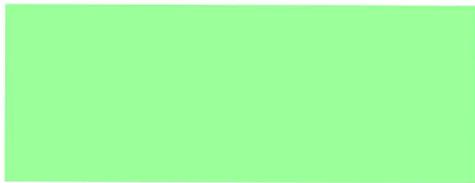




U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

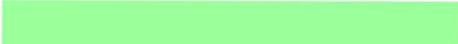
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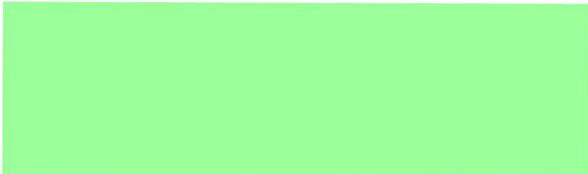
OFFICE: TEXAS SERVICE CENTER

FILE: 

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:

Enclosed please find the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office in your case. All of the documents related to this matter have been returned to the office that originally decided your case. Please be advised that any further inquiry that you might have concerning your case must be made to that office.

If you believe the AAO inappropriately applied the law in reaching its decision, or you have additional information that you wish to have considered, you may file a motion to reconsider or a motion to reopen in accordance with the instructions on Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion, with a fee of \$630. The specific requirements for filing such a motion can be found at 8 C.F.R. § 103.5. Do not file any motion directly with the AAO. Please be aware that 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(1)(i) requires any motion to be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reconsider or reopen.

Thank you,

Perry Rhew
Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The employment-based immigrant visa petition was denied by the Director, Texas Service Center, and is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The petitioner describes itself as an asphalt paving company. It seeks to permanently employ the beneficiary in the United States as an equipment operator/assistant foreman. The petitioner requests classification of the beneficiary as a professional or skilled worker.¹ The petition is accompanied by a Form ETA 750, Application for Alien Employment Certification, approved by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).

The director's decision denying the petition concluded that the petitioner had not established that it possessed the continuing ability to pay the beneficiary the proffered wage beginning on the priority date of the visa petition.

The petitioner appealed the director's decision to the AAO. The record shows that the appeal is properly filed 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.

At issue in this case is whether or not the petitioner has the ability to pay the proffered wage as of the priority date and continuing until the beneficiary obtains lawful permanent residence.

The AAO conducts appellate review on a *de novo* basis. *See Soltane v. DOJ*, 381 F.3d 143, 145 (3d Cir. 2004). The AAO considers all pertinent evidence in the record, including new evidence properly submitted upon appeal.²

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 regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(g)(2) states in pertinent part:

¹ Section 203(b)(3)(A)(i) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(3)(A)(i), grants preference classification to qualified immigrants who are capable 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. Section 203(b)(3)(A)(ii) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(3)(A)(ii), also grants preference classification to qualified immigrants who hold baccalaureate degrees and are members of the professions.

² 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).

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 either 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 was accepted for processing by any office within the employment system of the DOL. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(d). The petitioner must also demonstrate that, on the priority date, the beneficiary had the qualifications stated on its Form ETA 750, as certified by the DOL and submitted with the instant petition. *Matter of Wing's Tea House*, 16 I&N Dec. 158 (Acting Reg'l Comm'r 1977).

Here, the Form ETA 750 was accepted on July 16, 2004. The proffered wage as stated on the Form ETA 750 is \$18.00 per hour (\$37,440 per year).

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'l Comm'r 1977); *see also* 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(g)(2). In evaluating whether a job offer is realistic, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) requires the petitioner to demonstrate financial resources sufficient to pay the beneficiary's proffered wages, although the totality of the circumstances affecting the petitioning business will be considered if the evidence warrants such consideration. *See Matter of Sonogawa*, 12 I&N Dec. 612 (Reg'l Comm'r 1967).

On April 11, 2012, the AAO issued a Request for Evidence (RFE). The RFE stated:

Your company must demonstrate that it has been able to pay the proffered wage from the July 16, 2004 priority date until the beneficiary obtains lawful permanent residence. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(g)(2). In order to establish ability to pay, the petitioner must submit its annual reports, federal tax returns, or *audited* financial statements for each year from the priority date. *Id.* The beneficiary has not yet obtained lawful permanent residence. Accordingly, please submit annual reports, federal tax returns or *audited* financial statements for 2008, 2009 and 2010. Please also submit any Forms W-2 or 1099 issued to the beneficiary by your organization for 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011.

The RFE also instructed the petitioner to submit a statement detailing the number of full time employees and contractors it has employed each year since the priority date. The petitioner was given 45 days to respond to the RFE and informed that the AAO would dismiss the appeal without a full response to the request.

The petitioner's response to the RFE did not provide copies of its tax returns, annual reports or audited financial statements for 2008, 2009, or 2010. Instead, the response contained copies of the beneficiary's personal tax returns. As is noted above, *the petitioner* must demonstrate its continuing ability to pay the proffered wage from the priority date and continuing until the beneficiary obtains lawful permanent residence. 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(g)(2). Evidence of ability to pay "shall be in the form of copies of annual reports, federal tax returns, or audited financial statements." *Id.* While additional evidence may be submitted to establish the petitioner's ability to pay the proffered wage, it may not be substituted for evidence required by regulation. As was explained in the RFE, the failure to submit requested evidence that precludes a material line of inquiry shall be grounds for denying the petition. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 103.2(b)(14).

The petitioner's failure to provide its requested annual reports, federal tax returns, or audited financial statements is sufficient cause to dismiss this appeal. The petitioner also failed to provide a statement detailing the number of full time employees and contractors it has employed each year since the priority date.

The evidence in the record does not establish that the petitioner had the continuing ability to pay the proffered wage beginning on the priority date.

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.