



NEWS RELEASE

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Application Deadline Approaches for Nicaraguans and Cubans

Eligible to Apply for NACARA Benefits

WASHINGTON – The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) today reminds Nicaraguans and Cubans eligible to file for benefits under section 202 of the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA) that the closing date for filing an application for Adjustment of Status is March 31, 2000. All applications filed with INS must be received at the Texas Service Center on or before March 31. Having the application postmarked by March 31 will not suffice. INS cannot accept NACARA 202 applications received after March 31.

This deadline is of particular importance to those potential applicants (both principals and dependents) who are currently outside the United States, since they must be physically present in the United States in order to apply for the NACARA adjustment benefit. These potential adjustment applicants must first apply to be paroled into the United States in order to file a NACARA adjustment application by the statutory filing deadline of March 31, 2000. The INS will make every effort to adjudicate parole requests in light of the impending deadline. However, since the processing of advance parole requests may take up to 60 days, it is imperative that such applications be filed immediately.

Any advance parole request that has not been processed to completion by INS with a travel document issued before March 31 will subsequently be denied. No fee refunds for such advance parole applications will be granted. In addition, any travel document issued will be valid only if presented at a U.S. port of entry before April 1. Any person who seeks to travel to the United States on or after April 1 using a parole document issued for purposes of filing a NACARA adjustment application will be refused entry.

Dependent children who are approaching their 21st birthday are reminded that the Service may deny an applicant's parole application if it determines that it is not feasible to process the request and issue the travel document in sufficient time for the dependent to travel to the United States, file an application for adjustment of status by March 31, and have that adjustment application completely processed prior to the applicant's 21st birthday.

To be eligible for NACARA benefits, Nicaraguan and Cuban principals and unmarried sons and daughters 21 or older must have been continuously physically present in the United States since December 1, 1995. Spouses and children under 21 must be physically

present in the United States at the time they apply. All NACARA applicants must also be admissible to the United States under all provisions of section 212(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, except those provisions specifically exempted by NACARA.

"Continuously physically present" means having spent no more than a total of 180 days outside the United States between December 1, 1995 and the date the NACARA adjustment application is granted.

Further information on NACARA can be obtained by accessing the INS Web site - www.ins.usdoj.gov - or through the INS customer service number: 1-800 375-5283 or TTY: 1-800-767-1833, (Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Eastern Time).

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