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U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services



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FILE: WAC 03 146 54108 Office: CALIFORNIA SERVICE CENTER Date: FEB 23 2005

IN RE: Petitioner: [Redacted]
Beneficiary: [Redacted]

PETITION: Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker Pursuant to Section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the
Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b)

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER:



INSTRUCTIONS:

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

Robert P. Wiemann, Director
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The service center director denied the nonimmigrant visa petition and the matter is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed. The petition will be denied.

The petitioner is a limousine service business that seeks to extend its authorization to employ the beneficiary as a financial manager. The petitioner endeavors to classify the beneficiary as a nonimmigrant worker in a specialty occupation pursuant to § 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b).

The director denied the petition because the proffered position is not a specialty occupation and the beneficiary is not qualified to perform a specialty occupation. On appeal, counsel submits a brief.

The AAO will first address the director's conclusion that the position is not a specialty occupation.

Section 214(i)(1) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(i)(1), defines the term "specialty occupation" as an occupation that requires:

- (A) theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge, and
- (B) attainment of a bachelor's or higher degree in the specific specialty (or its equivalent) as a minimum for entry into the occupation in the United States.

Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A), to qualify as a specialty occupation, the position must meet one of the following criteria:

- (1) A baccalaureate or higher degree or its equivalent is normally the minimum requirement for entry into the particular position;
- (2) The degree requirement is common to the industry in parallel positions among similar organizations or, in the alternative, an employer may show that its particular position is so complex or unique that it can be performed only by an individual with a degree;
- (3) The employer normally requires a degree or its equivalent for the position; or
- (4) The nature of the specific duties is so specialized and complex that knowledge required to perform the duties is usually associated with the attainment of a baccalaureate or higher degree.

Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) interprets the term "degree" in the criteria at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A) to mean not just any baccalaureate or higher degree, but one in a specific specialty that is directly related to the proffered position.

The record of proceeding before the AAO contains: (1) Form I-129 and supporting documentation; (2) the director's request for additional evidence; (3) the petitioner's response to the director's request; (4) the director's denial letter; and (5) Form I-290B and supporting documentation. The AAO reviewed the record in its entirety before issuing its decision.

The petitioner is seeking the beneficiary's services as a financial manager. Evidence of the beneficiary's duties includes: the I-129 petition; the petitioner's March 21, 2003 letter in support of the petition; and the petitioner's response to the director's request for evidence. According to this evidence, the beneficiary would perform duties that entail: evaluating new services; managing the cash receipts and disbursements; investing in capital equipment; and helping staff work as a team. The petitioner indicated that a qualified candidate for the job would possess a bachelor's degree in economics, business, or a related discipline.

The director found that the proffered position was not a specialty occupation because the petitioner had not demonstrated that the proposed duties are those of a financial manager. The director found further that the petitioner failed to establish any of the criteria found at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A).

On appeal, counsel states, in part, that the proffered position is that of a financial manager, as described in the Department of Labor's (DOL) *Occupational Outlook Handbook (Handbook)*, 2002-2003 edition. Counsel states further that the proposed duties entail complex duties, such as analyzing financial data and possible mergers or buyouts of other companies, as well as negotiating with financial institutions.

Upon review of the record, the petitioner has established none of the four criteria outlined in 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A). Therefore, the proffered position is not a specialty occupation.

The AAO turns first to the criteria at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A)(1) and (2): a baccalaureate or higher degree or its equivalent is the normal minimum requirement for entry into the particular position; a degree requirement is common to the industry in parallel positions among similar organizations; or a particular position is so complex or unique that it can be performed only by an individual with a degree.

Factors often considered by CIS when determining these criteria include: whether the DOL's *Handbook* reports that the industry requires a degree; whether the industry's professional association has made a degree a minimum entry requirement; and whether letters or affidavits from firms or individuals in the industry attest that such firms "routinely employ and recruit only degreed individuals." See *Shanti, Inc. v. Reno*, 36 F. Supp. 2d 1151, 1165 (D. Minn. 1999)(quoting *Hird/Blaker Corp. v. Sava*, 712 F. Supp. 1095, 1102 (S.D.N.Y. 1989)).

The AAO routinely consults the *Handbook* for its information about the duties and educational requirements of particular occupations. The AAO does not concur with the petitioner that the proffered position is that of a financial manager, an occupation that would normally require a bachelor's degree in finance, accounting, economics, or business administration. In its *Handbook*, 2004-2005 edition, at pages 39-40, the DOL describes the job of a financial manager, in part, as follows:

Controllers direct the preparation of financial reports that summarize and forecast the organization's financial position, such as income tax statements, balance sheets, and analyses of future earnings or expenses. Controllers also are in charge of preparing special reports required by regulatory authorities. Often, controllers oversee the accounting, audit, and budget departments.

Financial managers play an increasingly important role in mergers and consolidations, and global expansion and related financing. These developments require extensive, specialized knowledge on the part of the financial manager to reduce risks and maximize profit. Financial managers increasingly are hired on a temporary basis to advise senior managers on these and

other matters. In fact, some firms contract out all accounting and financial functions to companies that provide these services.

The role of the financial manager, particularly in business, is changing in response to technological advances that have significantly reduced the amount of time it takes to produce financial reports. Financial managers now perform more data analysis and use it to offer senior managers ideas on how to maximize profits. They often work on teams, acting as business advisors to top management.

