

BUILDING TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS: A GUIDE FOR ADVOCATES/ATTORNEYS WORKING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT (LE) ON U-VISA CERTIFICATION ISSUES

Create a plan for building strong, mutually beneficial relationships with local law enforcement

“Do Your Homework” –

Before contacting law enforcement, prepare by conducting “research” in the following areas: identify an LE ally and learn about current practices; collect survivors’ stories; and collect data about current U-visa certification practices

Collect stories of survivors of crime illustrative of the impact on crime victims (positive/negative) of current U-visa certification practices¹

Work with allies and the community to collect data documenting the extent of U-visa certification practices

Identify an ally/officer to learn about agency practices and to understand how to most effectively work within the LE system

“Build Alliances” –

Look for partners and/or coalitions that already have trusting relationships with police departments

Mainstream partner (e.g., DV, SA, Courts, Gov’t.) can help advocates successfully create relationships with law enforcement

Formulate strategy to approach law enforcement based on allies’ past experiences

If you do not have access to a mainstream partner or positive relationship with the police:

Plan a meeting with the Chief of Police or head of the agency through a trusted ally of the Chief

“Meet and Greet” –

Plan by creating a strategy for contacting, meeting with, and building relationships with LE agencies

Letter – who is best suited to send it? Advocate, judge, or another ally?

Determine the best person to contact – may be the chief or an officer or supervisor good on DV/SA issues. Identify liaison advocates can communicate with

Determine who comprises the best cross-discipline team to attend any such meetings with LE

Conduct trainings in the context of community policy & safety rather than batterer/victim framework