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FILE: WAC 04 064 52598 Office: CALIFORNIA SERVICE CENTER Date: MAY 12 2006

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, Chief
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 furniture retailer and wholesaler that seeks to employ the beneficiary as a database administrator. 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. On appeal, counsel submits a brief.

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 database administrator. Evidence of the beneficiary's duties includes: the I-129 petition; the petitioner's December 30, 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 would require him to:

- Determine user requirements;
- Set up computer databases;
- Test and coordinate changes;
- Ensure performance;
- Add new users;
- Design and implement system security, including the planning and coordinating of security measures;
- [Ensure] data integrity and backup; and
- Keeping [sic] databases secure.

The petitioner indicated that a qualified candidate for the job would possess a bachelor's degree in computer science.

The director found that the proffered position was not a specialty occupation because the job is not so complex as to require a related bachelor's degree. Citing to the Department of Labor's *Occupational Outlook Handbook (Handbook)*, 2004-2005 edition, the director noted that the minimum requirement for entry into the position was not a baccalaureate degree or its equivalent in a specific specialty. 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 director disregarded the evidence. According to counsel, the petitioner has satisfied three criteria of 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A). Counsel states that a baccalaureate or higher degree or its equivalent is normally the minimum requirement for entry into the particular position, the degree requirement is common to the industry in parallel positions among similar organizations, and 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.

Upon review of the record, the petitioner has not established the 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 *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 counsel that the proffered position is a specialty occupation. A review of the Computer Scientists and Database Administrators training requirements in the *Handbook*, 2006-2007 edition, finds that "[m]ost community colleges and many independent technical institutes and proprietary schools offer an associate's degree in computer science or a related information technology field. Many of these programs may be more geared toward meeting the needs of local businesses and are more occupation specific than are 4-year programs." In this case, information on the petition that was signed by the petitioner's president on December 30, 2003, reflects that the petitioner was established in 2003 and has 16 employees and a "N/A" gross annual income. In a letter dated June 15, 2004, the petitioner's president asserts that the petitioner has three retail stores in Rowland Heights, CA and El Monte, CA, and that it is in the process of finalizing five expansion sites in Orange County, Covina, Pasadena, and Montebello in the next three months. He goes on to say that the petitioner is currently developing an on-line management system linking all stores as well as establishing an on-line presence and, therefore, requires the services of a "sophisticated and highly skilled Database Administrator." The petitioner, however, provides no evidence in support of his assertions. 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 Soffici*, 22 I&N Dec. 158, 165 (Comm. 1998) (citing *Matter of Treasure Craft of California*, 14 I&N Dec. 190 (Reg. Comm. 1972)). No evidence in the *Handbook* indicates that a baccalaureate or higher degree, or its equivalent, is required for a database administrator position of the nature described in the instant petition.

Regarding parallel positions in the petitioner's industry, the petitioner submitted Internet job postings for database administrators. The director found that there was no evidence to show that the employers issuing those postings were similar to the petitioner, or that the advertised positions were parallel to the instant position. On appeal, counsel disagrees with the director's finding, pointing out that the following two advertisers are similar to the petitioner: Dealer Tire and the "small start-up company." The petitioner, however, has not demonstrated that the proposed duties of the proffered position are as complex as the duties described for Dealer Tire, such as working with infrastructure and application development teams including vendor support to resolve database issues. It is also noted that the "small start-up company" does not stipulate the requirement of a bachelor's degree in a specific specialty, nor does its posting describe the duties to be performed by its database designer and administrator. Thus, the advertisements have no relevance.

The record also does not include any evidence from firms, individuals, or professional associations regarding an industry standard, or documentation to support the complexity or uniqueness of the proffered position. The petitioner, therefore, has 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. The evidence of record does not establish this criterion.

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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. Accordingly, the AAO shall not disturb the director's denial 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 sustained that burden.

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