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Immigration and Naturalization Service

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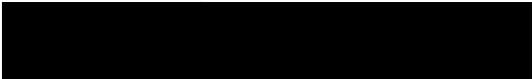


File: EAC 00 021 50058

Office: VERMONT SERVICE CENTER

Date: 11 APR 2002

IN RE: Petitioner:
Beneficiary:



Petition: Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker as a Skilled Worker or Professional Pursuant to § 203(b)(3) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1153(b)(3)

IN BEHALF OF PETITIONER:



Public Copy

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision in your case. All documents have been returned to the office which originally decided your case. Any further inquiry must be made to that office.

If you believe the law was inappropriately applied or the analysis used in reaching the decision was inconsistent with the information provided or with precedent decisions, you may file a motion to reconsider. Such a motion must state the reasons for reconsideration and be supported by any pertinent precedent decisions. Any motion to reconsider must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reconsider, as required under 8 C.F.R. 103.5(a)(1)(i).

If you have new or additional information which you wish to have considered, you may file a motion to reopen. Such a motion must state the new facts to be proved at the reopened proceeding and be supported by affidavits or other documentary evidence. Any motion to reopen must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reopen, except that failure to file before this period expires may be excused in the discretion of the Service where it is demonstrated that the delay was reasonable and beyond the control of the applicant or petitioner. Id.

Any motion must be filed with the office which originally decided your case along with a fee of \$110 as required under 8 C.F.R. 103.7.

FOR THE ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER,
EXAMINATIONS

Robert P. Wiemann
Robert P. Wiemann, Director
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The preference visa petition was denied by the Director, Vermont Service Center, and is now before the Associate Commissioner for Examinations on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The petitioner is a restaurant. It seeks to employ the beneficiary permanently in the United States as a specialty cook. As required by statute, the petition is accompanied by an individual labor certification approved by the Department of Labor. The director determined that the petitioner had not established that it had the financial ability to pay the beneficiary the proffered wage as of the filing date of the visa petition.

On appeal, counsel submits a brief and additional evidence.

Section 203(b)(3)(A)(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. 1153(b)(3)(A)(i), provides for the granting of preference classification to qualified immigrants who are capable, at the time of petitioning for classification under this paragraph, of performing skilled labor (requiring at least two years training or experience), not of a temporary or seasonal nature, for which qualified workers are not available in the United States.

8 C.F.R. 204.5(g)(2) states in pertinent part:

Ability of prospective employer to pay wage. Any petition filed by or for an employment-based immigrant which requires an offer of employment must be accompanied by evidence that the prospective United States employer has the ability to pay the proffered wage. The petitioner must demonstrate this ability at the time the priority date is established and continuing until the beneficiary obtains lawful permanent residence. Evidence of this ability shall be either in the form of copies of annual reports, federal tax returns, or audited financial statements.

Eligibility in this matter hinges on the petitioner's ability to pay the wage offered as of the petition's filing date, which is the date the request for labor certification was accepted for processing by any office within the employment system of the Department of Labor. Matter of Wing's Tea House, 16 I&N Dec. 158 (Act. Reg. Comm. 1977). Here, the petition's filing date is January 7, 1998. The beneficiary's salary as stated on the labor certification is \$697.20 per week or \$36,254.40 per annum.

Counsel initially submitted a copy of the petitioner's 1998 Form 1065 U.S. Partnership Return of Income which reflected gross

receipts of [REDACTED] gross profit of [REDACTED] salaries and wages paid of [REDACTED]; guaranteed payments to partners of \$0; depreciation of [REDACTED]; and an ordinary income (loss) from trade or business activities of [REDACTED]. Schedule L reflected total current assets of [REDACTED] with [REDACTED] in cash, and total current liabilities of [REDACTED].

On July 17, 2000, the director requested additional evidence to establish the petitioner's ability to pay the proffered wage as of January 7, 1998, to include the petitioner's 1997 and 1999 federal tax returns.

In response, counsel submitted a copy of the petitioner's 1999 Form 1065 U.S. Partnership Return of Income which reflected gross receipts of [REDACTED] gross profit of [REDACTED] salaries and wages paid of [REDACTED] guaranteed payments to partners of [REDACTED] depreciation of [REDACTED] and an ordinary income (loss) from trade or business activities of [REDACTED]. Schedule L reflected total current assets of [REDACTED] with [REDACTED] in cash and total current liabilities of [REDACTED]. The director determined that the documentation was insufficient to establish the ability to pay the proffered wage and denied the petition accordingly.

On appeal, counsel submits a letter from the petitioner which states:

This letter confirms that our balance sheet shown on our 1998 income tax return for the end of 1998 was correct. The largest current asset was a demand loan to a shareholder. Since a demand loan can be called at any time, it is listed as a current asset and considered virtually the same as cash. Thus, during 1998, the firm had excess to over \$1 million cash to pay the salary of [the beneficiary] or for other expenses. This situation continued throughout 1999 as shown on the 1999 income tax return.

Counsel asserts that the denial does not take into consideration the excess of current assets over current liabilities. Counsel further asserts that current assets exceeded current liabilities by approximately [REDACTED].

Counsel's assertion is not persuasive. A review of the 1998 federal tax return shows that when one adds the depreciation, the ordinary income, and the cash on hand at year end (to the extent that total current assets exceed total current liabilities), the result is [REDACTED] less than the proffered wage.

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Accordingly, after a review of the federal tax returns, it is concluded that the petitioner has not established that it had sufficient available funds to pay the salary offered at the time of filing of the petition.

The burden of proof in these proceedings rests solely with the petitioner. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. 1361. The petitioner has not met that burden.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed.