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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Administrative Appeals Office (AAO)
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**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

PUBLIC COPY

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[REDACTED]

FILE:

[REDACTED]

Office: HOUSTON

Date: MAR 03 2011

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 director of the Houston office terminated the temporary resident status of the applicant, pursuant to the terms of the CSS/Newman Settlement Agreements, finding the applicant to be ineligible for temporary resident status based on both a lack of documentation and inconsistent documentation in the record of proceedings.

On appeal, counsel for the applicant asserts that the director's decision is erroneous because the evidence which the applicant previously submitted establishes by a preponderance of the evidence that he continuously resided in the United States in an unlawful status for the duration of the requisite period. The applicant has not submitted any additional evidence on appeal.¹ The AAO has considered counsel's assertions, reviewed all of the evidence, and has made a *de novo* decision based on the record and the AAO's assessment of the credibility, relevance and probative value of the evidence.²

The temporary resident status of an alien may be terminated upon the determination that the alien was ineligible for temporary residence. Section 245A(b)(2)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1255a(b)(2)(A), and 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(u)(i).

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)(1).

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

¹ The witness statements that the applicant submits on appeal have previously been submitted into the record.

² The AAO conducts appellate review on a *de novo* basis. The AAO's *de novo* authority is well recognized by the federal courts. See *Soltane v. DOJ*, 381 F.3d 143, 145 (3d Cir. 2004).

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. Doubt cast on any aspect of the applicant's proof may lead to a reevaluation of the reliability and sufficiency of the remaining evidence offered in support of the application. *Matter of Ho*, 19 I & N Dec. 582, 591-592 (BIA).

The issue in this proceeding is whether the applicant has overcome the inconsistencies in the record and established his eligibility for temporary resident status. As stated, the applicant must establish that he (1) entered the United States before January 1, 1982 and (2) has continuously resided in the United States in an unlawful status throughout the requisite period. 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 witness statements. The AAO has reviewed the documents in their entirety to determine the applicant's eligibility; however, the AAO will not quote each statement in this decision. Some of the evidence submitted indicates that the applicant resided in the United States after May 4, 1988; however, because evidence of residence after May 4, 1988 is not probative of residence during the requisite time period, it shall not be discussed.

The record contains witness statements from the following witnesses: [REDACTED]

The statements are general in nature and state that the witnesses have knowledge of the applicant's residence in the United States for all, or a portion of, the requisite period.

Although the witnesses claim to have personal knowledge of the applicant's residence in the United States during the requisite period, the witness statements do not provide concrete information, specific to the applicant and generated by the asserted associations with him, which would reflect and corroborate the extent of those associations, and demonstrate that they were a sufficient basis for reliable knowledge about the applicant's residence in the United States during the requisite period. To be considered probative and credible, witness statements must do more than simply state that a witness knows an applicant and that the applicant has lived in the United States for a specific period. Their content must include sufficient detail from a claimed relationship to indicate that it probably did exist and that the witness, by virtue of that relationship, does have knowledge of the facts alleged. For instance, the witnesses do not state how they date their initial meeting with the applicant in the United States, or specify social gatherings, other special occasions or social events when they saw and communicated with the applicant during the requisite period. The witnesses also do not state how frequently they had contact with the applicant during the requisite period. The witnesses do not provide sufficient details that would lend credence to their claimed knowledge of the applicant's residence in the United States during the requisite period. For these reasons the AAO finds that the witness statements do not indicate that their assertions are probably true.

In addition, in a 1994 statement, [REDACTED] states that from 1981 to 1984 the applicant resided with her on [REDACTED]. However, the testimony of the witness is inconsistent with the testimony of the applicant in the instant I-687 application, in which the applicant states that he lived at that address from 1981 through the end of the requisite statutory period. Further, [REDACTED] states that from 1984 through the end of the requisite period the applicant resided at [REDACTED]. However, the testimony of the witness is inconsistent with the testimony of the applicant in the instant I-687 application, in which the applicant does not list a residence on [REDACTED] during the requisite period. Due to these inconsistencies, the testimony of these witnesses will be given no weight.

The applicant has submitted employment verification letters from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] state that from 1981 to 1984 the applicant was employed by them once weekly, doing lawn maintenance and handyman work. [REDACTED] states that the applicant was employed by him from January 1984 through the end of the requisite period as a bricklayer and that during the period of his employment the applicant resided at [REDACTED]. However, the testimony of the witnesses is inconsistent with the testimony of the applicant in the instant I-687 application, in which the applicant does not list any employment with [REDACTED] or [REDACTED], and does not list a residence on [REDACTED] during the requisite period. Due to these inconsistencies, the employment verification letters are of minimal probative value.

