

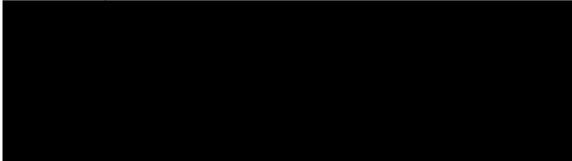


U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

B6

identifying data deleted to
prevent clearly unwarranted
invasion of personal privacy

PUBLIC COPY



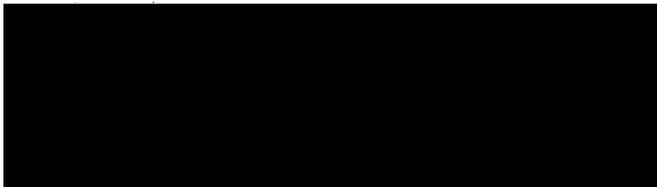
FILE: WAC 05 033 52245 Office: CALIFORNIA SERVICE CENTER

Date: MAR 01 2007

IN RE: Petitioner: 
Beneficiary: 

PETITION: Immigrant petition for Alien Worker as a Skilled Worker or Professional pursuant to section 203(b)(3) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(3)

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.

Robert P. Wiemann, Chief
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The preference visa petition was denied by the Director, California Service Center, and is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be remanded.

The petitioner is a lighting manufacturer. It seeks to employ the beneficiary permanently in the United States as a structural metal fabricator and fitter. As required by statute, the petition is accompanied by a Form ETA 750, Application for Alien Employment Certification, approved by the United States Department of Labor (DOL). As set forth in the director's August 17, 2005 denial, the director determined that the petitioner had not established that the beneficiary is qualified to perform the duties of the proffered position with two years of qualifying employment experience. The director denied the petition accordingly.

The record shows that the appeal is properly filed and timely and makes a specific allegation of error in law or fact. The procedural history in this case is documented by the record and incorporated into the decision. Further elaboration of the procedural history will be made only as necessary.

Section 203(b)(3)(A)(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(3)(A)(i), provides for the granting of preference classification to qualified immigrants who are capable, at the time of petitioning for classification under this paragraph, of performing skilled labor (requiring at least two years training or experience), not of a temporary nature, for which qualified workers are not available in the United States.

The petitioner must demonstrate that, on the priority date, the beneficiary had the qualifications stated on its Form ETA 750, Application for Alien Employment Certification, as certified by the DOL and submitted with the instant petition. *Matter of Wing's Tea House*, 16 I&N Dec. 158 (Act. Reg. Comm. 1977). Here, the Form ETA 750 was accepted on April 16, 2001.

The AAO takes a *de novo* look at issues raised in the denial of this petition. *See Dor v. INS*, 891 F.2d 997, 1002 n. 9 (2d Cir. 1989)(noting that the AAO reviews appeals on a *de novo* basis). The AAO considers all pertinent evidence in the record, including new evidence properly submitted upon appeal.¹ On appeal, counsel submits a brief and a letter dated August 26, 2005 from [REDACTED] detailing the beneficiary's prior employment experience. Other relevant evidence in the record includes a letter dated April 2, 2001 from Pacific Plating detailing the beneficiary's prior employment experience. The record does not contain any other evidence relevant to the beneficiary's qualifications.

On appeal, counsel asserts that the letter from Pacific Plating submitted on appeal verifies that the beneficiary has the required qualifying employment experience.

To determine whether a beneficiary is eligible for an employment based immigrant visa, Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) must examine whether the alien's credentials meet the requirements set forth in the labor certification. In evaluating the beneficiary's qualifications, CIS must look to the job offer portion of the labor certification to determine the required qualifications for the position. CIS may not ignore a term of the labor certification, nor may it impose additional requirements. *See Matter of Silver Dragon Chinese Restaurant*, 19 I&N Dec. 401, 406 (Comm. 1986). *See also, Mandany v. Smith*, 696 F.2d 1008, (D.C. Cir.

¹ The submission of additional evidence on appeal is allowed by the instructions to the Form I-290B, which are incorporated into the regulations by the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 103.2(a)(1). The record in the instant case provides no reason to preclude consideration of any of the documents newly submitted on appeal. *See Matter of Soriano*, 19 I&N Dec. 764 (BIA 1988).

1983); *K.R.K. Irvine, Inc. v. Landon*, 699 F.2d 1006 (9th Cir. 1983); *Stewart Infra-Red Commissary of Massachusetts, Inc. v. Coomey*, 661 F.2d 1 (1st Cir. 1981).

