CHICAGO VOLUNTEER LEGAL SERVICES

Because equal access to justice is everyone's fight

Dear Therapist or Social Worker:

Chicago Volunteer Legal Services is assisting our client to apply for U visa status in the U.S. Thank you so much for assisting our client in his/her application to apply for U visa status in the U.S. He/she must prove that as a result of the crime of which he/she was victim, that he/she suffered substantial mental or physical abuse. He/she must also prove that he/she was helpful to the police and that he/she is a person of good moral character.

You may address your letter to "To whom it may concern." Please include the date, your business address, and your phone number at either the top or the bottom of your letter on letterhead. Based on your own personal knowledge, please include as much information as you can about the following points in your statement:

- A paragraph explaining your experience (it is okay to also include your curriculum vitae);
- A paragraph describing your relationship with your client: when you first met him/her, your relationship with him/her, any information about the type of person that you observe him or her to be, and how often you see (or have seen) the client;
- If applicable, a paragraph sharing the different types of individual and group therapy sessions that your client has attended;
- A paragraph or more describing in detail what your client told you about what he/she experienced during the crime/incident(s) (this includes extreme cruelty, not just physical violence);
- A paragraph explaining how your client's experience was credible to the interviewer (in this case: you) given your experience with survivors like the applicant;
- Any side effects of physical or mental harm that your client shared with you or any effects that you noticed. Please be very detailed in your response if possible.
    - Please also address the following:
        - Whether and how those problems are common among survivors of this type of crime.
        - Whether and how those problems may indicate psychological conditions like depression, PTSD, acute anxiety, etc. and describe what methodology you used to give those diagnoses and the related DSM codes.
- Your observations, including specific details, of characteristics and specific problems you observed in the applicant related to the crime. For example: *Is the applicant anxious, hypervigilant, fearful, unable to concentrate, feeling hopeless, exhausted, etc?*

t 312.332.1624 | f 312.332.1460 | w www.cvls.org
33 North Dearborn Street, Suite 400 Chicago, Illinois 60602

- A final paragraph describing why the client needs ongoing counseling and the writer's willingness to provide such counseling and/or direct him/her to local resources. Please note that merely stating that he/she needs counseling isn't helpful.

Unlike an evaluation for an applicant for political asylum, you do not need to address the impact of deportation unless fear of deportation is a part of the cycle of violence your client is subjected to. Also, you do not need to research political, health care, or safety issues in the client's home country. Generally, letters between 1-3 pages are sufficient for the immigration application.

Please note that if you do not have knowledge or information about any of the above points, you do not need to state that you "do not know" in your statement. Please provide a letter to your client as soon as possible to assist him/her. You may give them a hard copy or provide an electronic copy over email. Do not hesitate to reach out to Julie Pellerite at jpellerite@cvls.org if you have any additional information.

Sincerely,
Chicago Volunteer Legal Services