

IMMIGRATION AFFAIRS OFFICE

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



Background

Launched in 2017, the Immigration Affairs Office (IAO) addresses the needs of immigrants, asylum-seekers, refugees, and the undocumented. This population continues to dramatically grow in Dane County, while available services and resources meet only a small portion of the demand. IAO's purpose is to respond to this need by collaborating with other organizations and increasing local capacity.



As a part of the Dane County Department of Human Services, IAO works with people presenting with different legal situations to help them understand and navigate the immigration process, gain or maintain their legal status, and address their basic human needs to enhance family stability. Operating with a team of 2 full-time and 1 part-time LTE staff, IAO engages clients in an approach that emphasizes inclusivity and empowerment.

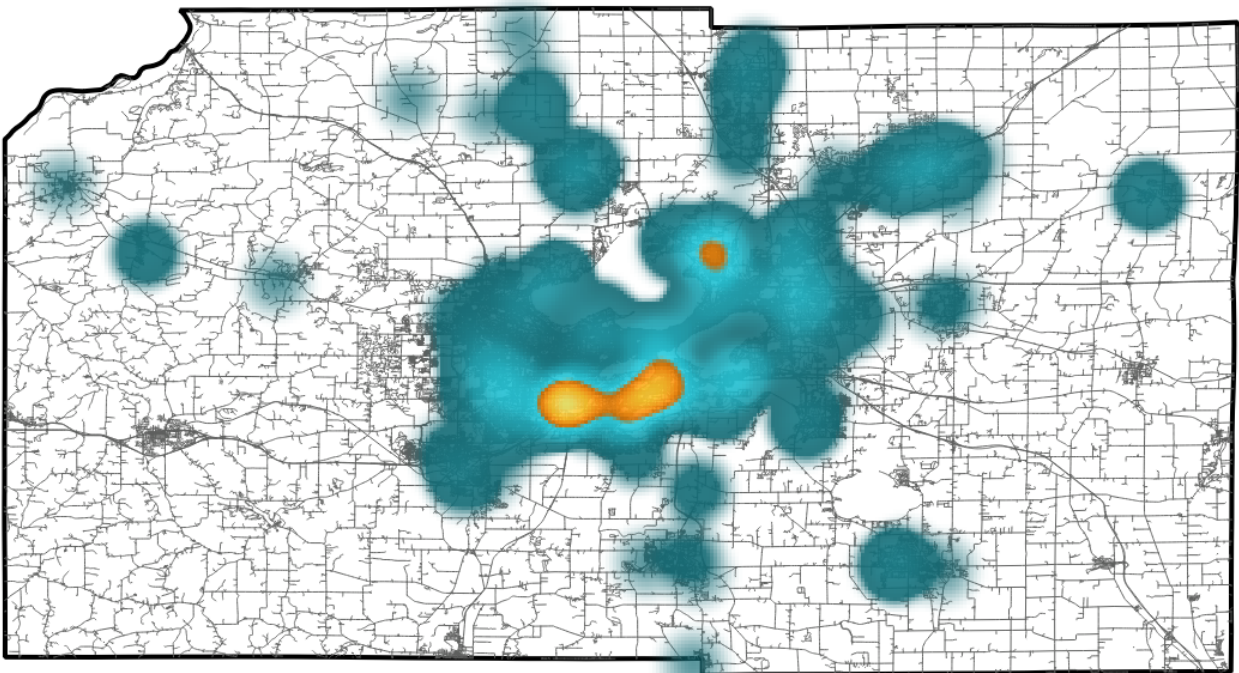
2022 in Review



With 2.5 FTE staff, IAO served:



Clients lived across Dane County, but many resided in southwest Madison neighborhoods.

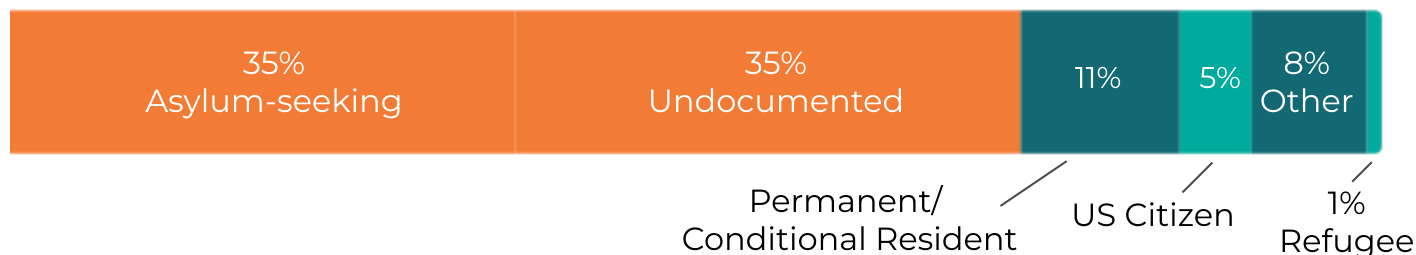


*Immigration status based on household's primary contact; people within households may have other statuses

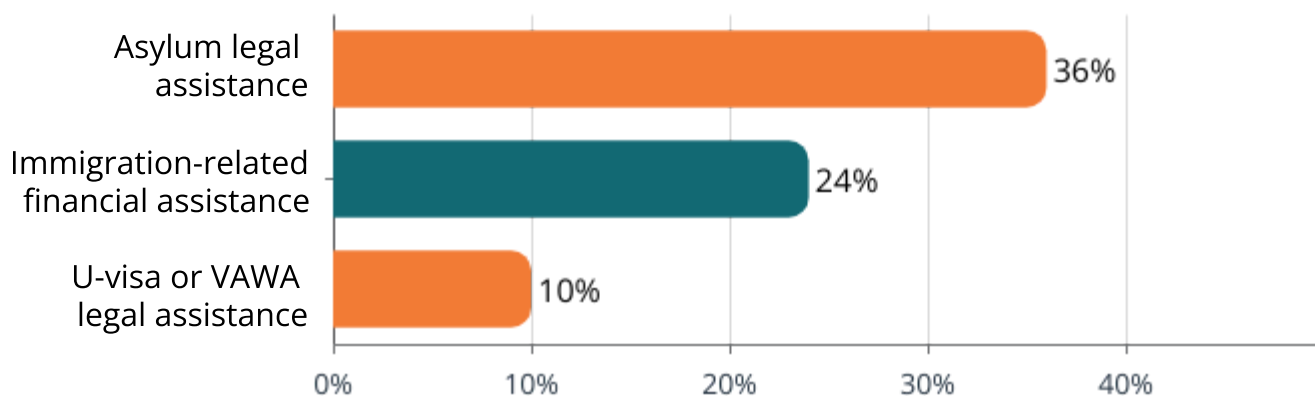
2022 in Review

70% of households* were asylum-seeking or undocumented.

IAO helps clients that have a variety of statuses. See glossary for definitions.



Legal assistance for seeking asylum and obtaining U-visas/VAWAs were top needs.



To meet the needs of clients, IAO maintains partnerships with the following sectors:

- Law enforcement
- Hospitals
- Health clinics
- Non-profits
- Housing agencies
- Faith-based congregations
- Immigration attorneys
- Government agencies
- Schools & colleges

