

Santiago Pastrana, Tania

From: Mary Ellen Stone <mstone@kcsarc.org>
Sent: Thursday, November 8, 2018 8:59 AM
To: Santiago Pastrana, Tania
Subject: RE: U visa and T visa Certifications - Public Comment Invitation

KCSARC works with hundreds of Latina/o survivors of sexual assault through our Dando Voz Program. In Dando Voz, bi-lingual bi-cultural staff provide trauma focused therapy, legal advocacy, psycho-education for families and connections for civil legal services related to immigration and family law.

We support the proposed ordinance based on our daily experience in assisting survivors of sexual assault in need of U and T visas.

The safety that survivors can gain through the U visa process already takes years, prompt response by law enforcement can help survivors by reducing the wait time for obtaining U visa certification.

The following is a rough timeline of the steps and barriers victims must take:

1. Once a survivor has their law enforcement certification, along with their own declaration and supporting documentation, they are able to submit their U visa application.
2. Survivors must wait approximately 47 months before their U visa application is reviewed by one of the 60 adjudicators working in the Humanitarian division.
3. Once their application is reviewed and if it is approved, they are then placed on a waitlist to receive the actual U visa (there is an annual cap of 10,000 U visas allowed to be granted). The benefits of deferred action and employment authorization are only granted to survivors once their application has been approved and they have been placed on the U visa waitlist.
4. Once they finally receive their U visa, they will only be eligible to apply for permanent residency after having their U visa for at least 3 years.
5. After having permanent residency for at least 5 years, then immigrants can be eligible to apply for citizenship.

Given the lengthy process of securing a U-Visa, we strongly support prompt action by the KCSO needed to initiate the application.

Please let me know if you need additional information.

Sincerely

Mary Ellen

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Executive Director | Pronouns: she/her

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From: Santiago Pastrana, Tania <Tania.SantiagoPastrana@kingcounty.gov>

Sent: Wednesday, November 7, 2018 12:44 PM