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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
20 Mass. Ave., N.W., Rm. 3000
Washington, D.C. 20529



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

L2



FILE:



MSC 03 249 64214

Office: HOUSTON

Date:

MAR 21 2008

IN RE:

Applicant:



APPLICATION:

Application for Status as a Permanent Resident pursuant to Section 1104 of the Legal Immigration Family Equity (LIFE) Act of 2000, Pub. L. 106-553, 114 Stat. 2762 (2000), *amended by* Life Act Amendments, Pub. L. 106-554, 114 Stat. 2763 (2000).

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 [or Records] 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.

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

Robert P. Wiemann, Chief
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The application for permanent resident status under the Legal Immigration Family Equity (LIFE) Act was denied by the District Director, Houston, Texas, and is now before the Administrative Appeals Office on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The director denied the application because the applicant had failed to establish that he satisfied the “basic citizenship skills” required under section 1104(c)(2)(E) of the LIFE Act.

On appeal, counsel asserts that the applicant was not able to properly prepare for the English language and civics tests because his former counsel did not make him aware of the requirements. Counsel asserts that the director did not allow the applicant to be re-tested.

Under section 1104(c)(2)(E)(i) of the LIFE Act (“Basic Citizenship Skills”), an applicant for permanent resident status must demonstrate that he or she:

- (I) meets the requirements of section 312(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1423(a)) (relating to minimal understanding of ordinary English and a knowledge and understanding of the history and government of the United States); or
- (II) is satisfactorily pursuing a course of study (recognized by the Attorney General) to achieve such an understanding of English and such a knowledge and understanding of the history and government of the United States.

Under section 1104(c)(2)(E)(ii) of the LIFE Act, the Attorney General may waive all or part of the above requirements for aliens who are at least 65 years of age or developmentally disabled.

The applicant, who was 41 years old at the time he took the basic citizenship skills test and provided no evidence to establish that he was developmentally disabled, does not qualify for either of the exceptions in section 1104(c)(2)(E)(ii) of the LIFE Act. Further the applicant does not satisfy the “basic citizenship skills” requirement of section 1104(c)(2)(E)(i)(I) of the LIFE Act because he does not meet the requirements of section 312(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act). An applicant can demonstrate that he or she meets the requirements of section 312(a) of the Act by “[s]peaking and understanding English during the course of the interview for permanent resident status” and answering questions based on the subject matter of approved citizenship training materials, or “[b]y passing a standardized section 312 test . . . by the Legalization Assistance Board with the Educational Testing Service (ETS) or the California State Department of Education with the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS).” 8 C.F.R. §§ 245a.3(b)(4)(iii)(A)(1) and (2).

The regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(b) provides that an applicant who fails to pass the English literacy and/or the United States history and government tests at the time of the interview, shall be afforded a second opportunity after 6 months (or earlier at the request of the applicant) to pass the tests or submit evidence as described in paragraphs (a)(2) or (a)(3) of this section.

The record reflects that the applicant was interviewed twice in connection with his LIFE application, on October 6, 2004, and again on June 15, 2005. On both occasions, the applicant failed to demonstrate a minimal knowledge of United States history and government. Furthermore, the applicant has not provided evidence of having passed a standardized citizenship test, as permitted by 8 C.F.R. § 312.3(a)(1).

The applicant, however, could have met the basic citizenship skills requirement under section 1104(c)(2)(E)(i)(II) of the LIFE Act by showing, pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a), that he:

- (2) has a high school diploma or general educational development diploma (GED) from a school in the United States; or
- (3) has attended, or is attending, a state recognized, accredited learning institution in the United States, and that institution certifies such attendance.

The record does not reflect that the applicant has a high school diploma or a GED from a United States school, and therefore does not satisfy the regulatory requirement of 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a)(2).

On September 12, 2005, the director issued a Notice of Intent to Deny, which advised the applicant of his failure to pass the United States history and government tests. The applicant, in response, asserted that he has been a victim of several unscrupulous methods of lawyers for filing his petition. The applicant claimed that at his last interview he was informed that no knowledge of United States history was required for residency applicants. The applicant requested that he be informed “as to what I need to know to do for my application to be approved.”

The applicant, however, cites no statute or regulation that compels the director to schedule the applicant for a third interview. The regulation only provides *one* opportunity after the failure of the first test. 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(b).

On appeal, counsel asserts that the director failed to follow the adjudicator’s field manual and did not give the applicant an opportunity to be re-tested.

Counsel’s assertion has no merit as the record clearly reflects that the applicant was afforded a second opportunity, eight months later, to pass the history portion of the test. The applicant once again failed to pass the test.

Counsel also asserts that the applicant was not able to properly prepare for the English language and civics tests because his former counsel did not make him aware of the requirements. The record, however, does not contain any evidence that the applicant was being represented in these proceedings until on appeal.¹ As such, even if applicable in this instance, the applicant has not taken the required steps to file a complaint of ineffectual assistance of counsel with the proper licensing authority.

As previously discussed, the applicant failed to meet the “basic citizenship skills” requirement of section 1104(c)(2)(E)(i)(I) of the LIFE Act because at his two interviews he did not demonstrate a minimal knowledge of United States history and government.

Therefore, the applicant does not satisfy either alternative of the “basic citizenship skills” requirement set forth in section 1104(c)(2)(E)(i) of the LIFE Act. Accordingly, the applicant is ineligible for adjustment to permanent resident status under section 1104 of the LIFE Act.

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

¹ The record does reflect that the applicant was represented by a counsel in a separate proceeding (Petition for Special Immigrant); however, that occurred five years prior to the filing of this LIFE application.