

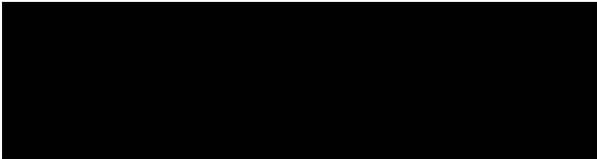
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U.S. Citizenship  
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FILE: EAC 07 142 53599 Office: VERMONT SERVICE CENTER Date: OCT 02 2008  
IN RE: Petitioner: [Redacted]  
Beneficiary: [Redacted]

PETITION: Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker Pursuant to Section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER:

SELF-REPRESENTED

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert P. Wiemann".

Robert P. Wiemann, Chief  
Administrative Appeals Office

**DISCUSSION:** The Director, Vermont Service Center, denied the nonimmigrant visa petition and the matter is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed. The petition will be denied.

The petitioner provides technology application development and consulting services. It seeks to employ the beneficiary as a programmer analyst. The petitioner, therefore, endeavors to classify the beneficiary as a nonimmigrant worker in a specialty occupation pursuant to section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b).

The petitioner filed the Form I-129 petition on April 23, 2007. As of that date, the annual fiscal-year cap on the issuance of H-1B visas, set by section 214(g)(1)(A) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(g)(1)(A) had been reached. The petition was accepted and adjudicated despite the cap limitation, however, because the petitioner indicated on the Form I-129 that the beneficiary had earned a master's or higher degree from a U.S. institution of higher education, as defined in the Higher Education Act of 1965, section 101(a), 20 U.S.C. section 1001(a), and was, therefore, exempt from the annual fiscal-year cap on the issuance of H-1B visas under 214(g)(5)(C) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(g)(5)(c).

Section 214(g)(5)(C) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(g)(5)(C) as modified by the American Competitiveness in the Twenty-first Century Act ((AC21), Pub. L. No. 106-313 (October 17, 2000), states, in relevant part, that the H-1B cap shall not apply to any nonimmigrant alien issued a visa or otherwise provided status under section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the Act who "has earned a master's or higher degree from a United States institution of higher education (as defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)) until the number of aliens who are exempted from such numerical limitation during such year exceeds 20,000." By letter dated April 17, 2007, [REDACTED], CS Graduate Coordinator of Bowling Green State University stated that the beneficiary began her studies in computer science in August of 2005. He further states that the beneficiary "is expected to receive the MS degree in computer science on May 4, 2007. She has completed all degree requirements other than the final project, and the project will be completed before the deadline." The Form I-129 was filed on April 23, 2007. On appeal, the petitioner submitted a second letter from [REDACTED] wherein he stated that the beneficiary began her studies in computer science at Bowling Green State University in August of 2005, and that "she completed all requirements for the degree as of April 20, 2007. On that date she submitted her final project report, and that was her last requirement for the degree. She submitted her H1B application on April 23, just after completion of the degree requirements." It is clear, however, as stated by [REDACTED] in his September 11, 2007 letter, that the applicant did not receive her master's degree until May 4, 2007, 11 days after the filing of the Form I-129.

As previously noted, Section 214(g)(5)(C) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(g)(5)(C) as modified by the American Competitiveness in the Twenty-first Century Act ((AC21), Pub. L. No. 106-313 (October 17, 2000), states, in relevant part, that the H-1B cap shall not apply to any nonimmigrant alien issued a visa or otherwise provided status under section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the Act who "has earned a master's or higher degree from a United States institution of higher education (as defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)) until the number of aliens who are exempted from such numerical limitation during such year exceeds 20,000." The beneficiary had not earned her master's degree, and the degree had not been conferred, when she filed the Form I-129. Thus, she is not exempt from the H-1B visa cap, and the AAO shall not

disturb the director's denial of the petition.

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. The petition is denied.