





Comparison Chart of Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Self-Petitioning, U visa, and Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS)¹

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	VAWA Self-Petition	U Visa	Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS)		
	ELIGIBILITY				
		Applicant			
Typical Recipients	The immigrant (or the immigrant's child or stepchild) has been battered or subjected to extreme cruelty by the immigrant's: U.S. citizen- Spouse Former spouse (within 2 years) Parent Step-parent Over 21 year old child, adopted child or step-child Lawful permanent resident Spouse Former spouse (within 2 years) Parent Spouse Former spouse (within 2 years) Parent Step-parent	Victims of certain criminal activities (i.e. violent criminal activity and fraud), including: • Direct victims: individuals who experienced substantial physical and mental abuse as a result of the qualifying criminal activity • Indirect victims: certain family members* of direct victims where the direct victim is: • Deceased due to manslaughter or murder, or • Incompetent, or incapacitated and therefore not able to give information concerning the qualifying criminal activity (i.e. parent of a sexually abused child)	 The applicant must: Be under 21 years old and unmarried (most jurisdictions will not declare a youth dependent of the court once they are 18 or older);² Have been abused, neglected, or abandoned by one or both parents; Demonstrate that reunification with parent who abused, neglected or abandoned is not viable; That it is not in the best interest of the child to return to home country; and Have a court order placing the child/juvenile under jurisdiction of a state juvenile, family, or probate court. 		
*Family Members Who May Qualify as Indirect Victims	Not applicable	If direct victim is over 21: spouse, and children under 21 years old. If direct victim is under 21: parents, and unmarried siblings under 18 years old.	Not applicable		
Proof of Good Moral Character	Required for self-petition	Proof of good moral character is not required for the U visa application, but is required to be	Not required		

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² State laws generally require that a child be under age 18 at the time he or she first is declared a juvenile court dependent. State laws vary as to how long a child can remain a juvenile court dependent once he or she has been declared a dependent. Some states end dependency at age 18, others extend it to age 19 (especially if the child must complete high school), and others potentially can extend dependency to age 21. Similarly, different states have different laws on how old a young person must be to enter or stay under juvenile court jurisdiction in a delinquency case.

		granted lawful permanent residency.	
Applicant's Criminal History	Any arrest,* conviction,* or otherwise criminal involvement* may make the applicant ineligible to file the VAWA self-petition. Many types of convictions may also bar access to lawful permanent residency based on an approved self-petition.	The applicant may apply for a discretionary waiver for crimes they may have committed. No waivers are available for participants in Nazi persecutions, genocide, acts of torture, or extrajudicial killings.	Criminal history involving drugs, prostitution, fraud, smuggling, or felonies may bar SIJS approval.
*Applicant's Criminal History That Is Related to Domestic Violence Suffered	In determining good moral character as part of the VAWA self-petition adjudication, crimes related to the domestic violence may not bar victims from being found to have good moral character. Domestic violence convictions are deportable offenses that could also bar access to lawful permanent residency. A domestic violence victim with a conviction for domestic violence may be able to obtain a special domestic violence victim waiver if the battered immigrant was acting in self-defense; was found to have violated a protection order intended to protect the person; or committed, was arrested for, was convicted of, or pled guilty to committing a crime — • that did not result in serious bodily injury; and • where there was a connection between the crime and the person's having been barred of subject to extreme cruelty	The applicant may apply for a discretionary waiver for crimes they may have committed including domestic violence. No waivers are available for participants in Nazi persecutions, genocide, acts of torture, or extrajudicial killings.	Not applicable
Criminal Activity Suffered by Victim			

