

## VOICES Act (Voices of Immigrant Communities Empowering Act)

### What is the VOICES Act?

The Voices of Immigrant Communities Empowering Act, also known as the VOICES Act, was recently amended by the Illinois Way Forward Act (Public Act 102-0234). The VOICES Act allows "victims of qualifying criminal activity" to request a "certification form" or a law enforcement certification form or statement required by federal immigration law certifying that a person is a victim of qualifying criminal activity for use in applying for a U-Visa or T-Visa under the United States Code.

The Illinois Way Forward Act (Public Act 102-0234) can be found here: <https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=102-0234&GA=102>

The Illinois VOICES ACT (5 ILCS 825/1) can be found here: <https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=3916&ChapterID=2>

### Who is eligible to participate?

Those individuals who are identified as "victims of qualifying criminal activity" as defined in the act who were involved in an incident investigated by the Vandalia Police Department.

"Victim of qualifying criminal activity" means a person described in Section 1101(a)(15)(U)(i)(I) of Title 8 of the United States Code, in the definition of "victim of a severe form of trafficking" in Section 7102(14) of Title 22 of the United States Code, or in any implementing federal regulations, supplementary information, guidance, and instructions.

"Qualifying criminal activity" means any activity, regardless of the stage of detection, investigation, or prosecution, designated in Section 1101(a)(15)(U)(iii) of Title 8 of the United States Code, any implementing federal regulations, supplementary information, guidance, and instructions.

### How does someone apply?

#### Step One:

Download the appropriate U-Visa or T Visa law enforcement certification form:

- [U-Visa \(USCIS Form I-918 Supplement B\)](#)
- [T-Visa \(USCIS Form I-914 Supplement B\)](#)

#### Step Two:

Complete Part 1 of the U-Visa or Part B of the T-Visa. **Do not complete any other sections of the applications. Incorrectly completed forms may be rejected or may increase response time.**

#### Step Three:

Send the U-Visa or T-Visa law enforcement certification form to:

Chief Jeff Ray  
Vandalia Police Department  
Attn: VOICES Act  
.219 South 5<sup>th</sup> St  
Vandalia, Illinois 62471

Applications can also be emailed to Chief Jeff Ray at [pdchief@vandaliaillinois.com](mailto:pdchief@vandaliaillinois.com)

**How long does it take to get a law enforcement certification response?**

If the Certifying Official determines the requester of a U-Visa or T-Visa is a victim of qualifying criminal activity or human trafficking, the Certifying Official must complete the certification or declaration form and provide it to the requester within ninety (90) of receiving the request, except that if the person making the request is in federal immigration removal proceedings or detained, the Certifying Official must complete the certification or declaration form and provide it to the requester within twenty-one (21) business days. Reduced time limits are in place for requests in cases involving reduced federal benefits for children, parents, or siblings of the requester.

**Whom do I contact at the Vandalia Police Department for more information?**

Chief Jeff Ray is the official designated to receive, review and respond to requests for completion of the certification form. He can also assist with questions relating to the VOICES Act. You can reach him directly at 618-283-0556 or by emailing him [pdchief@vandaliaininois.com](mailto:pdchief@vandaliaininois.com) Mail can also be directly addressed to him at 219 South 5<sup>th</sup> St., Vandalia, Illinois 62471.