Further, the employment verification letters of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] do not meet the requirements set forth in the regulations, which provide specific guidance on the sufficiency of documentation when proving residence through evidence of past employment. The regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(3)(i) provides that letters from employers must include: (A) Alien's address at the time of employment; (B) Exact period of employment; (C) Periods of layoff; (D) Duties with the company; (E) Whether or not the information was taken from official company records; and (F) Where records are located and whether the Service may have access to the records. If the records are unavailable, an affidavit-form letter stating that the alien's employment records are unavailable and why such records are unavailable may be accepted in lieu of subsections (E) and (F). The employment verification letters fail to comply with the above cited regulation because they lack considerable detail regarding the applicant's employment. For instance, the witnesses do not state the applicant's daily work duties, or the location at which he was employed. Furthermore, the witnesses do not state how they were able to date the applicant's employment. It is unclear whether they referred to their own recollection or any records they may have maintained. For these reasons, the employment verification letters are of little probative value.

The remaining evidence in the record is comprised of copies of the applicant's statements, the instant I-687 application, three prior I-687 applications filed on 2001, May 1994, and April 1994, respectively, a Form I-485, application to adjust to permanent resident status under the Legal Immigration Family Equity (LIFE) Act, and a Form I-698, application to adjust status from temporary to permanent resident.³ The AAO finds in its *de novo* review that the record of proceedings contains materially inconsistent statements from the applicant regarding the date of his initial entry into the United States, as well as the particular locations where he resided and worked in the United States during the requisite statutory period, as well as the reason for his absence from the United States during the requisite period.

In the instant I-687 application, the applicant lists a residence in [REDACTED] from May 1981 through the end of the requisite statutory period at [REDACTED]. The applicant lists employment in [REDACTED] from 1981 to 1984 as a self-employed maintenance worker, and from January 1984 through the end of the requisite statutory period as a laborer with [REDACTED]. The applicant lists one absence from the United States during the requisite period, in February 1988, to travel to Mexico because his father was sick.

At the time of his interview on May 9, 2005, the applicant stated that he first entered the United States in February 1981. The applicant also stated that during the requisite statutory period he only worked for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

In a class member worksheet signed by the applicant on June 1, 1994, the applicant stated that he first entered the United States in October 1981 with his father. The applicant also stated that the reason for his absence from the United States in February 1988 was that his mother was sick.

³ The applicant's I-698 application has been denied.

In the I-687 application filed in May 1994, applicant listed addresses in the United States during the requisite period, from 1981 through the end of the requisite period on [REDACTED], and from May 1984 through the end of the requisite statutory period on [REDACTED]. The overlapping dates are incongruous. There are contradictions as to when and where the applicant resided.

In the I-687 application filed in April 1994, the applicant did not, at the time of filing the application, list any addresses in the United States during the requisite statutory period. At the time of his interview, the applicant amended the application to list addresses in the United States during the requisite period, from 1981 to 1984 on [REDACTED], and from 1984 through the end of the requisite period on [REDACTED]. The applicant listed employment in the United States from January 1984 through the end of the requisite period as a bricklayer with [REDACTED].

The director of the Houston office cited some of the aforementioned inconsistencies in a notice of intent to terminate (NOIT) the applicant's temporary residence. In rebuttal to the NOIT, the applicant asserted that the evidence which he previously submitted establishes by a preponderance of the evidence that he continuously resided in the United States in an unlawful status for the duration of the requisite period.

The applicant has failed to provide probative and credible evidence of his continuous residence in the United States for the duration of the requisite period. The inconsistencies regarding where the applicant resided and worked in the United States during the requisite period, the reason for his absences from the United States during that period, and the date of his initial entry into the United States are material to his claim, in that they have a direct bearing on the applicant's residence in the United States during the requisite period. No evidence of record resolves these inconsistencies. It is incumbent upon the applicant to resolve any inconsistencies in the record by independent objective evidence pointing to where the truth lies. Doubt cast on any aspect of the applicant's proof may lead to a reevaluation of the reliability and sufficiency of the remaining evidence offered in support of the application. *Matter of Ho*, 19 I & N Dec. 582, 591-592 (BIA). These contradictions undermine the credibility of the applicant's claim of entry into the United States prior to January 1, 1982 and continuous residence in the United States during the requisite period.

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. The various statements currently in the record which attempt to substantiate the applicant's residence and employment in the United States during the statutory period are not objective, independent evidence such that they might overcome the inconsistencies in the record regarding the applicant's claim that he maintained continuous residence in the United States throughout the statutory period, and thus are not probative.

Based on the foregoing, the AAO finds that the applicant has failed to resolve the inconsistencies in the record with independent objective evidence. Furthermore, 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. As the applicant has not overcome the basis for the termination of status, the appeal must be dismissed.

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