Qualifying Criminal Activity	Not applicable	Any of the following: abduction, abusive sexual contact, blackmail, domestic violence, extortion, false imprisonment, female genital mutilation, felonious assault, fraud in foreign labor contracting, hostage, incest, involuntary servitude, kidnapping, manslaughter, murder, obstruction of justice, peonage, perjury, prostitution, rape, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, slave trade, stalking, torture, trafficking, witness tampering, unlawful criminal restraint, other related criminal (including attempt, conspiracy, or solicitation to commit any of the above and other related criminal activity).	Not applicable
Proof of Harm	Must show battery or extreme cruelty • Extreme cruelty includes forms of emotional abuse that do not have to rise to the level of physical violence, sexual violence or criminal activity.	Must show substantial physical or mental abuse as a result of the criminal activity.	Must show that the child has been abused, neglected, or abandoned by one or both parents. "Abuse, abandonment or neglect" includes behaviors and patterns of treatment and coercive control that are not limited to physical or sexual abuse and would constitute "extreme cruelty." 3
		Perpetrator	
Applicant's Relationship to Perpetrator	Applicant must have or had one of the following relationships with the abuser: Spouse Former spouse (must file within 2 years) Parent of child victim Step-parent of child victim Parent abused by over 21-year-old son or daughter.	Any individual	Applicant must be the perpetrator's child.
*If Applicant Is/Was Married to Perpetrator	Applicant must show the couple was legally married in good faith (i.e. not solely to gain immigration status).	Not required	Applicant must be unmarried.
Effect of Marriage for Child Applicant	Cannot marry until the self-petition is approved.	No effect	Applicant must be unmarried

³ Leslye Orloff, Brittnay Roberts and Stefanie Gitler, *Battering and Extreme Cruelty: Drawing Examples from Civil Protection Order and Family Law Cases*, NIWAP (Oct. 13, 2013) available at http://niwaplibrary.wcl.american.edu/reference/additional-materials/materials-for-adjudicators-and-judges/tools-for-courts/family-law/Extreme-Cruelty-BIA-training-memo.pdf/view.

Requirement of Applicant and Perpetrator's Shared Residence	Applicant must currently reside or have resided with the abuser at any point (no specific duration of residence required).	Not required	Not required
Perpetrator's Immigration Status	Abuser must be either a United States Citizen or a Lawful Permanent Resident spouse, former spouse, parent or step parent. The abuser may also be an over 21 year old son or daughter.	Any status (including undocumented)	Any status (including undocumented)
Cooperation with Law Enforcement Requirement	Not required	Applicant must submit a U visa certification (Form I-918 Supplement B) signed by a designated law enforcement officer, judge, prosecutor, or other state or federal government official involved in detection, investigation, conviction, prosecution, conviction or sentencing of a listed criminal activity. Applicant may be certified if she is a victim of a qualifying criminal activity and has been, is being, or is likely to be helpful in the detection, investigation, prosecution conviction or sentencing of criminal activity. Certification is encouraged as soon as possible and certifying helpfulness does not hinge on a case proceeding beyond detection or investigation of a criminal activity.	Not required
		Process	
What to File	VAWA Self-Petition (Form I-360).	U visa Application. Title: Application for U Nonimmigrant Status (Form I-918; including I- 918 Supplement B).	Form I-360 ⁴ (and Form I-485 Application for Lawful Permanent Residency Title: "Adjustment of Status" if the child is filing affirmatively).
Where to File	VAWA Unit of Vermont Service Center of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).	VAWA Unit of Vermont Service Center of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).	VAWA Unit of Vermont Service Center of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).
Family Members Whom Applicant Can Include in His or Her Application	If applicant is over 21: unmarried children under the age of 21 at the time of filing. If applicant is under 21: children under the age of 21 at the time of filing	If applicant is over 21: spouse and unmarried children under the age of 21 at the time of filing. If applicant is under 21: spouse, children under the age of 21 at the time of filing, parent(s), unmarried siblings under the age of 18 at the time of filing.	Cannot include family members. A child who immigrates as SIJS essentially ceases to be the "child" of his or her natural or prior adoptive parent who subjected the child to abuse, abandonment or neglect for immigration purposes. This means that the child who obtains lawful permanent residence through SIJS and later becomes a naturalized citizen will not be able to file an immigration application to confer any legal immigration status on the parent who

⁴ Form I-360 must be filed with the underlying custody order from family court, dependency order, and the child's translated birth certificate.

