

Your Declaration for Immigration

The declaration is your story, in your voice. For an immigration case, you submit an application form that has questions USCIS or the Immigration Judge has about every applicant. Beyond the questions in an application, the declaration is your chance to provide a fuller picture and better details about why it is important for you to continue living in the U.S. Here, you can share details you think are important.

For applications based on physical or sexual violence, the declaration will be very similar in format, with small differences. Below are the general areas you want to discuss in your declaration:

- Introduction:** What is your full name; date of birth; city and country of birth; name of parents and siblings? What type of immigration relief are you seeking (see **Page 2**)?
- Childhood:** What was your family life like? How was your education/schooling? Did you experience any unusual circumstances or childhood traumas? Any incidents that have affected your adult life?
- Experience in home country:** What kind of post-secondary education or employment did you have? See **Page 2** if your application is based on abuse or persecution in your home country.
- Relationships/marriage:** How did you meet your partner? Was there love in the beginning? What changed? Do you have children? See **Page 2** if your application is based on your partner's abuse.
- Entry (all) into the U.S./Past deportations:** When and how did you first come to the U.S.? Have you left the U.S. and reentered, if so, how many times? When and how did you reenter the U.S.?
- Contacts with Immigration:** Have you applied for any visa or immigration status? Do you have any experience with ICE or an immigration judge? Any pending applications or past deportation orders?
- Experience in the U.S.:** Since entering the U.S., how has life been better? How has it been hard (experiences of abuse/crime/trafficking)? See **Page 2** if application is based on victimization in the U.S.
- Criminal charges/past convictions:** Have you been arrested, charged or convicted for any crime in the U.S.? Was the criminal activity connected to the abuse you suffered?
- Other inadmissibility concerns:** Any health issues, use of false documents, substance abuse, receipt of public benefits, lack of passport, assistance in smuggling others, etc.? Any of this because of the abuse?
- Family and communities in the U.S.:** Do you have any parents, siblings, children in the U.S. with status?
- Good moral character:** How have you been a positive member of society (volunteer, church, school)?
- Importance to stay in the U.S.:** What are your goals/aspirations? What protection/support/services are you receiving here that you could not access in your home country? What are your steps to healing?
- Signature:** Sign with language of perjury at the end of declaration in **blue ink: I declare under penalty of perjury, that the information contained in this document is true to the best of my knowledge.**

Note: *If your immigration case is based on having experienced abuse or violence, the government will not share your information with your abuser.*

Organize your declaration in the order the events happened, starting with your childhood and ending with what your life in the U.S. is like now. Focus on the major/important events in your life.

Provide details (dates, descriptions, names, locations, emotions). Use your words to illustrate for the immigration officer/judge what you've been through and the importance of you staying in the U.S.

Type or print your declaration, though typing makes it easier to read. It can be any length as long as it contains all the important information. Include your name and A number on every page.

Be honest and include the information you may be embarrassed or worried about. Take your time in writing the declaration. It can be hard to have to think and write about memories that you have tried to forget. Talk to people you trust who know what you've been through as they can help you remember details may be you had forgotten. They can also provide letters supporting your declaration.

Review carefully because your interview or testimony should be consistent with your declaration.



Recommendation: If you have a counselor, therapist or mental health provider you trust, work with them on your writing as you can receive better emotional support when remembering abuse/trauma.

Relief	Eligibility	Details for Declaration	Place of Abuse
Asylum/ WOR/CAT	Past persecution or future fear of persecution in home country based on race, nationality, religion, political opinion or membership in particular social group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and who targeted/persecuted you? • Did you seek help from anyone? • Could you relocate in your country? • Have you heard/seen others persecuted similarly situated as you? • What would happen if you returned? 	Home Country
U-visa	Substantial physical/mental abuse as victim of qualifying U.S. crime, assisted or assisting with investigation/ prosecution (certification required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the criminal activity you were a victim of? How did you report and then assist in investigating/testifying? • What was your relationship to the offender/perpetration of the crime? • How has this crime affected your life? 	U.S.
T-visa	Present in U.S. due to trafficking (sex or labor), complied with reasonable requests for investigation/ prosecution and will suffer extreme hardship/severe harm if removed (certification optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How were you recruited/entered U.S.? • What did you believe you agreed to? When did you realize you were tricked? • Why could you not leave? • What were you coerced into doing? Who profited from your abuse? • How were you able to escape/leave? • Were you able to help investigators? 	U.S.
Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (minors only)	Abuse, neglect or abandonment by one or both parents, either in home country or U.S. and reunification not in the best interest of the child (state court finding required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were one or both parents abusive? • What are dates and details of physical, psychological, sexual and economic abuse? • Is life better away from the parent? • Do you have fear of being reunited with abusive parent? 	Home country and U.S.
VAWA petition	Physical abuse and/or extreme cruelty by U.S. citizen/lawful permanent resident spouse, parent or child in joint residence and good faith marriage; showing good moral character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you meet/marry your partner? • Was there love in the beginning? When did the abuse start in the relationship? • Was there: use of status to scare, abuse during pregnancy, abuse of children, pressure from family to stay together, attempts to leave? 	Home country and U.S.
I-751	Removal of conditional residence where USC spouse caused physical abuse/extreme cruelty, lived in joint residence and good faith marriage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include details of abusive patterns, first incident and recent or worst incidents of abuse. Provide dates and details of physical, psychological, sexual abuse. • Did you tell anyone else about the abuse? 	Home country and U.S.



**UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION STATUS
AFFIDAVIT OF MARIA DOE (A 099 888 777)**

1. My name is Maria Doe. I currently live at 1000 5th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104. I am seeking asylum based on fear of persecution in Mexico and a U-visa based on being a victim of a crime in the U.S.
 2. I was born in Mexico City, Mexico, on January 1, 1988. My mother is Sarah Doe, of Mexican nationality. My father was Larry Doe, of Mexican nationality and Portuguese ancestry. I am Catholic. I am one of six children, with four brothers and a sister. I have three children. My youngest son is a U.S. citizen. I have included my non-U.S. citizen children in my application as well.
 3. I had a good childhood until my father died. When I was about 10 years old, my father was assassinated. He was a law professor and had organized a group at the university. He, along with other organizers, were killed. My father had dreamed of a better life for us but things became harder after he died. We were poor and could not afford school so I never finished though I wanted to be a professor like my father.
 4. Life after my father's death became unbearable for me at home. My mother and I were always fighting. My older brothers were very controlling. At the time, I was angry at everyone and hurt but we didn't have counseling or talk about our feelings, so I never thought about why everyone in the family was acting the way they did. I was looking for an escape and a way to get away.
 5. When I was still very young, I met Robert White. I think I was about 16 years old then. At the time I did not know it but later I found out he was a connected to the Los Zetas gang that caused a lot of violence in my community. When I first met Robert, he seemed nice and appropriate. He was very charming and I thought I had found the ideal man. I was young and did not know better. We decided to move in together very quickly. That decision would change my life forever.
 6. Within a few months, things started to get really bad. Robert had affairs with other women, and when I would confront him, he would get violent and angry. He was not afraid to hurt me and he had a very jealous nature. I am a Christian woman and church is important to me, but Robert would not let me go. He would force me to have sex with him, when I did not want to or was too hurt. At the time I thought there was nothing I could do because he was my boyfriend. I have now learned that it is still rape, even if you are in a relationship. Because of his gang affiliation and the Zetas being all over Mexico, I was afraid he would find me no matter where I fled to in Mexico.
 7. I ended up leaving Mexico in October 2007 and coming to the U.S. I entered on a tourist visa and flew into Los Angeles. I told Robert I was going to visit for a short time. I actually wanted to stay safely in the U.S. but then Robert was able to get my phone number through mutual friends or someone in my family and began contacting me, telling me he would hurt my family if I didn't come back. He said he would never stop looking for me.
 8. On April 23, 2008, my older brother Joel was gunned down in a drive by. Through the grapevine, I found out Robert was connected to the shooting. I came back to Mexico in May 2008. I had already lost my father and a brother, I could not have anyone else in my family die if I could prevent it.
- Introduction of yourself and your background**
- Information on your childhood and abuse/trauma**
- How you met your partner or abuser**
- Examples of abuse, why you feared leaving; persecution and torture in home country**
- Past entries into U.S.; example of inadmissibility**
- Consequences of leaving; reason for returning to home country**



