



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

(b)(6)

Date: **NOV 17 2014** Office: CALIFORNIA SERVICE CENTER

File: [REDACTED]

IN RE: Petitioner: [REDACTED]
Beneficiary: [REDACTED]

PETITION: Petition for Alien Fiancé(e) Pursuant to § 101(a)(15)(K) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(K)

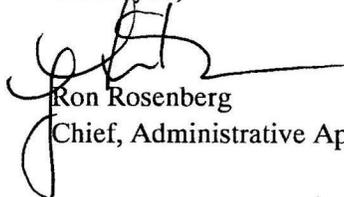
ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER:

SELF-REPRESENTED

Enclosed please find the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) in your case.

This is a non-precedent decision. The AAO does not announce new constructions of law nor establish agency policy through non-precedent decisions. If you believe the AAO incorrectly applied current law or policy to your case or if you seek to present new facts for consideration, you may file a motion to reconsider or a motion to reopen, respectively. Any motion must be filed on a Notice of Appeal or Motion (Form I-290B) within 33 days of the date of this decision. **Please review the Form I-290B instructions at <http://www.uscis.gov/forms> for the latest information on fee, filing location, and other requirements. See also 8 C.F.R. § 103.5. Do not file a motion directly with the AAO.**

Thank you,



Ron Rosenberg
Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

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

The petitioner is a citizen of the United States who seeks to classify the beneficiary, a native and citizen of Ethiopia, as the fiancé(e) of a United States citizen pursuant to § 101(a)(15)(K) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(K).

The director denied the nonimmigrant visa petition because the petitioner failed to establish that he and the beneficiary met in person during the two-year period immediately preceding the filing of the petition or demonstrate that he is eligible for a waiver of the meeting requirement. On appeal, the petitioner submits a completed Form I-290B.

Applicable Law

A "fiancé(e)" is defined at Section 101(a)(15)(K) of the Act as:

subject to subsections (d) and (p) of section 214, an alien who -

(i) is the fiancée or fiancé of a citizen of the United States . . . and who seeks to enter the United States solely to conclude a valid marriage with the petitioner within ninety days after admission[.]

Section 214(d)(1) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(d)(1), states in pertinent part that a fiancé(e) petition:

shall be approved only after satisfactory evidence is submitted by the petitioner to establish that the parties have previously met in person within 2 years before the date of filing the petition, have a bona fide intention to marry, and are legally able and actually willing to conclude a valid marriage in the United States within a period of ninety days after the alien's arrival except that the Secretary of Homeland Security in his discretion may waive the requirement that the parties have previously met in person. . . .

The statutory requirement of an in-person meeting between the petitioner and the beneficiary is further explained at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(k)(2), which states:

The petitioner shall establish to the satisfaction of the director that the petitioner and K-1 beneficiary have met in person within the two years immediately preceding the filing of the petition. As a matter of discretion, the director may exempt the petitioner from this requirement only if it is established that compliance would result in extreme hardship to the petitioner or that compliance would violate strict and long-established customs of the K-1 beneficiary's foreign culture or social practice . . . Failure to establish that the petitioner and K-1 beneficiary have met within the required period or that compliance with the requirement should be waived shall result in the denial of the petition. Such denial shall be without



prejudice to the filing of a new petition once the petitioner and K-1 beneficiary have met in person.

The regulation does not define what may constitute extreme hardship to the petitioner. Therefore, each claim of extreme hardship must be judged on a case-by-case basis taking into account the totality of the petitioner's circumstances. Generally, a director looks at whether the petitioner can demonstrate the existence of circumstances that are (1) not within the power of the petitioner to control or change, and (2) likely to last for a considerable duration or the duration cannot be determined with any degree of certainty.

Factual and Procedural History

The petitioner filed the fiancé(e) petition with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) on September 12, 2013. Therefore, the petitioner and the beneficiary were required to have met in person between September 12, 2011 and September 12, 2013.

On the Form I-129F, the petitioner stated that he met the beneficiary in childhood and that the family has arranged a traditional marriage. In response to question number 34, the petitioner indicated that he and the beneficiary had not met within the two-year period preceding the filing of the petition. In a Request for Evidence (RFE), the director informed the petitioner that he must either submit evidence of having met the beneficiary in person during the required time period or request a waiver of the meeting requirement. In response, the petitioner submitted a statement in which he explained that he did not want to travel to Lebanon where the beneficiary was residing because of uncertain conditions in the country, and that he could not get a leave of absence from his work to travel to Ethiopia.

The director determined that the petitioner failed to establish that he and the beneficiary had met in person within the two-year period immediately prior to the filing date of the petition, and that complying with the meeting requirement was an extreme hardship. On appeal, the petitioner submits a statement indicating that the marriage has been arranged by the families according to custom; that he cannot get a leave of absence from his job; and cannot cover the cost of travel to Ethiopia and the wedding expenses.

Analysis

The petitioner and the beneficiary have not met the statutory requirement of a face-to-face meeting within the two years preceding the filing of the petition. The petitioner states that it would have been a financial hardship for him to travel to Ethiopia during the two-year period in question. However, the cost of travel outside of the United States is not a sufficient reason to waive the requirement of a personal meeting. The fact that the engagement was traditionally arranged does not change the in-person meeting requirement. The petitioner does not contend that it would be a violation of custom to meet with the beneficiary prior to their marriage. The evidence presented by the petitioner does not demonstrate that he is eligible for a waiver of the meeting requirement. The director's decision to deny the petition is, therefore, affirmed.



Conclusion

The statutorily required personal meeting between the petitioner and the beneficiary did not occur during the required time period and the petitioner is not exempt from such a requirement. Consequently, the instant petition must remain denied and the appeal is, therefore, dismissed. As stated at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(k)(2), the denial of this petition is without prejudice to the filing of a new petition.

The burden of proof in these proceedings rests solely with the petitioner. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. Here, the petitioner has not met that burden.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed. The petition remains denied.