			abused, abandoned or neglected the parent, even when the parent's parental rights were not terminated. ⁵
Number of Visas given/year	No limit	10,000 each fiscal year	No limit
Average Case	As of April 2014, 7 months	As of April 2014, 7 months.	
Processing Times	Prior to December 2013: research shows that processing times vary between 6-24 months from filing.	Prior to December 2013: research shows that processing times vary between 6-18 months from filing.	As of April 2014, DHS states it takes 5 months.
How Long Relief Lasts	Indefinitely – must request Deferred Action every year	4 years – may be extended if U visa holder is certified by law enforcement to be required for an investigation, prosecution, exceptional circumstances, or because U visa holder was unable to apply for lawful permanent residence due to a DHS delay in issuing regulations.	SIJS leads directly to lawful permanent residency
What Wait-List Approval Provides	Not applicable	Pursuant to the limit of 10,000 U visas a year, the Department of Homeland Security provides certain immigrants with "wait-list" approvals. This classification does not grant the individual with all benefits that come with a U visa status, but it does provide deferred action, which: Protects against removal/deportation Provides basis for work authorization	Not applicable
What Approval Provides	Approval provides deferred action which: Protects against removal/deportation Provides basis for work authorization May be renewed until self-petitioner is eligible to apply for lawful permanent residence. Eligibility to apply for lawful permanent residency either o Immediately if the perpetrator	Conditional approval provides deferred action, which: Protects against removal/deportation Provides basis for work authorization U visa approval provides U visa that lasts for 4 years Ability to apply for lawful permanent residency after 3 years	SIJS approval allows the applicant to apply for lawful permanent residency.

⁵ In some cases where children want to help a non-offending parent to also obtain lawful immigration status, applying for U visa may be a better option. Moreover, an SIJS with lawful permanent residency can apply for citizenship in 5 years, and a U.S. citizen of at least 21 years of age would be able to file for her immediate family members, parents, and siblings.

	is a citizen; or When the victim's priority date becomes current if the perpetrator is a lawful permanent resident. As of April 2014 the wait times for a current priority date to be able to apply for lawful permanent residency were anywhere from 9 months to 2 years depending on the victim's country of origin.	*May be extended if U visa holder is certified by law enforcement to be required for an investigation, prosecution, exceptional circumstances, or because U visa holder was unable to apply for lawful permanent residence due to a DHS delay in issuing regulations.	
		BENEFITS	
		Immigration Benefits	
Protection Against Deportation	Upon filing, applicant is flagged as "384" in Department of Homeland Security's system as a VAWA confidentiality-protected case. This stops the Department of Homeland Security from taking any enforcement action against the victim, including detention and removal. Cannot rely on information provided by the perpetrator or their family member to harm the victim.	Upon filing, applicant is flagged as "384" in Department of Homeland Security's system as a VAWA confidentiality-protected case. This stops the Department of Homeland Security from taking any enforcement action against the victim, including detention and removal. Cannot rely on information provided by the perpetrator or their family member to harm the victim.	Upon filing, applicants are protected against deportation until their cases are decided.
Applicant's Access to Work Authorization It is important to consider WA even for children under the legal working age as it provides eligibility to	If abuser is a United States Citizen: Employment authorization upon prima facie finding, provided the applicant is admissible and has jointly filed an application for lawful permanent residency (I-485) as an immediate relative of a U.S. citizen. If abuser is a Lawful Permanent Resident: Applicant receives employment authorization upon approval of VAWA petition.	Work authorization upon conditional approval based on deferred action status if cap is reached. Work authorization for 4 years upon receipt of the U visa.	Applicants, who have submitted affirmative SIJS petitions and have also submitted an application for lawful permanent residency, are granted employment authorization while their cases pending. Applicants who are in removal (deportation) proceedings and cannot obtain a work authorization until their SIJS application has been approved by USCIS and their application for lawful permanent residency is filed with the immigration judge.
provides eligibility to apply for an SSN	Form to file: Application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765) – fee waiver available.	Form to file: None required for approvals. Application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765) is required for wait-list approvals with deferred action status.	Forms to file: Form I-485 "Adjustment of Status Application." This is the application for lawful permanent residency. Additionally, the applicant will need to file an Application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765) – fee waivers are available.