The record reflects that the petitioner, which is a limousine service business, has 10 employees (according to the petitioner's quarterly tax return for the period ending on October 31, 2003) and a gross annual income of \$472,454. The petitioner has not demonstrated that it requires the services of a financial manager who is part of an executive decision-making team. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the position offered includes complex or advanced financial planning duties involving mergers and consolidations, global expansion and financing, or that the position requires an individual with a knowledge of sophisticated financial planning techniques normally associated with the duties of a financial manager. Rather, the job duties parallel those responsibilities of a marketing manager or bookkeeper. No evidence in the *Handbook*, 2004-2005 edition, indicates that a baccalaureate or higher degree, or its equivalent, is required for a marketing manager or bookkeeper job.

The record does not include any evidence regarding parallel positions in the petitioner's industry or from professional associations regarding an industry standard. Nor does the record include any documentation to support the complexity or uniqueness of the proffered position. The petitioner has, thus, not established the criteria set forth at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A)(1) or (2).

The AAO now turns to the criterion at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A)(3) – the employer normally requires a degree or its equivalent for the position. As counsel does not address this issue on appeal, it will not be discussed further.

Finally, the AAO turns to the criterion at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A)(4) – the nature of the specific duties is so specialized and complex that knowledge required to perform the duties is usually associated with the attainment of a baccalaureate or higher degree.

To the extent that they are depicted in the record, the duties do not appear so specialized and complex as to require the highly specialized knowledge associated with a baccalaureate or higher degree, or its equivalent, in a specific specialty. Therefore, the evidence does not establish that the proffered position is a specialty occupation under 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A)(4).

As related in the discussion above, the petitioner has failed to establish that the proffered position is a specialty occupation.

The director found that the proffered position is not bona fide and, therefore, that the proffered specialty occupation does not exist. An H-1B alien is coming temporarily to the United States to perform services in a specialty occupation. Section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b). 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(1)(ii)(B). In this case, the petitioning entity is a limousine service with ten employees and, according to the petitioner's 2001 federal tax return, a gross annual income of \$472,454. The petitioner claims that it will

employ the beneficiary as a full-time financial manager. Counsel and the petitioner claim that the proposed duties entail analyzing financial data for possible expansion through mergers or buyouts of other companies. The petitioner provided no documentation in support of this claim. Simply going on record without supporting documentary evidence is not sufficient for the purpose of meeting the burden of proof in these proceedings. *Matter of Treasure Craft of California*, 14 I&N Dec. 190 (Reg. Comm. 1972). Furthermore, although the petitioner's organizational chart reflects 18 full-time and part-time employees, the petitioner's 2001 federal income tax reflects only \$60,714 in salaries and wages. In addition, although information on the petition reflects the beneficiary's annual salary as \$41,000, the petitioner's 2001 federal income tax reflects the beneficiary's compensation as only \$33,800. The record contains no explanation for these inconsistencies. Doubt cast on any aspect of the petitioner's proof may, of course, lead to a reevaluation of the reliability and sufficiency of the remaining evidence offered in support of the visa petition. It is incumbent upon the petitioner to resolve any inconsistencies in the record by independent objective evidence, and attempts to explain or reconcile such inconsistencies, absent competent objective evidence pointing to where the truth, in fact, lies, will not suffice. *Matter of Ho*, 19 I&N Dec. 582, 591-92 (BIA 1988). In view of the foregoing, the petitioner has failed to establish that it will be able to employ the beneficiary as a full-time financial manager, and that the beneficiary will be coming to perform services in a specialty occupation, in accordance with Section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b).

It is also noted that prior approvals do not preclude CIS from denying an extension of the original visa petition based on a reassessment of the petitioner's qualifications. *Texas A&M Univ. v. Upchurch*, 99 Fed. Appx. 556, 2004 WL 1240482 (5th Cir. 2004). If the previous nonimmigrant petition was approved based on the same unsupported and contradictory assertions that are contained in the current record, the approval would constitute material and gross error on the part of the director. The AAO is not required to approve applications or petitions where eligibility has not been demonstrated, merely because of prior approvals that may have been erroneous. *See, e.g. Matter of Church Scientology International*, 19 I&N Dec. 593, 597 (Comm. 1988). It would be absurd to suggest that CIS or any agency must treat acknowledged errors as binding precedent. *Sussex Engg. Ltd. v. Montgomery*, 825 F.2d 1084, 1090 (6th Cir. 1987), *cert. denied*, 485 U.S. 1008 (1988).

As related in the discussion above, the petitioner has failed to establish that the proffered position is a specialty occupation.

The director also found that the beneficiary was not qualified to perform the duties of the proffered position because he does not hold a related master's degree. The record reflects that the beneficiary hold a bachelor's degree in economics from an Israeli institution. An evaluation from a company that specializes in evaluating academic credentials indicates that the beneficiary possesses the equivalent of a bachelor's degree in economics with a minor in labor studies from an accredited U.S. college or university. As stated previously, the proffered position is similar to that of a marketing manager or bookkeeper. No evidence in the *Handbook*, 2004-2005 edition, indicates that a baccalaureate or higher degree, or its equivalent, is required for a marketing manager or bookkeeper job. Thus, the beneficiary is qualified to perform the duties of the proffered position. The petition may not be approved, however, because the proffered position is not a specialty occupation. Accordingly, the AAO shall not disturb the director's denial of the petition.

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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 sustained that burden.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed. The petition is denied.