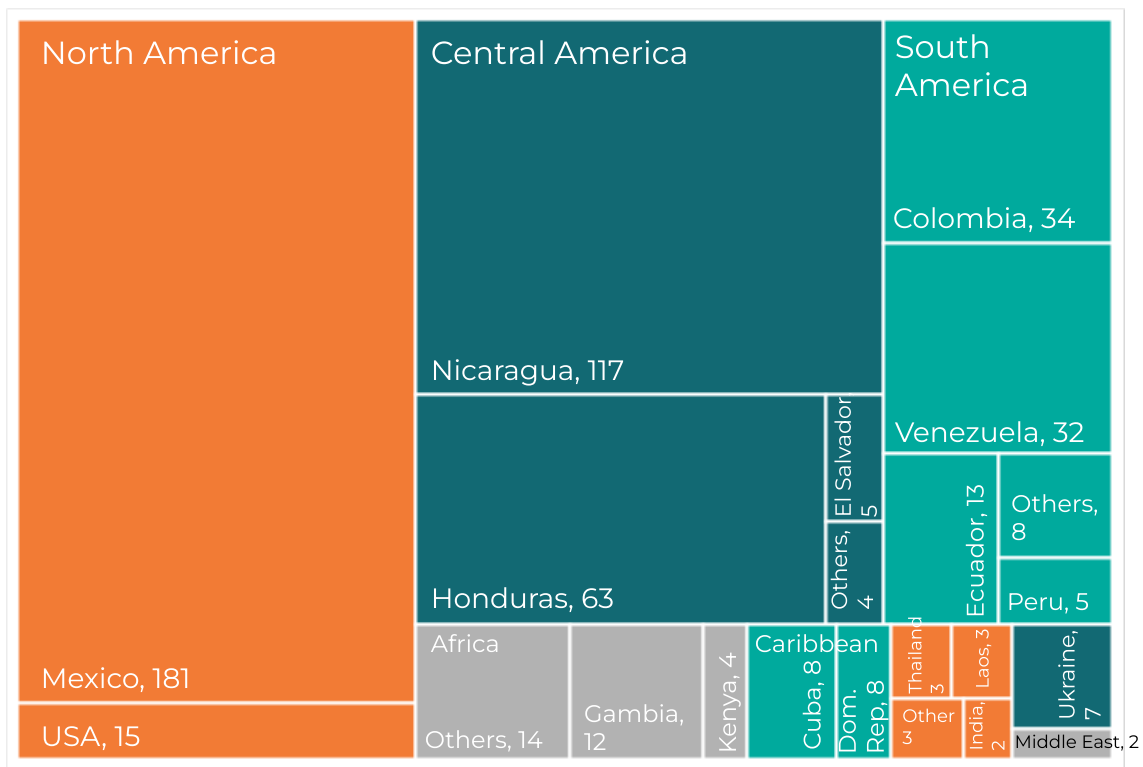
*Immigration status based on primary contact; people within households may have other statuses

Client Needs & Outcomes



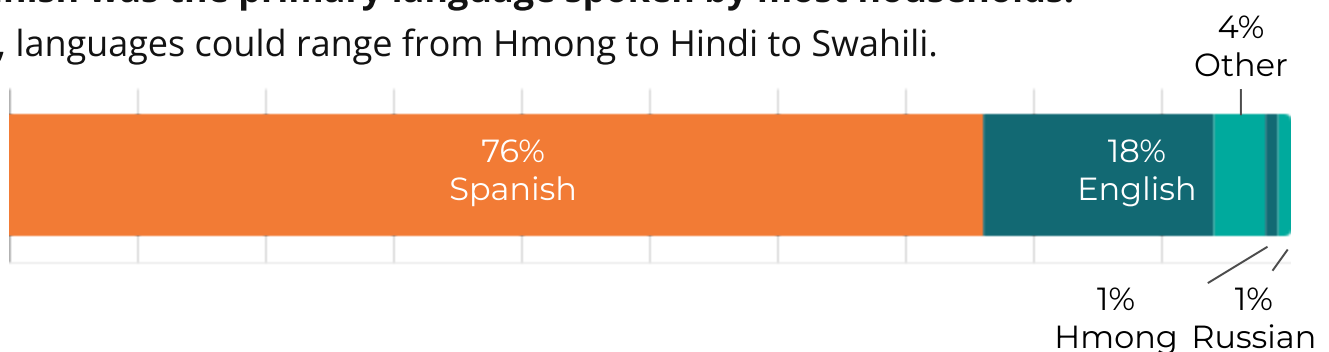
IAO pools its resources with partners to address a variety of needs, including assistance with passports, immigration filing and consultation fees, medical exams needed for immigration purposes, and responding to basic needs.

The majority of households came from **Mexico, Nicaragua, and Honduras**, with the latter two driving much of the need for asylum assistance.



Spanish was the primary language spoken by most households.

But, languages could range from Hmong to Hindi to Swahili.



Client Needs & Outcomes



2 in 5 households needed assistance in seeking asylum.

Most of the time, this entailed legal assistance. See page 8 for more information on asylum-seekers.



Positive outcomes for those seeking asylum were difficult to achieve.

Obtaining legal assistance is costly, and the process can take years. This poses as a barrier to most households.



2 in 5 households requested immigration-related financial assistance.

The assistance was primarily for immigration application filing fees for DACA and employment authorizations.



Financial assistance was available for most households.

However, the County budget and community funding was not enough to cover all needs.



1 in 10 households needed help with U-Visas and VAWAs.

Clients were referred to non-profit agencies and private attorneys to determine if they qualified for U-Visa or VAWA.



Positive outcomes for those needing help with U-Visas and VAWAs was challenging.

There are limited low-cost legal services for people who qualify for U-Visa or VAWA, making it difficult to obtain legal representation.

