an immigration attorney, contact the American Immigration Lawyers Association at 1-800-954-0254, the South Carolina Bar Lawyer Referral Service at 1-800-868-2284, or Catholic Charities at (843) 388-0089.

Additional information may be found at:

**LawHelp.org/SC**

South Carolina's guide to free legal resources

## Other Legal Representation

Consumer & Bankruptcy

Education

Employment

Family

Federal Income Tax

Housing

Migrant Farm Workers

Probate

Public Benefits

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Printed April 2010



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**BAR FOUNDATION**  
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**South Carolina  
Legal Services**

*Balancing the Scales of Justice*

# AVAILABLE IMMIGRATION RELIEF



## Our Mission

South Carolina Legal Services is a statewide law firm that provides civil legal services to protect the rights and represent the interests of low-income South Carolinians.

## For Free Services

1 (888) 346-5592

[contactus@sclegal.org](mailto:contactus@sclegal.org)

[www.sclegal.org](http://www.sclegal.org) / [www.lawhelp.org/sc](http://www.lawhelp.org/sc)

[www.probono.net/sc](http://www.probono.net/sc)

Different types of immigration relief may be available depending on when and how you entered the country. This is a brief look at some types of immigration relief available for victims of crimes and domestic violence. The list does not include everything, and South Carolina Legal Services strongly advises you to seek the help of an experienced immigration attorney to find out if you can get immigration relief.

## **Eligibility under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)**

### **To qualify for immigration status under VAWA you must:**

- » Be married or be a child of a United States citizen or lawful permanent resident; and
- » Have gotten married in “good faith” which means you got married to live a married life together, not to gain legal immigration status; and
- » Have “any credible evidence” of past abuse or extreme cruelty; and
- » Have lived with your abuser at some time; and
- » Have good moral character (last 3 years matters the most).

## **Eligibility under the Trafficking Act**

The Trafficking Act created two new types of potential visas for noncitizen victims of crimes.

## **T-visas**

### **To be eligible for a T-visa you must:**

- » Be brought into the United States and:
  - you are forced or tricked to engage in sex for money; or
  - you are forced or tricked into working for someone who tells you that you must work for them to pay off a debt; or
  - you are forced to work for someone against your will; or
  - you are forced to work without pay
- » Be physically present in United States because of trafficking
- » Have contacted a federal law enforcement agency
- » Comply with any reasonable request in assisting with an investigation or prosecuting trafficking
- » Show you would suffer extreme hardship with unusual and severe harm if you are sent back to your home country.

## **U-visas**

### **To be eligible for a U-visa you must:**

- » Have suffered substantial physical and mental abuse as a result of being a victim of a certain types of crimes;
- » Have information about that criminal activity;
- » Be helpful in investigating and prosecuting the criminal activity; and
- » The criminal activity must violate the laws of the US or have occurred in the US.
- » The qualifying crimes are rape; torture; trafficking; incest; domestic violence; sexual assault; abusive sexual contact; prostitution; sexual exploitation; female genital mutilation; being held hostage; peonage; involuntary servitude; slave trade; kidnapping; abduction; unlawful criminal restraint; false imprisonment; blackmail; extortion; manslaughter; murder; felonious assault; witness tampering; obstruction of justice; perjury; or attempt, conspiracy, or solicitation to commit any of the above mentioned crimes.

