



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

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FILE:

[REDACTED]

Office: Dallas

Date:

MAY 04 2006

MSC 02 242 60571

IN RE:

Applicant:

[REDACTED]

APPLICATION:

Application for Status as a Permanent Resident pursuant to Section 1104 of the Legal Immigration Family Equity (LIFE) Act of 2000, Pub. L. 106-553, 114 Stat. 2762 (2000), *amended by* LIFE Act Amendments, Pub. L. 106-554, 114 Stat. 2763 (2000).

ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT:

[REDACTED]

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office in your case. The file has been returned to the office that originally decided your case. If your appeal was sustained, or if the matter was remanded for further action, you will be contacted. If your appeal was dismissed, you no longer have a case pending before this office, and you are not entitled to file a motion to reopen or reconsider your case.

Robert P. Wiemann, Chief
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The application for permanent resident status under the Legal Immigration Family Equity (LIFE) Act was denied by the District Director, Dallas, Texas, and is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The district director determined that the applicant had not established that he had continuously resided in the United States in an unlawful status since before January 1, 1982 through May 4, 1988. In addition, the director determined that the applicant had failed to sufficient documentation to establish that he satisfied the "basic citizenship skills" required under section 1104(c)(2)(E) of the LIFE Act. Therefore, the director concluded that the applicant was ineligible to adjust to permanent residence under the provisions of the LIFE Act and denied the application.

On appeal, counsel asserts that the applicant has submitted sufficient evidence in support of his claim of residence in the United States since prior to January 1, 1982. Counsel declares that applicant is currently attending a course including forty hours of study in the English language and American history, which he expects to complete in June of 2004. Counsel subsequently submits a certificate of achievement earned by the applicant for an "ESL Civics Course" from the Adult Basic Education component of the Dallas Independent School District.

An applicant for permanent resident status must establish entry into the United States before January 1, 1982 and continuous residence in the United States in an unlawful status since such date and through May 4, 1988. *See* § 1104(c)(2)(B) of the LIFE Act and 8 C.F.R. § 245a.11(b).

An applicant for permanent resident status under section 1104 of the LIFE Act has the burden to establish by a preponderance of the evidence that he or she has resided in the United States for the requisite periods, is admissible to the United States and is otherwise eligible for adjustment of status under this section. The inference to be drawn from the documentation provided shall depend on the extent of the documentation, its credibility and amenability to verification. 8 C.F.R. § 245a.12(e).

When something is to be established by a preponderance of evidence, the proof submitted by the applicant has to establish only that the assertion or asserted claim is probably true. *See Matter of E--M--*, 20 I&N Dec. 77 (Comm. 1989).

Although the regulations provide an illustrative list of contemporaneous documents that an applicant may submit, the list also permits the submission of affidavits and any other relevant document. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(3)(vi)(L).

At issue in this proceeding is whether the applicant established entry into the United States before January 1, 1982 and continuous residence in the United States in an unlawful status since such date and through May 4, 1988. The applicant is a class member in a legalization class-action lawsuit and as such, was permitted to previously file a Form I-687, Application for Temporary Resident Status Pursuant to Section 245A of the Immigration and Nationality Act (Act) on October 1, 1990. The applicant subsequently submitted his Form I-485 LIFE Act application on May 30, 2002. In support of his claim of continuous residence in the United States since prior to January 1, 1982, the applicant submitted an employment letter and three affidavits of residence.

In the notice of intent to deny issued on September 13, 2003, the district director questioned the veracity of the applicant's claimed residence in the United States by indicating that he had failed to submit sufficient evidence in support of his claim. The applicant was granted thirty days to respond to the notice and submit additional evidence in support of his claim of residence in this country since prior to January 1, 1982.

In response, the applicant included copies of previously submitted documentation and two new affidavits in support of his claim of residence in this country for the requisite period.

The district director determined that the applicant had failed to submit sufficient evidence establishing her continuous residence in this country since prior to January 1, 1982, and, therefore, denied the application on December 23, 2003. However, in this instance, the applicant submitted evidence, including affidavits and an employment letter, which tends to corroborate his claim of residence in the United States during the requisite period. The district director has not established that the information in this evidence was inconsistent with the claims made on the application, or that it was false information. As stated in *Matter of E--M--*, *supra*, when something is to be established by a preponderance of evidence, the proof submitted by the applicant has to establish only that the assertion or asserted claim is probably true. That decision also points out that, under the preponderance of evidence standard, an application may be granted even though some doubt remains regarding the evidence. The documents that have been furnished may be accorded substantial evidentiary weight and are sufficient to meet the applicant's burden of proof of residence in the United States for the requisite period.

The documentation provided by the applicant establishes by a preponderance of the evidence that the applicant satisfies the statutory and regulatory criteria of entry into the United States before January 1, 1982, as well as continuous unlawful residence in the country during the ensuing time frame of January 1, 1982 through May 4, 1988, as required for eligibility for legalization under section 1104(c)(2)(B)(i) of the LIFE Act. Consequently, the applicant has overcome this particular basis of denial cited by the district director.