Client Needs & Outcomes



1 in 12 households needed help with DACA.

DACA beneficiaries were referred to agencies that can help renew their work permits, and IAO assisted with financial assistance if it was needed.



The majority of households that needed help with DACA received it.

Dane County has many resources for DACA recipients needing to renew their work permits.



1 in 14 households needed immigration-related transportation assistance.

Attending immigration appointments in Milwaukee, Chicago, and Waukegan is a critical step in the process.



The majority of households that needed transportation assistance received it.

The support of Dane Sanctuary Coalition's Volunteer Driving Program has been essential for clients.



1 in 14 households needed help with physical or mental health.

This could range from a preventive visit to emergency care to a mental health assessment.



The majority of households that needed help with physical or mental health had difficulty receiving it.

Without insurance, money, or translation and interpretation services, clients have barriers to accessing services.

Asylum-seeker Needs & Outcomes



Dane County saw a large increase in asylum-seekers, as did the US. IAO interfaced with most of them. Asylum-seekers primarily came from the Central and South America. These families arrived needing medical attention as well as assistance with employment, housing, and basic needs. However, the most critical need they had was obtaining immigration-related legal services.



2 out of 6 households served were seeking asylum, covering 190 households, 259 adults, and 151 children.

In 2021, Immigration Affairs began working with Fozia and her daughter, originally from Ethiopia and seeking asylum in the US, after a school social worker referred the family to IAO. At that time, they did not have any income or work permits causing housing instability, which negatively impacted them in many ways. Since then, Fozia and her daughter have obtained work permits with the support of local immigration attorneys. Fozia works full-time as a caregiver, and her daughter works part-time while studying at Madison College. After obtaining jobs, Middleton Outreach Ministry assisted the family in locating housing, and they now live in their own apartment. Fozia and her daughter are prime examples of the work that IAO does within our community. Without the support of community partners, this work would not be possible.

Asylum-seeker Needs & Outcomes

Asylum-seekers released at the border have many steps to take. Each case is unique, but the usual route includes: checking in with US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, finding an immigration attorney, attending immigration court hearings, applying for asylum in less than a year, applying for a work permit, and attending a final hearing. They must do all of this facing language, financial, and transportation barriers.

The legal process for obtaining asylum can be complex and lengthy. IAO offers multiple supports directly to families or via its partnerships with Centro Hispano and the Immigration Community Immigration Law Center (CILC).

IAO Assistance with Asylum Process

Initial Contact

Complete an intake and gather client's information. Document change of address, if needed.

Immigration Appointments

Schedule immigration appointments with Milwaukee ICE office. Verify any upcoming court dates. Provide transportation to immigration appointments.

Asylum orientation & attorney consultations

Provide information about the asylum process and get individual consultations with an immigration attorney.

CILC Pro Se Clinic

Assist client in meeting with attorney who helps with the asylum application (attorney does not represent client).

Work Permit & Follow-ups

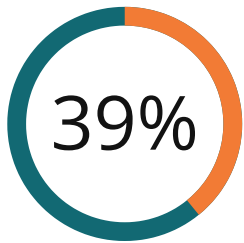
After asylum application is submitted, follow-up with client to apply for work permit, once eligible.

Immigration Court

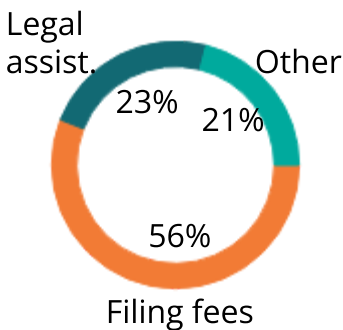
Arrange transportation for asylum-seekers who need to attend court in Chicago. Connect client to private immigration attorney who can represent them in court.

Client Financial Assistance

The second biggest need for clients was financial assistance. This financial need could range from application fees to legal assistance to addressing basic needs. Yet, it is legal costs, like retaining an immigration attorney, that can exceed \$15,000. Most agencies are not able to help cover these costs. IAO utilizes pro bono attorneys, faith community donations, and committed community agencies to respond to this need.

