



USCIS Update

May 4, 2009

Law Extends Non-Minister Special Immigrant Religious Worker Program *USCIS Will Receive Petitions through Sept. 29, 2009*

WASHINGTON—U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) advises its customers that Public Law 111-9, signed by President Obama on March 20, 2009, extends the non-minister special immigrant religious worker program through Sept. 29, 2009. The program had expired on March 6, 2009.

The extended category covers special immigrant religious workers in professional or non-professional capacity within a religious vocation or occupation. The extended date also applies to accompanying spouses and children of these non-ministers. Workers entering the United States only to continue the vocation of a religious minister are not affected by the expiration date.

USCIS will receive and process the *Petition for Amerasian, Widow(er), or Special Immigrant*, Form I-360, for those religious workers affected by the expiration of the program. USCIS will also process *Applications to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status*, Form I-485, based on approved Form I-360 petitions for non-minister special immigrant religious workers.

Form I-824, *Application for Action on an Approved Application or Petition*, requesting ‘following-to-join’ individuals whose basis for the adjustment was an approved Form I-360 SR petition for a non-minister category, or requesting an approved Form I-360 SR petition to be sent to the State Department’s National Visa Center, will continue to be accepted and processed as well.

Unless Congress extends the expiration date of the program, beginning Sept. 30, 2009, USCIS will suspend processing of any pending Forms I-360, I-485 and I-824 affected by the expiration, and will reject all petitions and applications for this program received on or after that date.

Religious workers affected by the extension of the program should check the USCIS web site (www.uscis.gov) or call the National Customer Service Center (800-375-5283) for future updates.