
Hughes Hubbard & Reed

Firm Obtains Green Card For Domestic Violence Survivor

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After a nearly two-year battle with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services ("USCIS"), Hughes Hubbard secured permanent residency status under the Violence Against Women Act for a pro bono client.

On March 21, 2013, the USCIS approved the client's application, one week after the agency granted her an adjustment of status interview. The firm received the case in June 2011 from inMotion, a nonprofit offering free legal services to low-income women.

The client came to New York from the Dominican Republic on a temporary visa in 2003. Instead of returning to her native country after her visa expired, she married a U.S. citizen in late 2005; she now resides in the upper section of Manhattan known as Washington Heights.

Her husband was emotionally and physically abusive; following a period of violence in late 2010, the client left him. After she sought assistance from Sanctuary for Families and inMotion, HHR came to the rescue. HHR filed voluminous applications with the USCIS on behalf of the client, setting the stage for her to emerge from the shadows.

In January 2012, HHR obtained a work authorization card for the client so she could legally work in New York and obtain social services. Soon after, she left her job at a restaurant where she was paid in cash and secured work as a home health aide.

Michael Rodriguez accompanied the client to her March 13 interview with USCIS and defended her as the hearing officer inquired into her background and the reasons why she remained in the country illegally. A week later, she received word that she was now a permanent resident and on the path to pursuing her dream of U.S. citizenship.

When Rodriguez and Regina Kaley presented the client with her green card, her daughter told the HHR team: "We were very blessed to meet all of you guys. Thank you so much for everything."

In addition to Rodriguez and Kaley, the client was represented by Ramy Ibrahim and Taylor Herman, with supervision by Marc Weinstein.