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## **TAHIRIH STATEMENT ON WORK PERMITS FOR U-VISA PETITIONERS**

Today, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced [the implementation of a policy](#) that allows U-visa petitioners within the U.S. who submit complete applications and pass a background check to receive a work permit and protection from deportation almost immediately, rather than waiting years in a backlogged system. The U-visa is available to survivors of gender-based violence and other survivors of serious crimes that occur in the U.S. who assist law enforcement with the investigation or prosecution of those crimes. The new policy gives these survivors much greater access to safety and economic stability.

“Tahirih applauds USCIS’s move to process U-visa petitions in a way that will support survivors and promptly provide an avenue to greater safety and security,” said Richard Caldarone, Tahirih Litigation Counsel. “A work permit is a powerful tool for immigrant survivors and can allow them to leave violent and exploitative situations. Under this new policy, survivors who need work permits to escape abusive situations should only have to wait weeks or months, as opposed to waiting for several years under the previous policy.”

Congress designed the U-visa to protect victims of crime who work with law enforcement and to make U.S. communities safer. In 2008, Congress amended the statute to allow all bona fide U-visa petitioners to receive work authorization while they waited for USCIS to adjudicate their petitions. Until now, USCIS had failed to do so, leaving hundreds of thousands of U-visa petitioners waiting for as many as five years before they received work authorization and protection from removal.

*Richard Caldarone is available for comment on this topic. Please contact Rachel Pak at [media@tahirih.org](mailto:media@tahirih.org) to arrange an interview.*

### **About the Tahirih Justice Center**

The Tahirih Justice Center is a national, nonprofit organization that serves immigrant survivors fleeing gender-based violence. By centering the voices of survivors in communities, courts, and Congress, Tahirih’s mission is to create a world in which all people share equal rights and are treated equitably.