Waivers Available for Ineligibility Factors So That Victim Can Receive Lawful Permanent Residency	There is an exception to the public charge grounds of inadmissibility. There are a range of inadmissibility waivers that are available specifically for VAWA selfpetitioners: • Fraud – may be waived if selfpetitioner can show extreme hardship to self and/or children, spouse, and parents • Immigration violations – may be waived if selfpetitioner can establish substantial connection between the immigration violation and the abuse • Other crimes – may affect the good moral character requirement, unless self-petitioner can show connection between the crime and the abuse suffered. • Domestic violence victim waiver – for self-defense; violation of protection order27 intended to protect the victim; or committed, was arrested for, was convicted of, or pled guilty to committing a crime that did not result in serious bodily injury; and where there was a connection between the crime and the alien's having been barred of subject to extreme cruelty	There is an exception to the public charge grounds of inadmissibility. Discretionary waiver of inadmissibility available if it is in the public or national interest. No waiver available for participants in Nazi persecution, genocide, torture, or extrajudicial killing.	Grounds of inadmissibility that are statutorily waived: public charge, misrepresentation (including false claim to U.S. citizenship), stowaways, smuggling/trafficking of people, being present without inspection, unlawful presence, being present without admission or parole For other grounds of inadmissibility, waivers are discretionary. The applicant must show that the inadmissibility should be waived: • For humanitarian purposes, family unity, or when it is otherwise in the public interest. • Because of health related reasons (physical/mental disorder) No waiver for certain crimes involving moral turpitude, drug offenses, multiple criminal convictions, terrorist activities, genocide, torture, extrajudicial killing.
Applicant's Access to a Permanent Residency Card Also known as a "Green Card"	If abuser is a United States Citizen: eligible following approval if admissible. If abuser is a Lawful Permanent Resident and self-petitioner must wait until their priority date becomes current. Wait times vary by the victim's country of origin and in April 2014 ranged from 9 months to 2 years.	 A U visa holder can apply for lawful permanent residence, if the applicant has: 1. Maintained continuous presence in the U.S. for 3 years; 2. Complied with reasonable requests to cooperate in investigation or prosecution, 3. Good moral character, and 4. Is admissible or qualifies for a waiver of inadmissibility. 	Applicants can apply for permanent residency upon approval of SIJS application.

	Access to Services Not Considered Public Benefits Open to All Immigrants ⁶			
Life and Safety Services ⁷	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	
Transitional Housing	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	
Emergency Medicaid	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	
Healthcare from HHS-funded Community Clinics www.HRSA.gov	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	
Assistance from a Legal Services Corporation Funded Program	Eligible under anti-abuse regulations for "related legal assistance" including matters related to escaping abuse; ameliorating the effects of the abuse, preventing future abuse, prevention of or obtaining relief from battering or extreme cruelty. Upon filing an application for lawful permanent residency based on VAWA, VAWA selfpetitioners are eligible for all legal assistance offered with no relationship to the abuse required.	Eligible under <i>anti-abuse regulations</i> for "related legal assistance" including matters related to escaping abuse, ameliorating the effects of the abuse, preventing future abuse, prevention of or obtaining relief from any U visa criminal activity. Upon filing an application for lawful permanent residency based upon a U visa the victim is eligible for all legal assistance offered with no relationship to the abuse required.	Eligible under anti-abuse regulations because "abuse, abandonment or neglect" includes behaviors and patterns of treatment and coercive control that are not limited to physical or sexual abuse and would constitute "extreme cruelty."	
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	
	Access to Federal and State Public Benefits ⁹			
General Access to Public Benefits	VAWA self-petitioners who entered on or after 8/22/1996, are "qualified immigrants," but must wait 5 years before they can access federal means-tested benefits.	U visa holders are not "qualified immigrants," and are not eligible to receive federal public benefits or federal means-tested public benefits.	SJIS applicants are lawfully present for health care purposes and states have the option of providing subsidized health care to lawfully present children.	

⁶ Leslye Orloff, Aditi Kumar and Krisztina Szabo, *Public Benefits Toolkit*, NIWAP (March 2014) *available at* http://niwaplibrary.wcl.american.edu/reference/additional-materials/public-benefits%20ToolKit%20FINAL%203%2024%2014%20leo.pdf/view (Hereinafter "Public Benefits Toolkit").

