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U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

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FILE:



Office: DALLAS

Date:

MAR 07 2007

MSC 02 240 60052

IN RE:

Applicant:



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:

SELF-REPRESENTED

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. 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, and is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The case will be remanded for further action and consideration.

The director denied the application because the applicant had failed to establish that she satisfied the “basic citizenship skills” required under section 1104(c)(2)(E) of the LIFE Act.

On appeal, the applicant asserts that she is still attending school and asks that her case be reconsidered.

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 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 she satisfy the “basic citizenship skills” requirement of section 1104(c)(2)(E)(i)(I) of the LIFE Act because she 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 the 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”

The regulation at 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 her LIFE Act application, on June 13, 2003 and again on April 20, 2004. On both occasions, the applicant was unable to demonstrate an understanding of ordinary English or of United States history and government. 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 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 she had attended or was attending at the time of the second interview 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 record contains a letter dated March 18, 2004 from the San Miguel Lutheran Church in Forth Worth, Texas indicating that the applicant has been attending English and Citizenship classes and has completed more than 40 hours of class. However, the letter does not indicate, or contain sufficient information from which it may be inferred, that the church is an accredited learning institution and that it has provided a course of study for a period of one academic year to the applicant. As stated above, the applicant was required to submit evidence of compliance with 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a)(3) by no later than the time of her interview. It is not sufficient for the applicant to indicate that she is now attending school.

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 AAO will not disturb the director’s decision that the applicant is ineligible for adjustment to permanent resident status under section 1104 of the LIFE Act.

Although the director found the applicant ineligible for permanent resident status under section 1104 of the LIFE Act, the director failed to consider the applicant’s eligibility for adjustment of status to that of a temporary resident. The regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 245a.6 provides, in pertinent part:

If the district director finds that an eligible alien as defined at § 245a.10 has not established eligibility under section 1104 of the LIFE Act (part 245a, Subpart B), the district director *shall* consider whether the eligible alien has established eligibility for adjustment to temporary resident status under section 245A of the Act, as in effect before enactment of section 1104 of the LIFE Act (part 245a, Subpart A).

(Emphasis added).

Accordingly, this case is remanded for a determination as to the applicant’s eligibility for adjustment of status to that of a temporary resident pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 245a.6.

ORDER: The application is remanded to the director for further action in accordance with the foregoing and entry of a new decision that, if adverse to the applicant, is to be certified to the Administrative Appeals Office for review.