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U.S. Citizenship  
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[REDACTED]

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FILE: [REDACTED]  
MSC 05 232 10070

Office: NEW YORK

Date:

**SEP 29 2009**

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. The file has been returned to the National Benefits Center. If your appeal was sustained, or if the matter was remanded for further action, you will be contacted. If your appeal was dismissed, 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.

John F. Grissom  
Acting Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

**DISCUSSION:** The application for temporary resident status pursuant to the terms of the settlement agreements reached in *Catholic Social Services, Inc., et al., v. Ridge, et al.*, CIV. NO. S-86-1343-LKK (E.D. Cal) January 23, 2004, and *Felicity Mary Newman, et al., v. United States Immigration and Citizenship Services, et al.*, CIV. NO. 87-4757-WDK (C.D. Cal) February 17, 2004 (CSS/Newman Settlement Agreements), was denied by the Director, New York, New York. The decision is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The director determined that the applicant had not established by a preponderance of the evidence that he had continuously resided in the United States in an unlawful status for the duration of the requisite period.

On appeal, counsel for the applicant submits a brief.

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 period, 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).

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.

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 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.

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). *See* 8 C.F.R. 245a.15(b). To meet his or her burden of proof, an applicant must provide evidence of eligibility apart from the applicant's own testimony. 8 C.F.R. § 245a.12(f). Affidavits indicating specific, personal knowledge of the applicant's whereabouts during the relevant time period are given greater weight than fill-in-the-blank affidavits providing generic information.

The regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(3)(i) states that letters from employers attesting to an applicant's employment must: provide the applicant's address at the time of employment; identify the exact period of employment; show periods of layoff; state the applicant's duties; declare whether the information was taken from company records; and identify the location of such company records and state whether such records are accessible or in the alternative state the reason why such records are unavailable.

The record shows that the applicant submitted the current Form I-687, Application for Status as a Temporary Resident Under Section 245A of the Immigration and Nationality Act, on May 20, 2005. The director denied the application on July 18, 2007.

The applicant claims to have initially entered the United States in December 1981, at the age of 13, and to have departed the United States on only one occasion from January to February 1988 in order to visit family in Ecuador.

The AAO maintains plenary power to review this matter 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 federal courts have long recognized the AAO's *de novo* review authority. *See, e.g. Dor v. INS*, 891 F.2d 997, 1002 n. 9 (2d Cir. 1989).

The issue in this proceeding is whether the applicant has furnished sufficient evidence to demonstrate that he resided in the United States for the duration of the requisite period. In support of his claim, the applicant submitted various objective evidence of his presence in the United States from 1987 forward. With regard to the time period from prior to January 1, 1982, through May 1986, the record reflects he submitted the following relevant documentation in support of his application:

1. Affidavits from [REDACTED] stating she had known the applicant since December 1981; [REDACTED] stating she had known the applicant since December 1981; [REDACTED] stating she knows the applicant came to the United States in 1981; [REDACTED] stating he knows the applicant came to the United States in 1981; [REDACTED] stating he had known the applicant since February 1982, when he was dating the applicant's cousin and that the applicant was living with his cousin in Florida; [REDACTED] stating that the applicant (her cousin) lived with her and her sister when he arrived in the United States in August 1981 until he moved out in 1984; [REDACTED] stating she that the applicant resided with her in New York from 1984 until December 1990; [REDACTED] stating he had known the applicant since May 1985; [REDACTED] stating he had known the applicant since 1985; [REDACTED] stating she had known the applicant since 1988; and, [REDACTED] stating he had known the applicant since 1988. The affidavits lack details as to how the affiants first met the applicant, what their relationships with the applicant were, and how frequently and under what circumstances they saw the applicant. As such, the statements can only be afforded minimal weight as evidence of the applicant's residence and presence in the United States during the requisite time period. Furthermore, none of the affiants provided evidence of their residence in the United States during the time periods attested to.
2. An un-notarized letter from [REDACTED] stating the applicant worked for him as a jewelry repair worker and diamond setter from 1984 to 1987. The letter does not comply with the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(3)(i) in that it fails to provide the applicant's address at the time of employment; identify the exact period of employment; show periods of layoff; declare whether the information was taken from company records; and identify the location of such company records and state whether such records are accessible or in the alternative state the reason why such records are unavailable.
3. Envelopes addressed to the applicant in the United States postmarked in 1981 (to an address in Florida) and 1985 (to an address in New York).
4. Unverifiable handwritten receipts dated in 1983 and 1984.

In summary, for the time period from prior to January 1, 1982, through 1987, the applicant has provided no employment letters that comply with the guidelines set forth in 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(3)(i)(A) through (F), no utility bills according to the guidelines set forth in 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(3)(ii), no school records according to the guidelines set forth in 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(3)(iii), no hospital or medical records according to the guidelines set forth in 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(3)(iv), and no attestations from churches, unions, or other organizations that comply with the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(3)(v). The applicant also has not provided documentation (including, for example, money order receipts, passport entries, children's birth certificates, bank book transactions, letters of correspondence (other than those noted), a Social Security card, Selective Service card, automobile, contract, and insurance documentation, deeds

or mortgage contracts, tax receipts, or insurance policies) according to the guidelines set forth in 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(3)(vi)(A) through (K).

Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(5), the inference to be drawn from the documentation provided shall depend on the extent of the documentation, its credibility and amenability to verification. Given the paucity of the documentation submitted, it is concluded that he has failed to establish continuous residence in an unlawful status in the United States from prior to January 1, 1982 through the date he filed a Form I-687 application 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 always in these proceedings, the burden of proof rests solely with the applicant. Section 245a.2(d)(5) of the Act.

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