In the instant case, the Application for Alien Employment Certification, Form ETA-750A, items 14 and 15, set forth the minimum education, training, and experience that an applicant must have for the position of structural metal fabricator and fitter. In the instant case, item 14 describes the requirements of the proffered position as follows:

14.	Education	
	Grade School	VV9
	High School	0
	College	0
	College Degree Required	0
	Major Field of Study	0

The applicant must also have two years of experience in the job offered, the duties of which are delineated at Item 13 of the Form ETA 750A and since this is a public record, will not be recited in this decision. Item 15 of Form ETA 750A does not reflect any special requirements.

The beneficiary set forth his credentials on Form ETA-750B and signed his name under a declaration that the contents of the form are true and correct under the penalty of perjury. On Part 15, eliciting information of the beneficiary's work experience, he represented that he worked for [REDACTED] as a fixture maker from November 1991 to August 1994, and that he worked for the petitioner as a fixture maker from September 1994 to the date he signed the Form ETA 750B on March 29, 2001. He does not provide any additional information concerning his employment background on that form.

The regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(l)(3) provides:

(ii) *Other documentation—*

(A) *General.* Any requirements of training or experience for skilled workers, professionals, or other workers must be supported by letters from trainers or employers giving the name, address, and title of the trainer or employer, and a description of the training received or the experience of the alien.

(B) *Skilled workers.* If the petition is for a skilled worker, the petition must be accompanied by evidence that the alien meets the educational, training or experience, and any other requirements of the individual labor certification, meets the requirements for Schedule A designation, or meets the requirements for the Labor Market Information Pilot Program occupation designation. The minimum requirements for this classification are at least two years of training or experience.

On appeal, the petitioner submitted a letter dated August 26, 2005 from [REDACTED] detailing the beneficiary's prior employment experience. The letter states that the beneficiary worked full-time as a fixture maker from November 1991 to August 1994. The letter details the beneficiary's job duties and gives the name, address and title of the employer. The preponderance of the evidence demonstrates that the beneficiary acquired over two years of experience in the job offered from the evidence submitted into this record of proceeding. Thus, the petitioner has demonstrated that the beneficiary is qualified to perform the duties of the

proffered position.

However, this office notes that the director erred in his determination that the petitioner established its ability to pay the proffered wage. The regulation 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(g)(2) states in pertinent part:

Ability of prospective employer to pay wage. Any petition filed by or for an employment-based immigrant which requires an offer of employment must be accompanied by evidence that the prospective United States employer has the ability to pay the proffered wage. The petitioner must demonstrate this ability at the time the priority date is established and continuing until the beneficiary obtains lawful permanent residence. Evidence of this ability shall be in the form of copies of annual reports, federal tax returns, or audited financial statements.

The petitioner must demonstrate the continuing ability to pay the proffered wage beginning on the priority date, which is the date the Form ETA 750, Application for Alien Employment Certification, was accepted for processing by any office within the employment system of the DOL. See 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(d). The proffered wage as stated on the Form ETA 750 is \$16.00 per hour (\$33,280.00 per year based on a 40 hour work week).

Relevant evidence in the record includes IRS Forms 1040, U.S. Individual Income Tax Returns, for [REDACTED] for 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004. The record does not contain any other evidence relevant to the petitioner's ability to pay the wage.

The evidence in the record of proceeding shows that the petitioner is structured as a sole proprietorship. On the petition, the petitioner claimed to have been established in 1991 and to currently employ ten workers.

The petitioner must establish that its job offer to the beneficiary is a realistic one. Because the filing of an ETA 750 labor certification application establishes a priority date for any immigrant petition later based on the ETA 750, the petitioner must establish that the job offer was realistic as of the priority date and that the offer remained realistic for each year thereafter, until the beneficiary obtains lawful permanent residence. The petitioner's ability to pay the proffered wage is an essential element in evaluating whether a job offer is realistic. See *Matter of Great Wall*, 16 I&N Dec. 142 (Acting Reg. Comm. 1977). See also 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(g)(2).

In determining the petitioner's ability to pay the proffered wage during a given period, CIS will first examine whether the petitioner employed and paid the beneficiary during that period. If the petitioner establishes by documentary evidence that it employed the beneficiary at a salary equal to or greater than the proffered wage, the evidence will be considered *prima facie* proof of the petitioner's ability to pay the proffered wage. In the instant case, the beneficiary's IRS Forms W-2 for 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004 show compensation received from the petitioner, as shown in the table below.

- In 2001, the Form W-2 stated compensation of \$14,557.84.
- In 2002, the Form W-2 stated compensation of \$14,393.63.
- In 2003, the Form W-2 stated compensation of \$16,215.00.
- In 2004, the Form W-2 stated compensation of \$17,973.00.

