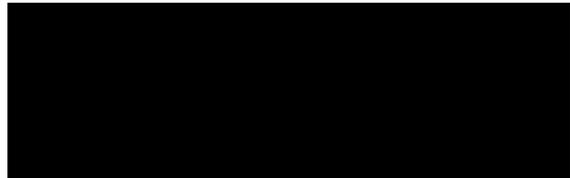


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U.S. Citizenship
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Services

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FILE: [Redacted] Office: VERMONT SERVICE CENTER Date:
EAC 06 140 51793

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

PETITION: Petition for Alien Fiancé(e) Pursuant to Section 101(a)(15)(K) of the Immigration and
Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(K)

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER: SELF-REPRESENTED

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision 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 nonimmigrant visa petition was denied by the Director, Vermont Service Center, and is now on appeal before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO). The appeal will be dismissed.

The petitioner is a naturalized citizen of the United States who seeks to classify the beneficiary, a native and citizen of Kazakhstan, as the fiancée of a United States citizen pursuant to section 101(a)(15)(K) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(K).

The director denied the petition after determining that the record did not establish that the petitioner and beneficiary had personally met within the two-year period immediately preceding the filing of the petition, as required by section 214(d) of the Act. *Decision of the director, dated September 6, 2006.*

Section 101(a)(15)(K) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(K), provides nonimmigrant classification to an alien who:

- (i) is the fiancé(e) of a U.S. citizen and who seeks to enter the United States solely to conclude a valid marriage with that citizen within 90 days after admission;
- (ii) has concluded a valid marriage with a citizen of the United States who is the petitioner, is the beneficiary of a petition to accord a status under section 201(b)(2)(A)(i) that was filed under section 204 by the petitioner, and seeks to enter the United States to await the approval of such petition and the availability to the alien of an immigrant visa; or
- (iii) is the minor child of an alien described in clause (i) or (ii) and is accompanying, or following to join, the alien.

Section 214(d) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(d), states, in pertinent part, that a fiancé(e) petition:

. . . shall be approved only after satisfactory evidence is submitted by the petitioner to establish that the parties have previously met in person within two years before the date of filing the petition, have a bona fide intention to marry, and are legally able and actually willing to conclude a valid marriage in the United States within a period of ninety days after the alien's arrival. . . .

Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(k)(2), the petitioner may be exempted from this requirement for a meeting if it is established that compliance would:

- (1) result in extreme hardship to the petitioner; or
- (2) that compliance would violate strict and long-established customs of the beneficiary's foreign culture or social practice, as where marriages are traditionally arranged by the parents of the contracting parties and the prospective bride and groom are prohibited from meeting subsequent to the arrangement and prior to the wedding day. In addition to establishing that the required meeting would be a violation of custom or practice, the petitioner must also establish that any and all other aspects of the traditional arrangements have been or will be met in accordance with the custom or practice.

The regulation does not define what may constitute extreme hardship to the petitioner. Therefore, each claim of extreme hardship must be judged on a case-by-case basis taking into account the totality of the petitioner's

circumstances. Generally, a director looks at whether the petitioner can demonstrate the existence of circumstances that are (1) not within the power of the petitioner to control or change, and (2) likely to last for a considerable duration or the duration cannot be determined with any degree of certainty.

The petitioner filed the Petition for Alien Fiancé(e) (Form I-129F) with Citizenship and Immigration Services on April 11, 2006. Therefore, the petitioner and the beneficiary were required to have met during the period that began on April 11, 2004 and ended on April 11, 2006.

At the time of filing, the petitioner indicated that he had not met the beneficiary within the two-year period immediately preceding the filing of the application. The petitioner submitted a statement noting that he has known the beneficiary since childhood and that he has not met with her within the last two years because of his work situation which does not permit him to leave the country for a prolonged period of time. *Statement from the petitioner, dated March 15, 2006.*

On appeal, the petitioner states that he met the beneficiary in Kazakhstan in July 2006. In support of this statement, the petitioner submitted photographs of himself and the beneficiary together in Kazakhstan, a copy of his passport with entry and exit stamps from June 2006 and July 2006, and copies of his airplane tickets and itinerary. The petitioner requests that his application be reconsidered. While the AAO finds the petitioner to have established that he traveled to Kazakhstan in July 2006 and met with the beneficiary, he has not, however, established compliance with the meeting requirement of section 214(d) of the Act, as it relates to the instant petition.

The petitioner's trips to meet the beneficiary occurred three months after the filing the Form I-129F. Therefore, although he has established that he has met the beneficiary, this meeting did not occur within the two-year time period specified above – April 11, 2004 to April 11, 2006 – and does not satisfy section 214(d) of the Act. Further, the petitioner has offered insufficient evidence to establish that compliance with the meeting requirement during the specified period would have constituted an extreme hardship for him or that such a meeting would have violated the customs of the beneficiary's culture or social practice. The petitioner has asserted that his employment prevented him from traveling to meet the beneficiary. However, the challenges of coordinating overseas travel with personal obligations, including employment, are faced by many persons who wish to file Form I-129s and do not constitute extreme hardship. Therefore, the appeal will be dismissed.

The denial of the petition is without prejudice. As the petitioner and beneficiary have met, he may file a new I-129F petition on the beneficiary's behalf so that a new two-year meeting period will apply.

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.