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| <p>9. Even though I hadn't told Robert I was back, he found me within 3 days of me coming back. I had gone to the mall with my older sisters and he was there, almost like he was waiting for me. He forced me to live with him and I was back in his home within a month of coming back to Mexico. I think he knew that he could control me by hurting my family, so the abuse became worse. Often he would tie me up or lock me in so I could not leave. It was no secret how much Robert tortured me. People in the neighborhood would hear us fighting and would see my injuries. But everyone was afraid of Robert and so they would tell me to keep faith and pray to God. I did pray that I could have the strength to survive.</p> | <p>Further examples of physical, sexual and psychological abuse; lack of protection in home country</p> |
| <p>10. I found strength in my children. My son Jack was born in April 1, 2009. My daughter Joan was born on May 2, 2011. My children are so loving and beautiful. Before, I was waiting for death but my children gave me hope. I also started to get scared about Robert hurting the children. Physically I could take it but I did not want him to hurt my babies.</p> | <p>Information about children included in application</p> |
| <p>11. In January 2012, I went to the police with the help of my cousin Jane. She had stopped by to see how I was doing. I was so hurt I could not pick up my one year old daughter. I was limping because Robert had beaten me so bad the day before. He had been angry that I had taken too long at the market and said that I was flirting with men and was a whore. I also knew I was pregnant again and I was afraid that if Robert kept hurting me, I would lose the baby. Jane took me to the police and I made a report.</p> | <p>Attempt to seek protection; example of why you will be tortured or cannot relocate in home country</p> |
| <p>12. Robert was arrested and in jail that night. I thought there would be justice. But the next day he was back out. He beat me again and told me that his gang owned the local police so no one could hold him. Because of Robert's abuse, I didn't have any contact with my family anymore and many of my siblings had moved away since my brother's death. I knew he would kill me any day and I had to get out.</p> | |
| <p>13. On March 1, 2012, I took the kids and took a bus headed north. I didn't know how, but I knew I had to get out of Mexico. One of the passengers on the bus knew a coyote who could help me. The coyote put me and the kids in a car with 4 other people headed to Tijuana. When we stopped, we did not stay for long, instead kept going for nearly two days. We were supposed to meet someone in Tijuana who was going to help us cross the border. We waited for a day but I didn't know how much longer I was supposed to wait so I started walking with the kids. I was also afraid that if we stopped too long and didn't keep going, I would lose my courage and turn back. We were very tired and they were hungry so I stopped at a Burger King. That's when I realized we were in the U.S.</p> | <p>Last entry into the U.S. and contact (or lack thereof) with immigration authorities</p> |
| <p>14. When I came to the U.S. in 2007, I had been up in Washington for several months and really liked it up here. I also had been going to a church and still knew some people who could help me and the children so I came to Seattle in May 2012. I wanted to work but my children were still very young and I was pregnant so I helped take care of other people's children while they were at work. We started attending the church I really liked and I volunteered there, so we would get donations of clothing and food.</p> | <p>Community connections in the U.S.; good moral character</p> |
| <p>15. On September 1, 2012, my son Jake was born in Seattle, WA. He was healthy and all my fears that the abuse from Robert would've affected him disappeared as soon as I saw him. With the help of some of the church members, I began volunteering at a food bank and also doing some housekeeping to make a little bit of money to support my children.</p> | <p>U.S. citizen family who will suffer if deported</p> |



16. On the evening of November 1, 2012, one of the food bank managers Mark showed up at my apartment. I was surprised because I didn't know him too well, he didn't speak any Spanish and we would only say 'hi' in passing. I didn't want to let him in but I didn't want to be rude. He came in and while I was still trying to figure out how to ask him what he wanted, he grabbed and tried to kiss me. I became scared and tried to push him out of the door but he was too strong. My children were playing in the bedroom and I was afraid if I cried or screamed, they would come into the room and see what was happening.

17. I kept struggling but Mark was stronger and violent. He forced my pants down and raped me. After a while, I stopped fighting. It was like Robert all over again. I remember feeling numb and waiting for it to be over. After he was done, he smiled at me and said "See you soon." I do not understand a lot of English but I did understand that. I nodded so he would leave. I sat on the floor for a few hours. I remember thinking that I could not let this happen to me again. I could not have my children see their mother like that. I went across the hall to my neighbor and knocked on her door and asked if she could help me call the police.

18. When the police came, I tried my best to explain what happened. I cried more than I talked. I was afraid I was going to get deported but I also couldn't let Mark rape me again. The police took my clothes and took pictures of my body. They told me to go to a hospital for an exam. I did all of that. I found out later they arrested Mark. Except this time, unlike Robert, he stayed in jail. I didn't really understand the process but I found out through my advocate that Mark pled guilty to raping me.

19. In reporting what Mark did, I was connected to counselors and resources that I didn't know existed before. I not only have talked about what Mark did to me, but I also have had the chance to talk about what Robert did to me. It has been hard going through those memories but I feel like I am becoming stronger and braver the more I go to counseling. I am worried that my older two may have been affected by being around Robert so I am so happy to have counseling as a resource for them too. I have also gotten connected to housing programs that have helped me financially so I am able to have a little more stability as I try to go back to school. I do not know if I can be a professor like my father but I would like to be a teacher.

20. Life has not always been perfect since I came to the U.S. I still have nightmares about what Mark did to me, about Robert finding me and fear what will happen to me and my family if we are deported back to Mexico. But I am working hard, and watching my children grow up happy and safe. I would never have had this opportunity in Mexico. Robert turned me into a shell of a woman and I would have stayed like that until he killed me. Mark almost broke me completely. But with a growing community and the chance to live without abuse and fear of violence, I feel like I can breath and sleep peacefully for the first time in years.

Under penalty of perjury and pursuant to the laws of the State of Washington, I swear that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

By: 
Maria Doe, A 099 888 777

Dated: 1/1/14

Details of crime you experienced in the U.S.; the physical and mental abuse you suffered from the criminal activity

Assistance with investigation and prosecution

Connection to supportive resources, community and recovery in the U.S. unavailable in home country; goals and aspirations for the future

Perjury language; signature and date

