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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**



L1

DATE: APR 30 2012

OFFICE: HOUSTON

FILE: 

IN RE:

Applicant: 

APPLICATION:

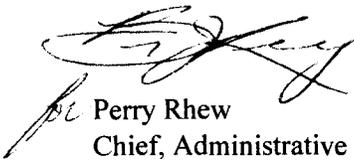
Application for Status as a Temporary Resident pursuant to Section 245A of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended, 8 U.S.C. § 1255a

ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT:



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: On April 15, 2005, the applicant filed an 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). The application was approved on August 28, 2007. On September 20, 2001, the director of the Houston office issued a notice of intent to terminate the applicant's temporary resident status. The applicant submitted a rebuttal. On February 24, 2011, the director of the Houston office terminated the applicant's temporary resident status. The decision is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be sustained.

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 245(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. 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). To meet his or her burden of proof, an applicant must provide evidence of eligibility apart from his or her own testimony, and the sufficiency of all evidence produced by the applicant will be judged according to its probative value and credibility. 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(6).

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).

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. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(6). The weight to be given any affidavit depends on the totality of the circumstances, and a number of factors must be considered. More weight will be given to an affidavit in which the affiant indicates personal knowledge of the applicant's whereabouts during the time period in question rather than a fill-in-the-blank affidavit that provides generic information. The regulations provide specific guidance on the sufficiency of documentation when proving residence through evidence of past employment or attestations by churches or other organizations. 8 C.F.R. §§ 245a.2(d)(3)(i) and (v).

Even if the director has some doubt as to the truth, if the petitioner 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 or petitioner has satisfied the standard of proof. *See U.S. v. Cardozo-Fonseca*, 480 U.S. 421, 431 (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.

The issue in this proceeding is whether the applicant established 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 requisite period. The evidence submitted in support of the applicant's claim to have arrived in the United States before January 1982 and to have resided in an unlawful status during the requisite period consists of numerous affidavits. The AAO has reviewed the documents to determine the applicant's eligibility.

The director terminated the applicant's temporary resident status, finding the applicant failed to establish his continuous residence. The director noted several minor inconsistencies between the applicant's testimony on his Form I-687 and the affiants' testimony regarding the applicant's exact street addresses during the 1980s. The Form I-687 was filed in 2005, more than 20 years after the applicant resided at the addresses in question.

The director found fault with the applicant's evidence, stating that the applicant and affiants had failed to submit "tangible evidence to support [their] claims." There is no requirement for legalization applicants and affiants to submit tangible evidence. If available and submitted for the record, the Service will evaluate such evidence. The Service cannot superimpose additional evidentiary requirements in the absence of proper rulemaking.

In the notice of termination, the director stated "you still have not submitted any evidence as to why a 9-year old boy would go to a strange country . . . [or] why you did not attend school in the United States." According to interview notes in the record of proceedings, when asked why he did not attend school in the United States, the applicant answered that he worked to help his

family. It is unclear what type of evidence would have satisfied the adjudicator. The record is clear that he satisfactorily answered the questions.

Based upon the foregoing, the AAO finds that the applicant has established 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 from such date through 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, eligible for temporary resident status under section 245A of the Act on this basis. The director's decision shall be withdrawn and the application shall be approved.

ORDER: The appeal is sustained.