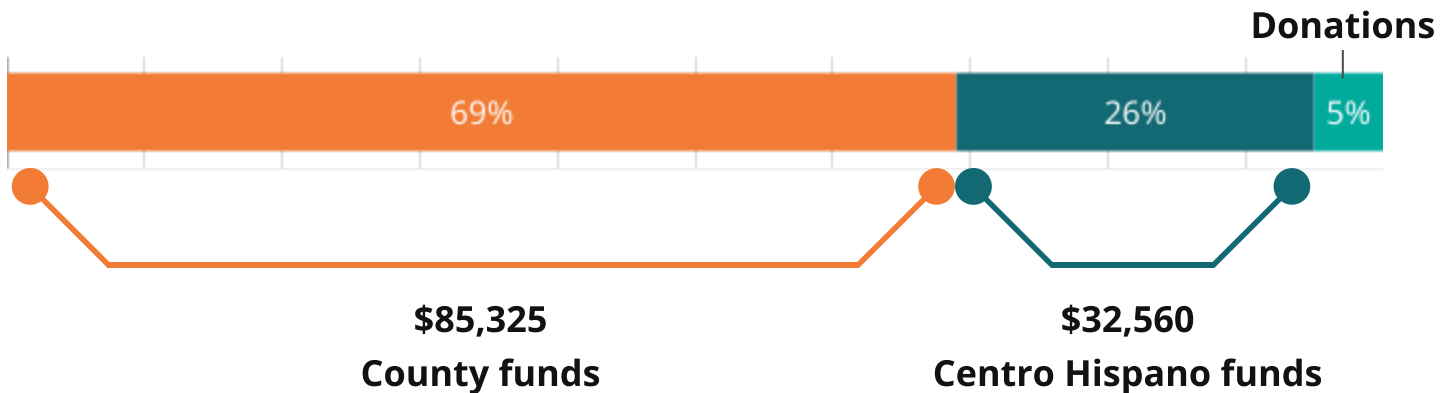


39% of households requested financial assistance, with an average of 1.2 requests. There were 273 requests in all.



Financial assistance was mostly needed for filing fees and obtaining legal assistance. Filing fees were primarily for DACA and employment authorizations - requests ranged from \$85 to \$1,225 per application.

Almost 75% of the \$123,000 of financial assistance was provided by the County. Centro Hispano and donations/other sources provided the remainder. There were 237 disbursements.



Community Projects & Partnerships

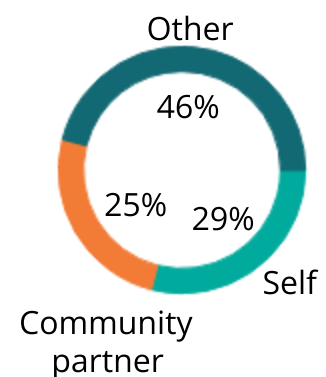


IAO has a three-pronged approach to its community-focused work. First, IAO hosts and facilitates community-wide events that reach large numbers of the immigrant population. Second, it provides education and training to community programs that interface with and serve immigrants. Third, it hosts and facilitates events that foster partnerships with community programs and agencies. Throughout all of these approaches, community relationships and partnerships are critical. Without them, much of what IAO does would not be possible.

IAO hosted partnership-building events, including:

- **Immigration Affairs Office Open House** - IAO celebrated opening a new office space at 818 W. Badger Rd. and hosted an open house that was attended by many partnering agencies, community members, and County Executive Joe Parisi.
- **Annual IAO Luncheon** - an event that honored the work of community organizations and people that support the work of IAO, with special recognition given to Shiva Bidar-Sielaff (UW Health Chief Diversity Officer), Kristina J. Rasmussen (CILC), Dan Zimmerman (Dane Sanctuary Coalition - Volunteer Driving Program), and Mary McNail (volunteer at IAO).
- **Immigration Leadership Discussion** - a session for leaders in Dane County that provided an overview of immigration issues.
- **Latino Health Council meetings** - developed a partnership with Latino Health Council to connect asylum-seekers and other immigrants without insurance to medical care.

A quarter of referrals to IAO came from community programs and agencies, demonstrating the reciprocal working relationship between IAO and its partners.



Community Projects & Partnerships



IAO provided immigration-focused presentations and training to community organizations, including:

- **Dane Sanctuary Coalition presentations** - presentations for faith-based organizations that provide support to immigrant and refugee communities, such as transportation and other services.
- **Dane County Sheriff's Office presentation** - a session for new deputies about asylum-related immigration issues.

