

**identifying data deleted to
prevent clearly unwarranted
invasion of personal privacy**

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**



PUBLIC COPY

[REDACTED]

L1

FILE:

[REDACTED]

Office: ATLANTA

Date:

MAR 24 2011

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. If your appeal was dismissed or rejected, all documents have been returned to the National Benefits Center. 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. If your appeal was sustained or remanded for further action, you will be contacted.


Perry Rhew
Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The application for status as a temporary resident, 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, Atlanta on November 19, 2007. The applicant filed an appeal which was rejected as late by the director. On September 20, 2010, the director reopened the application *sua sponte*¹ indicating that the grounds for rejecting the appeal were in error. The decision is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The applicant submitted a Form I-687, Application for Status as a Temporary Resident under Section 245A of the Immigration and Nationality Act (Act), and a Form I-687 Supplement, CSS/Newman Class Membership Worksheet (together comprising the I-687 Application). In the original Notice of Denial (NOD), the director noted that the applicant submitted several affidavits which lacked sufficient detail to be considered probative and which could not be verified. Thus, the director concluded that the applicant failed to establish his eligibility for the benefit sought and denied the application.

On appeal, the applicant asserts that the director denied the application without properly considering the evidence.

The AAO conducts appellate review on a *de novo* basis. *See Soltane v. DOJ*, 381 F.3d 143, 145 (3d Cir. 2004). Following *de novo* review, the AAO finds that the applicant has failed to establish his continuous residence in the United States from January 1, 1982 through the end of the relevant period.

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).

For purposes of establishing residence and physical presence under the CSS/Newman Settlement Agreements, the term “until the date of filing” in 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(b)(1) means until the date the applicant attempted to file a completed Form I-687 application and fee or was caused not to timely file during the original legalization application period of May 5, 1987 to May 4, 1988. CSS Settlement Agreement, paragraph 11 at page 6; Newman Settlement Agreement, paragraph 11 at page 10.

¹Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 210.2(g), the director may *sua sponte* reopen any adverse decision. Additionally, the director may certify any such decision to the AAO. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 210.2(h).

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).

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). 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.2(d)(6).

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, "[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 or petition.

As a preliminary matter, counsel questions the AAO's jurisdiction of the appeal because the director notes that the applicant has not established his class membership under the CSS/Newman Settlement Agreements. According to the settlement agreements, the director shall issue a NOID before denying an application for class membership, and appeals of class membership should be forwarded to the Special Master following Notice of Intent to Deny. Here, the director adjudicated the Form I-687 application on the merits. As a result, the director is found not to have denied the application for class membership. Thus, the AAO retains jurisdiction of the appeal.

Secondly, the director raised the issue of whether the applicant was discouraged from filing during the eligibility period of the legalization program. This is a separate issue that relates to the applicant's eligibility for class membership, and therefore will not be addressed in this decision. Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(p), the AAO has jurisdiction over this appeal on the issue of the applicant's failure to provide evidence of continued unlawful residence during the requisite period.

In support of his assertion that he (1) entered the United States before January 1, 1982 and (2) has continuously resided in the United States in an unlawful status throughout the relevant period, the applicant submits the following:

- Affidavits from [REDACTED] While the affiants indicate that they met the applicant during the relevant period, they fail to provide sufficient details regarding the applicant's residence in the United States. They do not indicate how they date the applicant's initial entry or residence, or how frequently they saw him during the relevant period.
- An affidavit from [REDACTED] who indicates that the applicant worked at [REDACTED] under his ownership beginning in 1986 through 1989. He also indicates that the applicant worked for the restaurant under the ownership of [REDACTED] beginning in 1981. The letter fails to meet certain regulatory standards set forth at 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(3)(i), which provides that letters from employers must include the applicant's address at the time of employment; exact period of employment; whether the information was taken from official company records and where records are located and whether USCIS may have access to the records; if records are unavailable, an affidavit form-letter stating that the employment records are unavailable may be accepted which shall be signed, attested to by the employer under penalty of perjury and shall state the employer's willingness to come forward and give testimony if requested. The statement submitted does not include much of the required information and can be afforded minimal weight as evidence of the applicant's residence in the United States for the duration of the requisite period.
- A letter from [REDACTED], of [REDACTED] indicating that the applicant's employment records were unavailable. The applicant indicates on his Form I-687 that he began working for this company in 1989. Therefore, his employment is not relevant to this appeal.
- Copies of deposit slips and a Statement of Account from [REDACTED] dated in 1986. These will be given no evidentiary weight, however, because the address for the applicant which is indicated on the documents is in Houston, Texas. The applicant does not indicate on his Form I-687 or in his testimony, that he ever resided in Houston, Texas.
- Copies of Statement of Earnings from [REDACTED] dated in 1986. The applicant does not indicate that he ever worked at [REDACTED]. The only employment that he lists for the relevant period is [REDACTED], noted above. These documents will be given no evidentiary weight.

It is incumbent upon the applicant to resolve any inconsistencies in the record by independent objective evidence. Any attempt to explain or reconcile such inconsistencies will not suffice unless the applicant submits competent objective evidence pointing to where the truth lies. *Matter of Ho*,

19 I&N Dec. 582, 591-92 (BIA 1988). Doubt cast on any aspect of the applicant's proof may, of course, lead to a reevaluation of the reliability and sufficiency of the application. *Id.* at 591.

It is further noted that the applicant list two absences from the United States during the relevant period on his Form I-687, in August 1985 until October 1985 and June 1987 until August 1987. It is unclear whether these absences exceed the 45 day limit for a single absence. Continuous unlawful residence is broken if an absence from the United States is more than 45 days on any one trip unless return could not be accomplished due to emergent reasons. 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(h)(1)(i). "Emergent reasons" has been defined as "coming unexpectedly into being." *Matter of C*, 19 I&N Dec. 808 (Comm. 1988). The applicant has not addressed his absences.

Upon a *de novo* review of all of the evidence in the record, the AAO agrees with the director that the evidence submitted by the applicant has not established that he is eligible for the benefit sought.

Therefore, based upon the foregoing, the applicant has failed to establish by a preponderance of the evidence that he entered the United States before January 1, 1982 and continuously resided in an unlawful status in the United States for the requisite period 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.

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