

## Provider's Letter of Support for Immigration

Letters of support from a provider who has worked with a survivor of domestic, trafficking or sexual violence are important for the survivor with an immigration case pending. A provider's letter verifies the applicant has received services for their abuse. It can provide details of trauma and healing that corroborate the applicant's declaration. The letter also shows the judge why the applicant deserves to remain in the U.S.

**Providers** can be counselors, physicians, psychologists, advocates and any professional who has provided services due to the applicant's experience of physical, sexual, psychological or economic abuse.

**Recommendation:** If you are a mental health provider such as a counselor, therapist or psychologist, consider working with the applicant on their declaration—they may need emotional and psychological support when remembering abuse. Include in your letter how the process has been re-traumatizing.

**Below are the general areas you want to include in your letter of support:**

- Introduction:** Address the letter to "Dear Adjudicating Officer" or "Honorable Immigration Judge."
- Background:** What is your full name, job title, qualification, and agency name?
- Agency information:** What kind services does your program or agency provide?
- Connection to applicant:** How was the applicant referred to you for services? How long have you worked with the applicant? What kind of services did the applicant receive from your program?
- Knowledge of abuse:** Do you have knowledge of the severity and history of abuse the applicant experienced? Check the client's declaration to corroborate but please write in your own voice.
- Hardship:** How would the applicant and applicant's family be affected if the applicant is removed from the U.S.? Is the applicant primarily responsible for the family's rent, food, bills, care or other support?
- Home country experience:** If you have worked with other clients from applicant's home country or have knowledge of the home country, how would the applicant be treated if removed from the U.S.?
- Rehabilitation:** If the applicant has any negative history (arrest, substance abuse, etc.), do you know how they have changed since then? Was the negative history a part of the abuse they experienced?
- Good moral character:** Has the applicant given back to the community (volunteer, church, school)?
- Healing in the U.S.:** Have you seen the applicant's healing process and strength gained through receiving support and services from the community? Do you know of the applicant's goals/aspirations?
- Contact information:** What is your office address or phone number for contact?
- Signature:** Sign and date in **blue ink** with perjury language at the end of letter: ***I declare under penalty of perjury, that the information contained in this document is true to the best of my knowledge.***

**Provide details** in your letter, specific examples about your work with the applicant or details of abuse they shared, that gives the immigration officer/judge a fuller picture of the kind of person the applicant is and why they are deserving of being granted their application to remain in the U.S. The more detailed, the better. Do not copy/paste from the applicant's declaration. Use your own words.

**Type or print** your letter, but typing makes it easier to read. It can be any length though most letters are between 1-2 pages. If you have a long history working with the applicant, the letter of support can be much longer. Do not forget to include the perjury language and your signature at the end. **Provide your letter of support on your agency letterhead.**

**For detained applicants:** Make 3 copies of the original and the translated letter (if translated) and mail them to the person detained. When mailing, include the person's first name and last name, their nine digit A-number (alien registration # or immigration file #) and the address of the detention center.



January 1, 2014

RE: **Maria DOE** (DOB 1/1/88), Application for U-visa and Asylum

To the Adjudicating Officer:

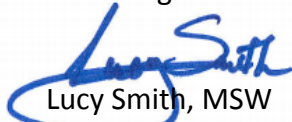
I am writing this letter in support of Maria Doe's application. I have been the Program Manager for The Counseling Group (TCG) in Seattle for 12 years. TCG is funded by the Office for Violence Against Women to provide mental health services to immigrant victims of physical and sexual abuse. Maria (known to us as "Mimi") has been a TCG client since March 2013 when we received a referral from her victim advocate that she had been a victim of rape. We have since discovered she has a long history of abuse. TCG has provided her with intensive case management and counseling, and worked with our community partners, such as the YWCA, to support her as she works toward self-sufficiency.

Mimi has shown significant signs of ongoing, untreated trauma and has had a difficult time overcoming the abuse she has experienced from her family back in Mexico and as a victim of a sexual assault in the U.S. Serving her had initially been difficult, but she has shown resilience and a strong will to survive. Even the simple act of a hug or touch on her arm would cause her to start trembling and have a panic attack. Now, she is in a much stronger emotional state. She is a loving and dedicated mother to her children, for whom she is the only provider. We hope to see Mimi achieve immigration status. She would be severely harmed if she was deported to Mexico where her abuser lives. Mimi has been clear that her ex will kill her and she has no support from her family for leaving him. It is clear to me that given her circumstances, she will be very vulnerable to re-victimization, if not death, if deported.

During her time with TCG, Mimi has expressed an intense desire to be independent and make a better life for her family. She is taking English classes. I observed her to be a caring, hard-working, and determined young woman. She is volunteering as an assistant for a childcare center and hopes to eventually become a teacher. She wants so badly to support herself, live a life free from abuse, and model for her children independence and strength. After all she's been through she deserves the opportunity to make the most of her future for herself.

If there is any more information that will help you make a decision in favor of Mimi, please do not hesitate to contact me at (206) 555-5556. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing information is true to the best of my knowledge.

  
Lucy Smith, MSW  
Program Manager  
The Counseling Group

