



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

41

[REDACTED]

FILE: [REDACTED]
MSC-06-081-13276

Office: INDIANAPOLIS

Date: DEC 08 2009

IN RE: Applicant: [REDACTED]

APPLICATION: Application for Status as a Temporary Resident pursuant to Section 245A of the
Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended, 8 U.S.C. § 1255a

ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT:

[REDACTED]

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office in your case. If your appeal was dismissed or rejected, all documents have been returned to the National Benefits Center. 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. If your appeal was sustained or remanded for further action, you will be contacted.

Perry Rhew
Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The application for temporary resident status pursuant to the terms of the settlement agreements reached in *Catholic Social Services, Inc., et al., v. Ridge, et al.*, CIV. NO. S-86-1343-LKK (E.D. Cal) January 23, 2004, and *Felicity Mary Newman, et al., v. United States Immigration and Citizenship Services, et al.*, CIV. NO. 87-4757-WDK (C.D. Cal) February 17, 2004 (CSS/Newman Settlement Agreements), was denied by the Director, Indianapolis. The decision is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The applicant submitted a Form I-687, Application for Status as a Temporary Resident under Section 245A of the Immigration and Nationality Act (Act), and a Form I-687 Supplement, CSS/Newman Class Membership Worksheet. The director denied the application, finding that the applicant had not established by a preponderance of the evidence that he had continuously resided in the United States in an unlawful status for the duration of the requisite period. Specifically, the director noted that the affidavits submitted lacked sufficient detail to be considered probative.

On appeal, the applicant asserts that he has established his unlawful residence for the requisite time period and that the director's decision was conclusory.

An applicant for temporary resident status must establish entry into the United States before January 1, 1982, and continuous residence in the United States in an unlawful status since such date and through the date the application is filed. Section 245A(a)(2) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1255a(a)(2). The applicant must also establish that he or she has been continuously physically present in the United States since November 6, 1986. Section 245A(a)(3) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1255a(a)(3). The regulations clarify that the applicant must have been physically present in the United States from November 6, 1986 until the date of filing the application. 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(b).

For purposes of establishing residence and physical presence under the CSS/Newman Settlement Agreements, the term "until the date of filing" in 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(b) means until the date the applicant attempted to file a completed Form I-687 application and fee or was caused not to timely file during the original legalization application period of May 5, 1987 to May 4, 1988. CSS Settlement Agreement paragraph 11 at page 6; Newman Settlement Agreement paragraph 11 at page 10.

The applicant has the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that he or she has resided in the United States for the requisite periods, is admissible to the United States under the provisions of section 245A of the Act, and is otherwise eligible for adjustment of status. The inference to be drawn from the documentation provided shall depend on the extent of the documentation, its credibility and amenability to verification. 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(5).

Although the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(3) provides an illustrative list of contemporaneous documents that an applicant may submit in support of his or her claim of continuous residence in the United States in an unlawful status since prior to January 1, 1982, the

submission of any other relevant document is permitted pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(3)(vi)(L). To meet his or her burden of proof, an applicant must provide evidence of eligibility apart from the applicant's own testimony, and the sufficiency of all evidence produced by the applicant will be judged according to its probative value and credibility. 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(6).

The "preponderance of the evidence" standard requires that the evidence demonstrate that the applicant's claim is "probably true," where the determination of "truth" is made based on the factual circumstances of each individual case. *Matter of E-M*, 20 I&N Dec. 77, 79-80 (Comm. 1989). In evaluating the evidence, *Matter of E-M* also stated that "[t]ruth is to be determined not by the quantity of evidence alone but by its quality." *Id.* Thus, in adjudicating the application pursuant to the preponderance of the evidence standard, the director must examine each piece of evidence for relevance, probative value, and credibility, both individually and within the context of the totality of the evidence, to determine whether the fact to be proven is probably true. See 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(6). The weight to be given any affidavit depends on the totality of the circumstances, and a number of factors must be considered. More weight will be given to an affidavit in which the affiant indicates personal knowledge of the applicant's whereabouts during the time period in question rather than a fill-in-the-blank affidavit that provides generic information. The regulations provide specific guidance on the sufficiency of documentation when proving residence through evidence of past employment or attestations by churches or other organizations. 8 C.F.R. §§ 245a.2(d)(3)(i) and (v).

Even if the director has some doubt as to the truth, if the applicant submits relevant, probative, and credible evidence that leads the director to believe that the claim is "probably true" or "more likely than not," the applicant or petitioner has satisfied the standard of proof. See *U.S. v. Cardozo-Fonseca*, 480 U.S. 421 (1987) (defining "more likely than not" as a greater than 50 percent probability of something occurring). If the director can articulate a material doubt, it is appropriate for the director to either request additional evidence or, if that doubt leads the director to believe that the claim is probably not true, deny the application or petition.

The issue in this proceeding is whether the applicant (1) entered the United States before January 1, 1982 and (2) has continuously resided in the United States in an unlawful status for the requisite period of time. The documentation that the applicant submits in support of his claim to have arrived in the United States before January 1982 and lived in an unlawful status during the requisite period consists of several affidavits and letters; copies of United States Postal Service receipts; and various handwritten receipts. The AAO has reviewed each document to determine the applicant's eligibility; however, the AAO will not quote each witness statement in this decision.

