

FY27 Support for Immigrant Survivors of Sexual Assault



National Alliance to
End Sexual Violence

CRITICAL VICTIM PROTECTIONS

Immigrant survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, human trafficking, and other crimes often face barriers when seeking safety and protection, including threats from abusers and perpetrators that seeking help will result in their deportation. To address these barriers, a bipartisan majority in Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) to **provide survivors with essential protections against deportation to allow them to seek help without fear of abuser retaliation**. Later, Congress established the **T and U visa programs** through the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) to facilitate the investigation or prosecution of criminal activity and to protect victims who come forward, in recognition of the many barriers survivors face in reaching out for help.

These protections, along with our asylum laws, were created so that victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking may **seek paths to safety and security in the United States**. However, recent policy shifts are eroding access to these protections and fueling a climate of fear. These policies and practices do not just undermine survivor protections—they embolden abusers and put lives and communities at risk, and create an immense chilling effect on survivors coming forward to seek help.

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF IMMIGRANT SURVIVORS

We call on Congress to:

- Ensure that **no funds are used to apprehend, detain, and remove benefit requesters or beneficiaries of survivor-based relief**, including VAWA self-petitioner classification, T nonimmigrant status, U nonimmigrant status, or Special Immigrant Juvenile classification, which undermines the protective purpose of these programs.
- **Recapture unallocated U visas** to assist in alleviating the significant backlog of over 239,000 primary petitioners and an additional 158,000 family members awaiting U visas by significantly cutting the backlog, helping eligible victims of crime to obtain stabilizing benefits, and facilitating family reunification.
- Maintain and publish annual **data on asylum seekers whose claims are based on a fear of intimate partner violence** in their home country (including approval rates);
- Maintain and publish **data on the number of individuals with pending victim-based benefit requests** who have been subject to enforcement actions (including removal orders).