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U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

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FILE: EAC 07 162 51536 Office: VERMONT SERVICE CENTER Date: **SEP 30 2008**

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.

Michael T. Kelly
Robert P. Wiemann, Chief
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The Director, Vermont Service Center, 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 software development and consulting firm that seeks to employ the beneficiary as a programmer analyst. The petitioner, therefore, endeavors to classify the beneficiary as a nonimmigrant worker in a specialty occupation pursuant to section 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 2008 fiscal-year cap for the issuance of H-1B visas, set by section 214(g)(1)(A) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(g)(1)(A), was reached on April 2, 2007. Although the petitioner filed the Form I-129 petition on April 19, 2007, the petition was accepted and adjudicated because the petitioner indicated on the Form I-129 that the beneficiary met the cap exemption criterion at section 214(g)(5)(C) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(g)(5)(C), as a beneficiary who, in the words of the Act, “has earned a master's or higher degree from a United States institution of higher education (as defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)).”

The director denied the petition on the ground that the beneficiary did not meet the requirements specified in section 214(g)(5)(C) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(g)(5)(C), and thus the beneficiary was subject to the annual cap.

On appeal, counsel argues that the beneficiary had “completed the master’s degree” as of April 19, 2007, the date that the Form I-129 petition was filed. Counsel submitted a copy of the beneficiary’s master of science diploma and a transcript from the Eastern Michigan University.

The AAO bases its decision upon its consideration of all of the evidence in the record of proceeding, including: (1) the petitioner’s Form I-129 (Petition for Nonimmigrant Worker) and the supporting documentation filed with it; (2) the director’s denial letter; and (3) the Form I-290B, and supporting documentation.

Section 214(g)(5)(C) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(g)(5)(C) as modified by the American Competitiveness in the Twenty-first Century Act (AC21), Pub. L. No. 106-313 (October 17, 2000), states, in relevant part, that the H-1B cap shall not apply to any nonimmigrant alien issued a visa or otherwise provided status under section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the Act who “has earned a master's or higher degree from a United States institution of higher education (as defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)) until the number of aliens who are exempted from such numerical limitation during such year exceeds 20,000.”

On appeal, counsel submits a copy of the beneficiary’s master of science diploma from Eastern Michigan University dated April 30, 2007 and transcript from Eastern Michigan University stating that the beneficiary was awarded the degree of master of science on April 30, 2007. The exemption criterion at section 214(g)(5)(C) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(g)(5)(C), requires that the beneficiary earn a “master’s or higher

degree from a United States institution of higher learning.” The evidence presented by the petitioner does not establish that the beneficiary earned a master’s degree from the Eastern Michigan University before the Form I-129 petition was filed.

The AAO finds that the evidence of record does not establish that the beneficiary is exempt from the H-1B visa cap under the requirements of section 214(g)(5)(C) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(g)(5)(C) because the beneficiary had not earned a master’s degree at the time that the petition was filed. Accordingly, the AAO will 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 met that burden.

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