

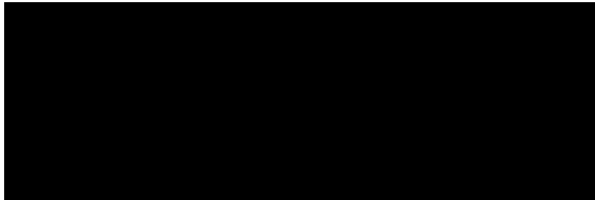
identifying data deleted to
prevent clearly unwarranted
invasion of personal privacy

PUBLIC COPY

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: FEB 27 2012

OFFICE: GARDEN CITY

FILE: 

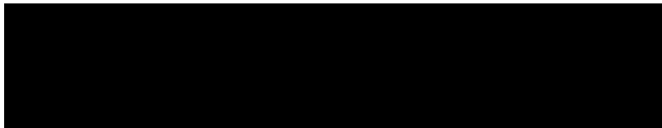
IN RE:

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: 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 of the Garden City office. The decision is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

On November 4, 2005, the applicant submitted a Form I-687, Application for Status as a Temporary Resident under Section 245A of the Immigration and Nationality Act (Act). On April 19, 2007, the director of the Garden City office erroneously denied the I-687 application, finding that the applicant abandoned the application, pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 103.2(b)(13), by failing to appear for a scheduled interview on November 7, 2006.¹ Because the director erred in denying the application based on abandonment, the applicant has the right to appeal the decision to the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO).

On February 1, 2011, the applicant submitted a Form I-694, Notice of Appeal of Decision Under Section 210 or 245A. On January 5, 2012, the AAO issued the applicant a Notice of Intent to Deny (NOID) and provided the applicant 21 days in which to respond or to provide additional evidence in support of his claim. The NOID was mailed to counsel and the applicant at their addresses of record; however, counsel's NOID was returned as undeliverable. The record reflects that no new address has been filed by counsel. As of the date of this decision, no response or additional evidence has been received; therefore, the record will be considered complete. The director's decision will be withdrawn and the AAO will consider the applicant's claim de novo, evaluating the sufficiency of the evidence in the record according to its probative value and credibility as required by the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 245a.2(d)(6).²

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) means until the date the

¹ On December 14, 2009, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California ruled that United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) may not apply its abandonment regulation, 8 C.F.R. § 103.2(b)(13), in adjudicating legalization applications filed by CSS class members. See, *CSS v. Michael Chertoff*, Case 2:86-cv-01343-LKK-JFM.

² The AAO conducts appellate review on a *de novo* basis. The AAO's *de novo* authority is well recognized by the federal courts. See *Soltane v. DOJ*, 381 F.3d 143, 145 (3d Cir. 2004).

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 periods, 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, 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).

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 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 or petitioner 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. Doubt cast on any aspect of the applicant's proof may lead to a reevaluation of the reliability and sufficiency of

the remaining evidence offered in support of the application. *Matter of Ho*, 19 I & N Dec. 582, 591-592 (BIA).

The issue in this proceeding is whether the applicant has 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 attestations from five individuals claiming to know the applicant during the requisite period. The AAO has reviewed the document to determine the applicant's eligibility.

The affidavits from [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] are general in nature and state that the applicant resided in the United States for all of the requisite period. The statements fail to establish the applicant's continuous unlawful residence in the United States for the duration of the requisite period. As stated previously, the evidence must be evaluated not by the quantity of evidence alone but by its quality; 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. While the affidavits provide some details of their relationship with the applicant, they fail to provide sufficient concrete information, specific to the applicant and generated by the asserted associations with him, which would reflect and corroborate the extent of those associations and demonstrate that the declarants have a sufficient basis for reliable knowledge about the applicant's residence during the time addressed in the statements. Further, [REDACTED] fails to state how he dates his initial acquaintance with the applicant; he merely states he has known the applicant since 1981 and they met [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] states he met the applicant in October 1981 at a Sikh Temple in Flushing, New York.

To be considered probative and credible, witness affidavits must do more than simply state that an affiant knows an applicant and that the applicant has lived in the United States for a specific time period. Their content must include sufficient detail from a claimed relationship to indicate that the relationship probably did exist and that the witness does, by virtue of that relationship, have knowledge of the facts alleged. Upon review, the AAO finds that the affidavits provide little probative value and will be given minimal weight as evidence in support of the applicant's claim. The affidavit from [REDACTED] is not amenable to verification as he resides in India and will be given no weight as evidence in support of the applicant's claim.

The evidence, in totality, provides a general account of the applicant's claimed residence in the United States during the requisite period and fails to provide specific details which would reflect and corroborate a reliable knowledge of the circumstances of the applicant's residence for the length of time claimed by the witnesses. Upon a *de novo* review of all of the evidence in the record, the AAO finds that the applicant has not established that he is eligible for the benefit sought.

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.