⁸ Leslye Orloff, Brittnay Roberts and Stefanie Gitler, *Battering and Extreme Cruelty: Drawing Examples from Civil Protection Order and Family Law Cases*, NIWAP (Oct. 13, 2013) *available at* http://niwaplibrary.wcl.american.edu/reference/additional-materials/materials-for-adjudicators-and-judges/tools-for-courts/family-law/Extreme-Cruelty-BIA-training-memo.pdf/view

⁷ For more information about the benefits available to all immigrants regardless of status, see Catherine Longville and Leslye E. Orloff, Programs Open To Immigrant Victims And All Immigrants Without Regard To Immigration Status, NIWAP (June 2014) available at http://niwaplibrary.wcl.american.edu/public-benefits/unrestricted-benefits/Programs%20Open%20To%20All%20Immigrants%20Regardless%20of%20Status.pdf/view.

⁹ This section highlights some of the public benefits available to qualified immigrants for a more complete list of benefits available see Public Benefits Toolkit, supra note 7.

	VAWA self-petitioners who entered the United States before 8/22/1996, are "qualified immigrants," and are eligible to receive federal public benefits and federal means-tested public benefits.		SIJS recipients who receive lawful permanent residency and qualified immigrants for public benefits purposes, but they must wait 5 years before they are eligible for federal means tested public benefits. SIJS recipients who receive lawful permanent residency are eligible for Title IV-E federal foster care funds and federal financial aid to go to college.
Post-secondary Education	VAWA self-petitioners and any children included in the VAWA self-petitioner's application upon receipt of a prima facie determination are qualified immigrants eligible for postsecondary grants and loans.	U visa holders are not able to file for FAFSA or other governmental scholarships, grants, or loans, until they become Lawful Permanent Residents. However, recipients may be eligible to apply for non-governmental and state scholarships, grants, and loans. ¹⁰ Recipients may also be eligible to receive in-state tuition in certain states. ¹¹	SIJS applicants and recipients are not able to file for FAFSA or other governmental scholarships, grants, or loans, until they become lawful permanent residents. However, recipients may be eligible to apply for non-governmental and state scholarships, grants, and loans. Recipients may also be eligible to receive instate tuition in certain states. ¹²
Public and Assisted Housing	Eligible as qualified immigrants for Section 8 Subsidized Housing and Public and Assisted Housing upon receipt of prima facie determination.	Not eligible until the U visa recipient applies for and is granted lawful permanent residency.	Eligible upon receipt of lawful permanent residency
Child Care ¹³	Child Care Development Fund (CCDF): Children, who are self-petitioners or included in their parent's self-petition upon receiving a prima facie determination are qualified immigrants, are eligible for CCDF child care as qualified immigrants TANF Funded Child Care: Varies by state. Depends on whether the state provides benefits for qualified immigrants during the 5 year bar.	 All immigrants, regardless of immigration status, are eligible for Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) child care when: Child care is provided in settings subject to public educational standards, including public or private pre-kindergarten or public and private childcare provided after school or during school holidays. Child care is subject to Head Start performance standards. Eligibility for child care services is determined by a nonprofit charitable organization. 	Child Care Development Fund (CCDF): Children receiving lawful permanent residency through SIJS are qualified immigrants are eligible for CCDF child care. TANF Funded Child Care: Varies by state. Depends on whether the state provides benefits for qualified immigrants during the 5 year bar.

¹⁰ For resources on financial aid and scholarships regardless of immigration status, please see http://www.maldef.org/leadership/Scholarships/.

11 For information, see National Conference of State Legislators, Undocumented Students: State Action (June 14, 2014), available at <a href="http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/undocumented-student-tuition-state-state-tuition-state-state-tuition-state-state-tuition-state-stat

action.aspx.