The record contains affidavits from [REDACTED]. Although the affiants state that they met the applicant during the relevant period, their statements do not supply enough details to lend credibility to an at least 24-year relationship with the applicant. For instance, the affiants do not indicate how they date their initial meeting with the

applicant, how frequently they had contact with the applicant, or how they had personal knowledge of the applicant's presence in the United States. Given these deficiencies, these affidavits have minimal probative value in supporting the applicant's claims that he entered the United States prior to January 1, 1982 and resided in the United States for the entire requisite period.

The applicant also submitted two letters of employment, from [REDACTED]. The letter from [REDACTED] is signed by [REDACTED] and is on company letterhead. [REDACTED] indicates that the applicant was employed as a busboy in 1982, 1984, 1985 and 1987 and that his employment was verified by an associate in the department in which he used to work. However, the record of proceedings contains copies of paycheck stubs issued to the applicant in 1986 only. This inconsistency has not been addressed.

The second letter of employment, from [REDACTED] indicates that the applicant was employed from October 1981 until December 1981, February 1983 until December 1984, and from February 1985 until January 1990.

Both letters of employment fail to meet certain regulatory standards set forth at 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(3)(i), which provides that letters from employers must include the applicant's address at the time of employment; exact period of employment; whether the information was taken from official company records and where records are located and whether United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) may have access to the records; if records are unavailable, an affidavit form-letter stating that the employment records are unavailable may be accepted which shall be signed, attested to by the employer under penalty of perjury and shall state the employer's willingness to come forward and give testimony if requested. The statements from the applicant's employers do not include much of the required information and can be afforded minimal weight as evidence of the applicant's residence in the United States for the duration of the requisite period.

It is further noted that in a Notice of Intent to Deny (NOID) issued on August 11, 2006, the director noted that the applicant was arrested:

- On December 9, 1976 in Los Angeles, for *Driving Under the Influence* (Case No. 4169583);
- On February 3, 1977 in Los Angeles for *Driving Under the Influence* (Case No. 4237624);
- On July 18, 1986 in Santa Ana, California for *Driving Under the Influence Causing Bodily Injury* (Case No. 608557).

An alien who has been convicted of a felony or three or more misdemeanors in the United States is ineligible for temporary resident status. 8 C.F.R. § 210.3(d)(3).

"Felony" means a crime committed in the United States punishable by imprisonment for a term of more than one year, regardless of the term such alien actually served, if any, except when the offense is defined by the state as a misdemeanor, and the sentence actually imposed is one year or less, regardless of the term such alien actually served. Under this exception, for purposes of 8 C.F.R. Part 245a, the crime shall be treated as a misdemeanor. 8 C.F.R. § 245a.1(p).

"Misdemeanor" means a crime committed in the United States, either (1) punishable by imprisonment for a term of one year or less, regardless of the term such alien actually served, if any, or (2) a crime treated as a misdemeanor under 8 C.F.R. § 245a.1(p). For purposes of this definition, any crime punishable by imprisonment for a maximum term of five days or less shall not be considered a misdemeanor. 8 C.F.R. § 245a.1(o).

The statutory language at section 245A(b)(1)(C) of the Act provides that the alien "*must establish* that he is (i) is admissible . . . and (2) *has not been convicted* of any felony or 3 or more misdemeanors." In this case, through counsel, the applicant asserts that he has not been convicted of three misdemeanors. In support of this assertion, he submits a Record Search from Superior Court of California, Santa Ana, indicating that he was arrested in 1986 for violating California Code 23152A and 23152B. No final disposition is listed. This record search is not sufficient evidence that the applicant has not been convicted of the offense. Therefore, the AAO concludes that the applicant has not met his burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that he has not been convicted of three misdemeanors pursuant to section 245A(b)(1)(C) of the Act.

Finally, beyond the decision of the director, the AAO notes that the applicant indicates on his Form I-687 Part #32 that he was absent from the United States from March 1984 until June 1984. The applicant shall be regarded as having resided continuously in the United States if at the time the application for temporary resident status is considered filed, as described above pursuant to the CSS/Newman Settlement Agreements, no single absence from the United States has exceeded 45 days, and the aggregate of all absences has not exceeded 180 days during the requisite period unless the applicant can establish that due to emergent reasons the return to the United States could not be accomplished within the time period allowed, the applicant was maintaining a residence in the United States, and the departure was not based on an order of deportation. 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(h).

If the applicant's absence exceeded the 45-day period allowed for a single absence, it must be determined if the untimely return of the applicant to the United States was due to an "emergent reason." Although this term is not defined in the regulations, *Matter of C-*, 19 I&N Dec. 808 (Comm. 1988), holds that "emergent" means "coming unexpectedly into being."

In this case, the applicant was absent from the United States for at least two months in 1984. This absence renders him ineligible for temporary resident status. He has not indicated that his return to the United States was delayed for an emergent reason.

The remaining evidence in the record is comprised of postal receipts and handwritten receipts dated in 1986, and two envelopes which contain stamps, however, which do not list a date or do not contain a visible date. These items provide some evidence that the applicant was present in the United States at various points during the relevant period, however, they do not provide evidence of the applicant's *continuous* residence.

Upon a *de novo* review of all of the evidence in the record, the AAO agrees with the director that the evidence submitted by the applicant has not established that he is eligible for the benefit sought.

Therefore, based upon the foregoing, the applicant has failed to establish by a preponderance of the evidence that he entered the United States before January 1, 1982 and continuously resided in an unlawful status in the United States for the requisite period as required under both 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(5) and *Matter of E- M--*, *supra*. The applicant is, therefore, ineligible for temporary resident status under section 245A of the Act on this basis.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed. This decision constitutes a final notice of ineligibility.