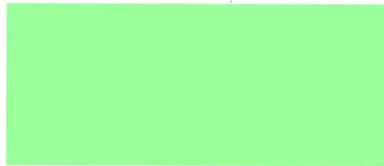


(b)(6)

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Administrative Appeals Office (AAO)
20 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., MS 2090
Washington, DC 20529-2090



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

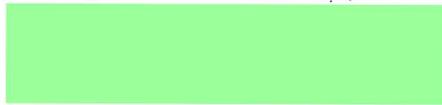


DATE: **FEB 12 2013**

OFFICE: TEXAS SERVICE CENTER

FILE: 

PETITIONER:
BENEFICIARY:



PETITION: Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker as a Skilled Worker or Professional Pursuant to Section 203(b)(3) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(3)

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER:



INSTRUCTIONS:

Enclosed please find the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office in your case. All of the documents related to this matter have been returned to the office that originally decided your case. Please be advised that any further inquiry that you might have concerning your case must be made to that office.

If you believe the AAO inappropriately applied the law in reaching its decision, or you have additional information that you wish to have considered, you may file a motion to reconsider or a motion to reopen in accordance with the instructions on Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion, with a fee of \$630. The specific requirements for filing such a motion can be found at 8 C.F.R. § 103.5. **Do not file any motion directly with the AAO.** Please be aware that 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(1)(i) requires any motion to be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reconsider or reopen.

Thank you,


Ron Rosenberg
Acting Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The Director, Texas Service Center (director), denied the employment-based immigrant visa petition. The petitioner appealed the decision to the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO). The appeal will be dismissed.

The petitioner describes itself as a distributor of natural stone. It seeks to permanently employ the beneficiary in the United States as an accountant. The petitioner requests classification of the beneficiary as a professional or skilled worker pursuant to section 203(b)(3)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(3)(A). The petition is accompanied by a labor certification approved by the U.S. Department of Labor.

The director's decision denying the petition concludes that the petitioner failed to establish that the beneficiary met the minimum educational requirements of the labor certification.

The record shows that the appeal is properly filed and makes a specific allegation of error in law or fact. 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.

The AAO conducts appellate review on a *de novo* basis. See *Soltane v. DOJ*, 381 F.3d 143, 145 (3d Cir. 2004). The AAO considers all pertinent evidence in the record, including new evidence properly submitted upon appeal.¹

On October 9, 2012, the AAO sent the petitioner a request for evidence (RFE) with a copy to counsel. The RFE informed the petitioner that the beneficiary's educational background and employment experience claimed on the application for labor certification were inconsistent with the evidence in the record. The petitioner was reminded that it bears the burden of proof in visa petition proceedings, and that any attempt to explain or reconcile such inconsistencies will not suffice unless the petitioner submits competent objective evidence pointing to where the truth lies. *Matter of Ho*, 19 I&N Dec. 582, 591-92 (BIA 1988). The petitioner was also informed that the evidence in the record did not establish that the petitioner held a bachelor's degree or foreign equivalent degree. The petitioner was directed to provide evidence that the beneficiary had such a degree, or evidence that when it recruited for the proffered job it alerted United States workers what the actual minimum requirements were. Finally, the petitioner was told that it must show its continued ability to pay the proffered wage, and was directed to provide such evidence for 2006 through 2011. The petitioner was informed that failure to submit requested evidence that precludes a material line of inquiry shall be grounds for denying the petition. See 8 C.F.R. § 103.2(b)(14).

Counsel for petitioner responded to the AAO's RFE on November 16, 2012. However, counsel failed to provide any evidence. In his response, counsel asserts that the labor certification contains

¹ The submission of additional evidence on appeal is allowed by the instructions to the Form I-290B, which are incorporated into the regulations by 8 C.F.R. § 103.2(a)(1). The record in the instant case provides no reason to preclude consideration of any of the documents newly submitted on appeal. See *Matter of Soriano*, 19 I&N Dec. 764 (BIA 1988).

erroneous information as a result of prior counsel's ineffective assistance. Counsel further asserts that prior counsel and its successor destroyed the requested evidence related to the instant petition and labor certification. Finally, counsel asserts that the beneficiary is no longer in contact with former employers to document dates of employment.

The assertions of counsel do not constitute evidence. *Matter of Obaigbena*, 19 I&N Dec. 533, 534 (BIA 1988); *Matter of Ramirez-Sanchez*, 17 I&N Dec. 503, 506 (BIA 1980). Further, although the petitioner claims that its counsel was incompetent, in this matter, the petitioner did not properly articulate a claim for ineffective assistance of counsel under *Matter of Lozada*, 19 I&N Dec. 637 (BIA 1988), *affd*, 857 F.2d 10 (1st Cir. 1988). A claim based upon ineffective assistance of counsel requires the affected party to, *inter alia*, file a complaint with the appropriate disciplinary authorities or, if no complaint has been filed, to explain why not. The instant appeal does not address these requirements. The petitioner does not explain the facts surrounding the preparation of the petition or the engagement of the representative. Accordingly, the petitioner did not articulate a proper claim based upon ineffective assistance of counsel.

Counsel's response also fails to address the petitioner's ability to pay the proffered wage at all.

Since the petitioner failed to submit requested evidence that precludes a material line of inquiry, the petition will be denied pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 103.2(b)(14). Further, the evidence in the record is not sufficient to establish that the beneficiary possesses the minimum requirements listed on the labor certification.

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.