12 Have same access to non-governmental and state scholarships as described for U visa victims.

13 Benish Anver and Leslye E. Orloff, Immigrant Crime Victim Child Care Access, NIWAP (March 13, 2013) available at http://niwaplibrary.wcl.american.edu/reference/additional-materials/public-benefits/access-to-be-invalignment-crime-victims/CHILDCAREChart-FINAL%204.17.13.docx/view

State Public Benefits	VAWA self-petitioners with prima facie determinations are qualified immigrants eligible for state funded benefits. Whether and which state funded benefits states provide to qualified immigrants varies by state and by benefit. ¹⁴	Not available until the U visa holder becomes a Lawful Permanent Resident and completes the 5 year bar. Some states provide state funded benefits to qualified immigrants during the 5 year bar. A very limited number of states provide state funded benefits to U visa applicants who are PRUCOL (present under color of law) or U visa victims with U visas or deferred action status, as U visa victims with conditional approval who are considered lawfully present. ¹⁵	SIJS recipients when they receive lawful permanent residency are qualified immigrants eligible for state funded benefits. Whether, and which state funded benefits states provide to qualified immigrants varies by state and by benefit. 16
Driver's Licenses ¹⁷	Varies by state. In most states upon receipt of work authorization. Maine: Upon receiving a prima facie determination in a VAWA selfpetitioning case	Varies by state. In most states upon receipt of work authorization. Maine: Letter or notice acknowledging that the person is a U visa victim	Varies by state. In most states upon receipt of work authorization. Maine: Evidence of a pending SIJS application.
	Acce	ss to Means-Tested Benefits ¹⁸	
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Eligible with prima facie determination as qualified immigrants to receive TANF after a 5-year bar. Some states provide state-funded TANF to qualified immigrants.	Not available until 5 years after attaining lawful permanent residency.	Eligible upon receipt of lawful permanent residency. Some states provide state-funded TANF to qualified immigrants.
Food Stamps (SNAP)	Eligible with prima facie determination as qualified immigrants to receive SNAP after a 5-year bar. Child under 18 year old VAWA self-petitioners are eligible for SNAP.	Not available until 5 years after attaining Lawful Permanent Residency. Children who receive lawful permanent residency are eligible up to the age of 18.	Eligible upon receipt of lawful permanent residency up to the age of 18.
Medicaid/CHIP	Eligible with prima facie determination as qualified immigrants to receive after a 5-year bar. Medicaid or CHIP may be available depending on the state without a 5-year bar. As qualified immigrants, VAWA self-petitioners may be able to receive subsidized health care in some states, most often for child health care and prenatal care.	Generally not available. U visa holders and wait-list approved U visa applicants with deferred action status may be able to receive subsidized healthcare for children, and pregnant women as lawfully present immigrants in some states.	Eligible upon filing the SIJS application as lawfully present children to access health care through the health care exchanges and are eligible for CHIP funded health care if available in their state of residence. ¹⁹

¹⁴ For an overview of public benefits available by state see Public Benefits Toolkit and NIWAP's state by state interactive demographics and benefits map available at http://niwaplibrary.wcl.american.edu/publicbenefits/public-benefits-tool-kit/Map% 20Document% 20backup% 202.swf/view.

15 For an overview of public benefits available by state see Public Benefits Toolkit, supra note 7, and NIWAP's state by state interactive demographics and benefits map available at

http://niwaplibrary.wcl.american.edu/public-benefits/public-benefits-tool-kit/Map%20Document%20backup%202.swf/view .

15 Id.
16 Id.

¹⁷ Angela Baker and Leslye Orloff, Acceptable Forms of Identification for State Drivers License/Identification Card, NIWAP (March 2013) available at http://niwaplibrary.wcl.american.edu/reference/additional-number-17 materials/public-benefits/state-issued-drivers-licenses-and-identification/Drivers-License-Access.pdf/view

¹⁸ For a full discussion of qualified immigrant access to federal means tested public benefits see Public Benefits Toolkit, supra note 7.

¹⁹ For an overview of health care benefits available to lawfully present persons by state see Carly Erickson and Leslye E. Orloff, Federal, Partnership, and State Exchanges That Provide State and State-Option Funded Medicaid or Medicaid-Like Services, NIWAP (June 16, 2014) available at http://niwaplibrary.wcl.american.edu/public-benefits/healthcare/Affordable%20Care%20Act%20and%20Exchanges.pdf/view.