The next issue to be examined in this proceeding is whether the applicant has established that he satisfied the "basic citizenship skills" required under section 1104(c)(2)(E) of the LIFE Act.

Under section 1104(c)(2)(E)(i) of the LIFE Act ("Basic Citizenship Skills"), an applicant for permanent resident status must demonstrate that he or she:

- (I) meets the requirements of section 312(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1423(a))(relating to minimal understanding of ordinary English and a knowledge and understanding of the history and government of the United States); or
- (II) is satisfactorily pursuing a course of study (recognized by the Attorney General) to achieve such an understanding of English and such a knowledge and understanding of the history and government of the United States.

Under section 1104(c)(2)(E)(ii) of the LIFE Act, the Attorney General may waive all or part of the above requirements for aliens who are at least 65 years of age or developmentally disabled.

The applicant, who is neither 65 years old nor developmentally disabled, does not qualify for either of the exceptions in section 1104(c)(2)(E)(ii) of the LIFE Act. Nor does he satisfy the “basic citizenship skills” requirement of section 1104(c)(2)(E)(i)(I) of the LIFE Act because he does not meet the requirements of section 312(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (Act). An applicant can demonstrate that he or she meets the requirements of section 312(a) of the Act by “[s]peaking and understanding English during the course of the interview for permanent resident status” and answering questions based on the subject matter of approved citizenship training materials, or “[b]y passing a standardized section 312 test . . . by the Legalization Assistance Board with the Educational Testing Service (ETS) or the California State Department of Education with the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS).” 8 C.F.R. § 245a.3(b)(4)(iii)(A)(1) and (2).

In the alternative, an applicant can satisfy the basic citizenship skills requirement by demonstrating compliance with section 1104(c)(2)(E)(i)(II) of the LIFE Act. The “citizenship skills” requirement of section 1104(c)(2)(E)(i)(II) is defined by regulation in 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a)(2) and 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a)(3). As specified therein, an applicant for LIFE Legalization must establish that:

He or she has a high school diploma or general education development diploma (GED) from a school in the United States. . . . 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a)(2), or

He or she has attended, or is attending, a state recognized, accredited learning institution in the United States, and that institution certifies such attendance. The course of study at such learning institution must be for a period of one academic year (or the equivalent thereof according to the standards of the learning institution) and the curriculum must include at least 40 hours of instruction in English and United States history and government. . . . 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a)(3).

Both 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a)(2) and 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a)(3) specify that applicants must submit evidence to show compliance with the basic citizenship skills requirement “...either at the time of filing Form I-485, subsequent to filing the application but prior to the interview, or at the time of the interview....”

8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(b) states that:

An applicant who fails to pass the English literacy and/or the United States history and government tests at the time of the interview, shall be afforded a second opportunity after 6 months (or earlier at the request of the applicant) to pass the tests or submit evidence as described in paragraphs (a)(2) and (a)(3) of this section [8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a)(2) and 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a)(3)]. The second interview shall be conducted prior to the denial of the application for permanent residence and may be based solely on the failure to pass the basic citizenship skills requirements.

Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(b), the applicant was interviewed twice in connection with his LIFE Act application, on February 14, 2003 and again on August 19, 2003. On both occasions, the applicant failed to demonstrate a minimal knowledge of United States history and government. Furthermore, the applicant did not provide evidence of having passed a standardized citizenship test, as permitted by 8 C.F.R. § 312.3(a)(1). The applicant in this case does not have a high school diploma or a GED from a United States school, and therefore does not satisfy the regulatory requirement of 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a)(2). Nor did the applicant provide evidence to demonstrate that he attended a state recognized, accredited learning institution in the United States that provides a course of study for a period of one academic year (or the equivalent thereof according to the standards of the learning institution) with curriculum including at least 40 hours of instruction in English and United States history and government as allowed under 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a)(3).

The applicant submits a certificate of achievement dated June 24, 2004, that was earned by him for an “ESL Civics Course” from the Adult Basic Education component of the Dallas Independent School District. However, the pertinent regulations at 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a)(2) and 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a)(3) specify that an applicant must submit evidence demonstrating compliance with the basic citizenship skills requirement in that period from the date the Form I-485 LIFE Act application is filed to the date the second interview is conducted. The applicant in this particular case failed to submit evidence to establish compliance with the basic citizenship skills requirement in that period from the date he submitted his Form I-485 Life Act application on May 30, 2002 to the date of his second interview on August 19, 2003.

Therefore, the applicant does not satisfy either alternative of the “basic citizenship skills” requirement set forth in section 1104(c)(2)(E)(i) of the LIFE Act. Accordingly, the applicant is ineligible for adjustment to permanent resident status under section 1104 of the LIFE Act.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed. This decision constitutes a final notice of ineligibility.