Therefore, for the years 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004, the petitioner has not established that it employed and paid the beneficiary the full proffered wage, but it did establish that it paid partial wages each year. Since the proffered wage is \$33,280.00 per year, the petitioner must establish that it can pay the difference between the

wages actually paid to the beneficiary and the proffered wage, which is \$18,722.16, \$18,886.37, \$17,065.00 and \$15,307.00 in 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004, respectively.

If the petitioner does not establish that it employed and paid the beneficiary an amount at least equal to the proffered wage during that period, CIS will next examine the net income figure reflected on the petitioner's federal income tax return, without consideration of depreciation or other expenses. Reliance on federal income tax returns as a basis for determining a petitioner's ability to pay the proffered wage is well established by judicial precedent. *Elatos Restaurant Corp. v. Sava*, 632 F. Supp. 1049, 1054 (S.D.N.Y. 1986) (citing *Tongatapu Woodcraft Hawaii, Ltd. v. Feldman*, 736 F.2d 1305 (9th Cir. 1984)); see also *Chi-Feng Chang v. Thornburgh*, 719 F. Supp. 532 (N.D. Texas 1989); *K.C.P. Food Co., Inc. v. Sava*, 623 F. Supp. 1080 (S.D.N.Y. 1985); *Ubeda v. Palmer*, 539 F. Supp. 647 (N.D. Ill. 1982), *aff'd*, 703 F.2d 571 (7th Cir. 1983).

The petitioner is a sole proprietorship, a business in which one person operates the business in his or her personal capacity. Black's Law Dictionary 1398 (7th Ed. 1999). Unlike a corporation, a sole proprietorship does not exist as an entity apart from the individual owner. See *Matter of United Investment Group*, 19 I&N Dec. 248, 250 (Comm. 1984). Therefore the sole proprietor's adjusted gross income, assets and personal liabilities are also considered as part of the petitioner's ability to pay. Sole proprietors report income and expenses from their businesses on their individual (Form 1040) federal tax return each year. The business-related income and expenses are reported on Schedule C and are carried forward to the first page of the tax return. Sole proprietors must show that they can cover their existing business expenses as well as pay the proffered wage out of their adjusted gross income or other available funds. In addition, sole proprietors must show that they can sustain themselves and their dependents. *Ubeda v. Palmer*, 539 F. Supp. 647 (N.D. Ill. 1982), *aff'd*, 703 F.2d 571 (7th Cir. 1983).

In *Ubeda*, 539 F. Supp. at 650, the court concluded that it was highly unlikely that a petitioning entity structured as a sole proprietorship could support himself, his spouse and five dependents on a gross income of slightly more than \$20,000 where the beneficiary's proposed salary was \$6,000 or approximately thirty percent (30%) of the petitioner's gross income.

In the instant case, the sole proprietor supports his wife and his three children. The proprietor's IRS Forms 1040 reflect his adjusted gross income was \$13,755.00, \$17,309.00, \$18,096.00 and \$5,380.00 in 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004, respectively. The record does not contain a statement of the petitioner's monthly expenses for the relevant years. Therefore, the AAO cannot determine if the petitioner was able to pay his household expenses and the difference between the wages actually paid to the beneficiary and the proffered wage with the remaining income. Regardless, it is improbable that the sole proprietor could support himself, his wife and his three children on a deficit in 2001, 2002 and 2004, which is what remains after reducing the adjusted gross income by the amount required to pay the difference between the wages actually paid to the beneficiary and the proffered wage. It is also improbable that the sole proprietor could support himself, his wife and his three children on \$1,031.00 in 2003, which is what remains after reducing the adjusted gross income by the amount required to pay the difference between the wages actually paid to the beneficiary and the proffered wage.² Thus, the evidence submitted does not establish that the petitioner had the continuing ability to pay the proffered wage beginning on the priority date.

In view of the foregoing, the previous decision of the director will be withdrawn. The petition is remanded to the director for consideration of the issue stated above. The director may request any additional evidence

² This office notes that the petitioner did not submit its Schedule C to the proprietor's IRS Form 1040 for 2002. Instead, the petitioner submitted a Schedule C for H&J Metals.

considered pertinent, including but not limited to a statement of the sole proprietor's monthly expenses for the relevant years and evidence of the sole proprietor's unencumbered and liquefiable personal assets. Similarly, the petitioner may provide additional evidence within a reasonable period of time to be determined by the director. Upon receipt of all the evidence, the director will review the entire record and enter a new decision.

ORDER: The director's decision is withdrawn. The petition is remanded to the director for further action in accordance with the foregoing and entry of a new decision, which, if adverse to the petitioner, is to be certified to the AAO for review.