

## Who we are



Since 2005, Lakeshore and LA VIDA have worked to provide culturally competent, holistic legal services to indigent battered women in Southwest Detroit.

Lakeshore is a non profit legal aid program and LA VIDA is the Southwest Detroit Partnership to Prevent Intimate Violence Against Latina Women.

Both agencies work to provide access to justice for battered women in our community so that nothing is decided about survivors without them.

For more information and to see if you qualify for our services, please contact LA VIDA's immigration law attorney at CHASS Center in Southwest Detroit.

Because Justice for Some is No  
Justice at All.



Lakeshore Legal Aid  
and LA VIDA

5635 W. Fort Street  
Detroit, MI 48209

# Lakeshore Legal Aid and LA VIDA



Immigration Law  
Project

## Did you know that you can obtain permanent residency if you have been mistreated by your spouse?

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Does your spouse...

- Threaten to hurt you?
- Scare you?
- Hit you, punch you, kick you, or hurt you and/or your children in any other way?
- Verbally abuse you?
- Call you names and insult you?
- Force you to have sexual relations when you don't want to?
- Threaten to take your children away or harm them?
- Threaten to turn you into immigration authorities for deportation?
- Control all of your finances or prohibit you from working?
- Control your life, including where you go and who you get to see?

If you answered "YES" to one or more of these questions, you and your children MAY be eligible to apply for permanent residency under VAWA.

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) is a law that allows you to request lawful permanent residency if you have been abused by your spouse. This law allows you to "self-petition" for yourself and your children, without having to rely on your spouse for help.

To be eligible for permanent residency under this law you must meet ALL of the following requirements:

1. You are currently married to a US citizen or lawful permanent resident (or were married within the last two years)
2. Your spouse is a US citizen or lawful permanent resident
3. You have lived with your spouse at some point during your relationship
4. You currently live in the US
5. You married your spouse in good faith (and not simply to obtain a green card)
6. You are a person of good moral character
7. You have been subjected to battery and/or extreme cruelty



## Benefits to VAWA

Once you qualify under VAWA, you obtain legal status in the United States, even though you may have to wait months or years for your actual green card. But there are several other benefits available to you as well. One of the most important is the ability to obtain certain public benefits for you and your children. Additionally, you can receive work authorization and a state driver's license, plus obtain permanent residency for your children at the same time.

## Alternatives to VAWA

If none of the above applies to you, there may be other routes to immigration relief available to you.

If you were not married to a US citizen or legal permanent resident, you may qualify for a U Visa. This is available to victims of crimes that occurred inside the US if the victim is willing and able to assist in the prosecution of their abuser.

If you have conditional permanent residency and your spouse refuses to join in your petition to remove that conditional status, you may qualify for a battered spouse waiver.

Please speak to our immigration law attorney to find the solution that is best for you and your children.