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U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

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FILE: [REDACTED] Office: HOUSTON Date: APR 17 2007
MSC 02 240 62804

IN RE: Applicant: [REDACTED]

APPLICATION: Application for Status as a Permanent Resident pursuant to Section 1104 of the
Legal Immigration Family Equity (LIFE) Act of 2000, Pub. L. 106-553, 114 Stat.
2762 (2000), amended by Life Act Amendments, Pub. L. 106-554, 114 Stat. 2763
(2000)

ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT:
[REDACTED]

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 application for permanent resident status under the Legal Immigration Family Equity (LIFE) Act was denied by the District Director, Houston, Texas, and is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The AAO affirms the director's decision denying the LIFE Act application, and remands the case for further action and consideration.

The director denied the application because the applicant failed to establish that she satisfied the "basic citizenship skills" required under section 1104(c)(2)(E) of the LIFE Act.

On appeal, counsel asserts that the district office failed to consider evidence submitted by the applicant that the applicant completed a course in Basic English, U.S. history and government and documentation that she had enrolled in an English as a second language course.

Under section 1104(c)(2)(E)(i) of the LIFE Act ("Basic Citizenship Skills"), an applicant for permanent resident status must demonstrate that he or she:

- (I) meets the requirements of section 312(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. § 1423(a)) (relating to minimal understanding of ordinary English and a knowledge and understanding of the history and government of the United States); or
- (II) is satisfactorily pursuing a course of study (recognized by the Attorney General) to achieve such an understanding of English and such a knowledge and understanding of the history and government of the United States.

Under section 1104(c)(2)(E)(ii) of the LIFE Act, the Attorney General may waive all or part of the above requirements for aliens who are at least 65 years of age or developmentally disabled

The applicant, who was 49 years old at the date of her last interview and provided no evidence to establish that she was developmentally disabled, does not qualify for either of the exceptions in section 1104(c)(2)(E)(ii) of the LIFE Act. Further the applicant does not satisfy the "basic citizenship skills" requirement of section 1104(c)(2)(E)(i)(I) of the LIFE Act because she does not meet the requirements of section 312(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act). An applicant can demonstrate that he or she meets the requirements of section 312(a) of the Act by "[s]peaking and understanding English during the course of the interview for permanent resident status" and answering questions based on the subject matter of approved citizenship training materials, or "[b]y passing a standardized section 312 test . . . by the Legalization Assistance Board with the Educational Testing Service (ETS) or the California State Department of Education with the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)." 8 C.F.R. § 245a.3(b)(4)(iii)(A)(1) and (2).

The regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(b) provides that an applicant who fails to pass the English literacy and/or the United States history and government tests at the time of the interview, shall be afforded a second opportunity after six months (or earlier at the request of the applicant) to pass the tests or submit evidence as described in paragraphs (a)(2) or (a)(3) of this section.

The record reflects that the applicant was interviewed twice in connection with her LIFE application, first on May 1, 2003 and again on July 14, 2004. On both occasions, the applicant did not understand sufficient English to be placed under oath. Furthermore, the applicant has not provided evidence of having passed a standardized citizenship test, as permitted by 8 C.F.R. § 312.3(a)(1).

The applicant, however, could still meet the basic citizenship skills requirement under section 1104(c)(2)(E)(i)(II) of the LIFE Act, if he meets one of the criteria defined in 8 C.F.R. §§ 245a.17(a)(2) and (3). In part, an applicant must establish that he meets the following under 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17:

- (2) has a high school diploma or general educational development diploma (GED) from a school in the United States; or
- (3) has attended, or is attending, a state recognized, accredited learning institution in the United States, and that institution certifies such attendance. The course of study at such learning institution must be for a period of one academic year (or the equivalent thereof according to the standards of the learning institution) and the curriculum must include at least 40 hours of instruction in English and United States history and government.

The record does not reflect that the applicant has a high school diploma or a GED from a United States school, and therefore does not satisfy the regulatory requirement of 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(2).

During her initial interview, the applicant submitted a November 17, 2002 "certificate of completion" from the Houston Community College System, indicating that she had completed 4.8 continuing education units in Basic English, U.S. history and government. The certificate did not indicate that the course was for a period of one academic year (or the equivalent thereof according to the standards of Houston Community College System) and the curriculum must include at least 40 hours of instruction in English and United States history and government. Therefore, the director issued the applicant a letter dated May 1, 2003 requesting this information from the institution. The record does not reflect that the district office received a response to the letter.

According to counsel, the applicant submitted a copy of the November 17, 2002 certificate from Houston Community College System in response to a Notice of Intent to Deny issued on October 26, 2004. However, the applicant submitted no additional documentation regarding the content and length of the course as requested by the director. The record also contains a copy of a June 26, 2004 "certificate of completion" from Houston Community College Northeast, indicating that the applicant had completed 18 hours of "citizenship preparation." As with the previous certificate provided by the applicant, however, the documentation fails to provide confirmation that the course content is for a period of one academic year or that the curriculum includes at least 40 hours of instruction in English and United States history and government as required by 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a)(3). Furthermore, the applicant failed to comply with the provisions of 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a)(3), which requires that the applicant submit certification on letterhead stationery from a state recognized, accredited learning institution.

Accordingly, the applicant does not satisfy either alternative of the "basic citizenship skills" requirement set forth in section 1104(c)(2)(E)(i) of the LIFE Act. Therefore, the applicant is ineligible for adjustment to permanent resident status under section 1104 of the LIFE Act.

Although the director found the applicant ineligible for permanent resident status under section 1104 of the LIFE Act, the director failed to consider the applicant's eligibility for adjustment of status to that of a temporary resident. The regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 245a.6 provides, in pertinent part:

If the district director finds that an eligible alien as defined at § 245a.10 has not established eligibility under section 1104 of the LIFE Act (part 245a, Subpart B), the district director

shall consider whether the eligible alien has established eligibility for adjustment to temporary resident status under section 245A of the Act, as in effect before enactment of section 1104 of the LIFE Act (part 245a, Subpart A).

(Emphasis added).

Accordingly, this case is remanded for a determination as to the applicant's eligibility for adjustment of status to that of a temporary resident pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 245a.6.

ORDER: The director's decision denying the LIFE Act application is affirmed. The application is remanded to the director for further action in accordance with the foregoing and entry of a new decision that, if adverse to the applicant, is to be certified to the AAO for review.