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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Office of Administrative Appeals MS 2090
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FILE: [REDACTED] Office: NEBRASKA SERVICE CENTER Date: JUL 06 2009
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IN RE: Petitioner: [REDACTED]
Beneficiary: [REDACTED]

PETITION: Immigrant petition for Alien Worker as a Member of the Professions Holding an Advanced Degree or an Alien of Exceptional Ability Pursuant to Section 203(b)(2) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(2)

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER:



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.

If you believe the law was inappropriately applied or you have additional information that you wish to have considered, you may file a motion to reconsider or a motion to reopen. Please refer to 8 C.F.R. § 103.5 for the specific requirements. All motions must be submitted to the office that originally decided your case by filing a Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion, with a fee of \$585. Any motion must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reconsider or reopen, as required by 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(1)(i).


John F. Grissom
Acting Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

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

The petitioner is a school. It seeks to employ the beneficiary permanently in the United States as a teacher pursuant to section 203(b)(2) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(2). The petition is accompanied by a Form ETA 750, Application for Alien Employment Certification, which was certified by the Department of Labor (DOL). The Form ETA 750 indicates in Block 14 that the position requires a bachelor's degree and no experience.¹

The director determined that the Form ETA 750 failed to demonstrate that the job requires a professional holding an advanced degree or the equivalent of an alien of exceptional ability and, therefore, the beneficiary cannot be found qualified for classification as a member of the professions holding an advanced degree or an alien of exceptional ability. 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(k)(4). The director also determined that the petitioner failed to establish that it had the ability to pay the proffered wage. 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(g)(2). The director denied the petition accordingly.

On appeal, counsel argues that the petitioner sought classification as an advanced degree professional or alien of exceptional ability in error by mistakenly checking block "d" in Part 2 of the Form I-140. Counsel asserts that the petitioner should have checked block "e" for a professional or skilled worker pursuant to section 203(b)(3)(A) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(3)(A). Counsel also submits additional evidence pertaining to the petitioner's ability to pay the proffered wage.

The record shows that the appeal is properly filed and timely. 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.

In pertinent part, section 203(b)(2) of the Act provides immigrant classification to members of the professions holding advanced degrees or their equivalent and whose services are sought by an employer in the United States. An advanced degree is a United States academic or professional degree or a foreign equivalent degree above the baccalaureate level. 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(k)(2). The regulation further states: "A United States baccalaureate degree or a foreign equivalent degree followed by at least five years of progressive experience in the specialty shall be considered the equivalent of a master's degree. If a doctoral degree is customarily required by the specialty, the alien must have a United States doctorate or a foreign equivalent degree." *Id.*

Section 203(b)(2) of the Act also includes aliens "who because of their exceptional ability in the sciences, arts or business, will substantially benefit prospectively the national economy, cultural or educational interests, or welfare of the United States." The regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(k)(2)

¹It is noted that counsel corrected the Form ETA 750 on November 11, 2004 by adjusting the educational requirement to a bachelor's degree and by eliminating the requirement that the worker have 16 years of experience.

defines "exceptional ability" as "a degree of expertise significantly above that ordinarily encountered."

Here, the Form I-140 was filed on June 20, 2007. On Part 2.d. of the Form I-140, the petitioner indicated that it was filing the petition for a member of the professions holding an advanced degree or an alien of exceptional ability.

The AAO maintains plenary power to review each appeal on a *de novo* basis. 5 U.S.C. § 557(b) ("On appeal from or review of the initial decision, the agency has all the powers which it would have in making the initial decision except as it may limit the issues on notice or by rule."); *see also, Janka v. U.S. Dept. of Transp., NTSB*, 925 F.2d 1147, 1149 (9th Cir. 1991). The AAO's *de novo* authority has been long recognized by the federal courts. *See, e.g. Dor v. INS*, 891 F.2d 997, 1002 n. 9 (2d Cir. 1989). The AAO considers all pertinent evidence in the record, including new evidence properly submitted upon appeal. On appeal, counsel submits a letter in which he argues that he committed a typographical error by marking Part 2.d. and that the petitioner intended to seek classification as a professional or skilled worker. Counsel also submits additional evidence pertaining to the petitioner's ability to pay the proffered wage.

The regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(k)(4) states in pertinent part that "[t]he job offer portion of an individual labor certification, Schedule A application, or Pilot Program application must demonstrate that the job requires a professional holding an advanced degree or the equivalent of an alien of exceptional ability."

In this case, the job offer portion of the Form ETA 750 indicates in Block 14 that the position requires a bachelor's degree and no experience. Accordingly, the job offer portion of the Form ETA 750 does not require a professional holding an advanced degree or the equivalent of an alien of exceptional ability. However, the petitioner requested classification as a member of the professions holding an advanced degree or an alien of exceptional ability and attempted to change this request to that of a skilled worker or professional on appeal. A petitioner may not make material changes to a petition in an effort to make a deficient petition conform to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) requirements. *See Matter of Izummi*, 22 I&N Dec. 169, 176 (Assoc. Comm. 1988). In this matter, the appropriate remedy would be to file another petition with the proper fee and required documentation.

The evidence submitted does not establish that the Form ETA 750 requires a professional holding an advanced degree or the equivalent of an alien of exceptional ability, and the appeal must be dismissed.

Furthermore, it is noted that the director properly concluded that the petitioner failed to establish that it has the ability to pay the proffered wage.

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

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). If all required initial evidence is not submitted with the petition, USCIS in its discretion may deny the petition for lack of evidence. 8 C.F.R. § 103.2(b)(8)(ii). In this matter, the petitioner was specifically put on notice in the June 27, 2007 Request for Evidence (RFE) that the record was insufficient to establish its continuing ability to pay the proffered wage as of the priority date of November 21, 2003. However, the petitioner failed to submit the requested evidence pertaining to its ability to pay the proffered wage with its response to the RFE. Failure to submit requested evidence that precludes a material line of inquiry shall be grounds for denying the petition. 8 C.F.R. § 103.2(b)(14). Instead, the petitioner has sought on appeal to submit additional evidence addressing this deficiency in the record. However, as the petitioner was notified of the deficiency in the RFE and given a reasonable opportunity to supplement the record, this additional evidence will not be considered by the AAO. *Matter of Soriano*, 19 I&N Dec. 764 (BIA 1988).

Accordingly, upon review, the director properly denied the petition because the petitioner failed to establish that it had the continuing ability to pay the proffered wage.

The petition will be denied and the appeal dismissed for the above stated reasons, with each considered as an independent and alternative basis for the decision. 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.