

## Protection from Abuse Order (PFA)

Are you an immigrant who is experiencing abuse but are afraid to contact the authorities because of deportation consequences?

If you are a victim of domestic violence, you can go to the authorities and seek help, regardless of your immigration status. For example, you can obtain what is called a Protection From Abuse (PFA) order, which is a paper signed by a judge ordering the abuser to stop the abuse or face legal consequences.

In Maine, a PFA order can be obtained when there is abuse between current or former family, household members or dating partners.

### Immigration Consequences

**Obtaining a PFA does not have any immigration consequences.** But, your abuser might be deported if he or she violates a PFA order.

### What is Abuse?

Abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- ◆ Physical violence, sexual abuse, threats, harassment or intimidation
- ◆ Stalking and following
- ◆ Isolation from family & friends
- ◆ Controlling where you go
- ◆ Threats or harm involving your children
- ◆ Forcing you to do something or preventing you from doing something



For More Information Visit:

**Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence**

<http://www.mcedv.org/>

**Safe Voices**

<http://www.safevoices.org/abuse.php>

**ASISTA**

<http://www.asistahelp.org/>



This brochure is meant to provide accurate information for advisory purposes only. This pamphlet is not legal advice. If you think you have a legal problem, please seek the help of an attorney.

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## A Guide For Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence

Protection from abuse is available for every victim of domestic violence in the United States, regardless of immigration or citizenship status.

Immigration-related protections may also be available for immigrant victims of domestic violence.



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## What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is when one person tries to control or scare another person through threats, physical harm, sexual assault, emotional abuse and immigration related threats.

**Domestic violence is illegal in the United States. All people, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, national origin or immigration status are protected from abuse under the law. There is help available.**

### DID YOU KNOW?

- ◆ One in every four women experiences domestic violence.
- ◆ An estimated 1.3 million women are victims of domestic violence each year.

## Possible Immigration Options for Victims of Violence

- ◆ If you believe you qualify for one of the immigration options detailed below, **contact an immigration attorney.**

### U-Visa

**Are you a victim of a crime that occurred in the U.S. and resulted in physical and/or mental abuse?**

Regardless of your immigration status, you may qualify for a U-Visa if you are a victim of domestic violence or another crime, even if the crime occurred in the past, and you are willing to help the authorities in their criminal investigation or prosecution.

## Obtaining a Green Card Through the Violence Against Women Act

**Are you an immigrant who has been abused by your spouse who is a U.S. citizen or green card holder?**

Regardless of your current immigration status, you may qualify for a green card through VAWA if your spouse who is a U.S. citizen or Lawful Permanent Resident (“green card” holder) abused you physically and/or emotionally.

In cases of domestic violence, U.S. immigration law allows certain victims of abuse who are not U.S. citizens to obtain a green card without having to rely on their abusing spouse to petition for a green card for them.

**The government cannot use information from your abuser against you in immigration proceedings.**



### T-Visa

**Are you a victim of labor trafficking or sex trafficking?**

Regardless of your immigration status, you may qualify for a T-Visa if you:

- ◆ Are a victim of trafficking;
- ◆ Would face extreme hardship if forced to leave the United States; AND
- ◆ Are willing to assist law enforcement prosecute the individual(s) responsible.

## Asylum

**Did you flee your country of origin because of domestic violence?**

Regardless of your immigration status, you may qualify for asylum if you experienced domestic violence in your country of origin, the government in your home country is unwilling or unable to protect you, and as a result, you fled and are afraid to return.



## FREE & CONFIDENTIAL RESOURCES

### IMMIGRATION HELP

If you or someone you know might qualify for one of the visas described in this pamphlet please contact the **Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project** to learn more.

Toll Free Helpline: 1.800.497.8505

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELP

If you or someone you know needs protection from domestic violence please contact **Maine's 24-hour Statewide Helpline:**

Toll Free Helpline: 1-866-83-4HELP

### **For Additional Support Contact:**

**Family Crisis Services** in Portland, ME  
at 1-866-83-4HELP

**Safe Voices** in Lewiston, ME  
at 1-800-559-2927