IAO facilitated multiple client-focused, community events, including:

- **Immigration Resource Fair** - a two-day event, attended by over 200 people, hosted by IAO, Madison College, Centro Hispano, CILC, and others to provide resources to support safety and justice for immigrants.
- **New Immigrant Town Hall** - an event attended by approximately 70 immigrants, hosted by IAO, Jewish Social Services, the Catholic Multicultural Center, the Literacy Network, and the League of Women Voters of Dane County, to learn about local government, meet government officials, ask questions, and share ideas.
- **Information sessions for newly arrived Ukrainians** - sessions hosted by IAO to connect families to resources and to assist with work permit applications and questions.

Goals for 2023



Continue to convene partners and stakeholders to improve collaboration and alignment of effort

Increase capacity for medical and mental health services and resources for asylum seekers

Continue public information activities on immigration issues, including webinars

Hire and on-board a bilingual Spanish-speaking social worker

Increase capacity for immigration attorney services for clients seeking asylum

Increase funding for immigration financial assistance

Contact Us!

Immigration Affairs Office

608-242-6260

818 W. Badger Road

Madison, WI 53713

[Click here! - Immigration Affairs Website](#)

Fabiola Hamdan, MSSW

She/Her(s)/Ella

Immigration Affairs Supervisor

608-335-5739

Hamdan@countyofdane.com

Jorge Salgado

He/Him/El

Immigration Affairs Social Service Specialist

608-283-2996

Salgado.jorge@countyofdane.com

Yesenia Villalpando-Torres, CSW

She/Her(s)/Ella

Immigration Affairs Social Worker

608-287-4004

Villalpando@countyofdane.com

Veronica Gonzalez

She/Her(s)/Ella

Immigration Affairs Intern

608-242-6260

Gonzalezfavela.veronica@countyofdane.com

Glossary of Terms

- **Asylum** - Protection and immigration benefits granted to a person already in the United States, or at a U.S. port of entry, because they fear persecution in their home country. A refugee becomes an asylee once they arrive in the United States or at a U.S port of entry. Asylees can request a green card after 1 year in the United States. A person who is seeking or has been granted political asylum - the status is granted AFTER a person arrives in the US.
- **DACA** - Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, a program introduced in 2012 to allow undocumented immigrants brought to the United States as children (known as “Dreamers”) to lawfully live, study, and work without fear of deportation.
- **Guest worker** - a temporary work permit, usually in certain industries, that allows a person to work in US for a certain amount of time and must return to their country of origin.
- **Immigrant** - person with no US citizenship at birth, and includes naturalized citizens, lawful permanent residents, refugees and asylees, persons on certain temporary visas, and the unauthorized.
- **Refugee** - a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster. Refugee status is determined abroad. Person may receive resettlement aid or other benefits.
- **Resident**
 - **Conditional Residence** - A probationary green card status issued to some U.S. residents, such as immigrants who were married for less than 2 years when their marriage-based green card was approved. Conditional residents’ green cards are marked “CR-1” and remain valid for just 2 years, after which they must apply for a permanent green card, valid for 10-year renewable periods.
 - **Permanent Residence** - status given to people who are allowed to live and work indefinitely in the United States.
- **Undocumented immigrant** - a person that is residing in the US without some other documentation status or after that status has expired.

Glossary of Terms

- **US Citizen** - a person born in the United States or its territories. For example, any person born in Wisconsin or any person born in Puerto Rico.
 - **A person born to a US citizen** - any person born outside the US or its territories whose mother or father is a US citizen. For example, child born in France to US soldier or child born in Costa Rica to a US citizen.
 - **Naturalized citizen** - a person born outside the US or its territories that earns the rights and privileges of US citizenship through the legal process.
- **U-visa** - nonimmigrant status provides immigration protection to crime victims who have suffered substantial mental or physical abuse as a result of the crime. The U-visa allows victims to remain in the United States and help law enforcement authorities in the investigation or prosecution of the criminal activity.
- **VAWA** - Violence Against Women Act, under this act, people may be eligible to become a lawful permanent resident if they are the victim of battery or extreme cruelty committed by a US citizen spouse, parent, son/daughter, or lawful permanent resident spouse or parent.
- **Visa holder** - there are many types of visas. Different visas will afford the person different rights and allow differing amounts of time to be spent in the US.

Definitions primarily derived from <https://www.boundless.com/immigration-resources/immigration-glossary/> and are meant to give the reader a general understanding of each term. They are not intended to be a legal definition.