

W The Olsen Law Firm IMMIGRATION WATCH

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We welcome you to meet the Immis! They help us simplify the immigration process for you. The Immis are in every issue of our newsletter and act as your personal guides to various immigration topics.



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Immi, Jr. says:

Religious workers, you need to know that USCIS extends the suspension for premium processing services for R-1 visa petitions until July 8, 2008.

USCIS EXTENDS SUSPENSION OF PREMIUM PROCESSING SERVICE FOR RELIGIOUS WORKERS (R-1) NONIMMIGRANT VISA CLASSIFICATION

Source: [AMERICAN IMMIGRATION LAWYERS ASSOCIATION \(AILA\)](#)

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced that suspension of premium processing services for religious worker (R-1) visa petitions will be extended until July 8, 2008. A previous six-month suspension was announced on June 18, 2007.

The Premium Processing Service provides faster processing of certain employment-based petitions and guarantees a 15-calendar day processing time. USCIS needs additional time to assess whether it is possible to provide this level of service for nonimmigrant religious worker petitions. Due to the complexities with adjudicating R-1 visa petitions, USCIS cannot reasonably ensure a level of processing service within 15 calendar days.

On April 25, 2007, USCIS proposed significant revisions to its regulations related to the special immigrant and nonimmigrant (R-1) religious worker visa classifications. USCIS is currently considering comments on the proposed rule and promulgating the final rule. The proposed rule suggested steps to eliminate fraud in the religious worker program and discusses concerns addressed in an August 2005 Benefit Fraud Assessment conducted by USCIS Office of Fraud Detection and National Security. That assessment revealed potential vulnerabilities in the religious worker program.

USCIS will continue processing R-1 visa petitions which include already-established procedures designed to ensure the legitimacy of the petitioner and statements made in the petition. The procedures

may include inspections, evaluations, verifications and compliance reviews for religious organizations – procedures that exceed the 15-day guarantee for premium processing.

In the future, if USCIS is able to properly process these cases within 15 calendar days of receipt, the Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker (Form I-129) requesting R-1 nonimmigrant visa classification may once again be available for premium processing services. Additionally, USCIS may prescribe additional conditions of availability on the Premium Processing Service for religious worker petitions.



Immi says:

Let's look at a couple of updates on employment-based immigration:

1. Employers do not forget to change to the new Form I-9.
2. February 2008 Visa Bulletin

USCIS REMINDS EMPLOYERS TO TRANSITION TO NEW EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION FORM BY DEC. 26, 2007

Source: AMERICAN IMMIGRATION LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (AILA)

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will announce in a Federal Register notice Nov. 26, 2007 that employers must transition to the revised Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9) not later than Dec. 26, 2007. All employers are required to complete a Form I-9 for each employee hired in the United States.

On Nov. 7, USCIS announced the availability of the revised version of Form I-9 (includes the revision date -- (Rev. 06/05/07) N printed on the lower right corner of the form) which is now the only version valid for use. In that Nov. 7 announcement, USCIS explained that employers would have 30 days, beginning on the date the Federal Register notice is published, to transition to the revised form. Accordingly, effective Dec. 26, 2007, employers who fail to use the revised form will be subject to applicable penalties.

Both the revised form and the "Handbook for Employers, Instructions for Completing the Form I-9" are available online at www.uscis.gov. To order forms, call USCIS toll-free at (800) 870-3676. For forms and information on immigration laws, regulations, and procedures, call the National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283.

VISA BULLETIN FOR FEBRUARY 2008

Source: AMERICAN IMMIGRATION LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (AILA)

	All Charge-ability Areas Except Those Listed	CHINA-mainland born	India	Mexico	PHILIP-PINES
Employment-Based					
1st	C	C	C	C	C
2nd	C	01JAN03	U	C	C
3rd	01NOV02	15NOV01	08MAY01	22APR01	01NOV02
other workers	01OCT01	01OCT01	01OCT01	01OCT01	01OCT01
4th	C	C	C	C	C
Certain Religious Workers	C	C	C	C	C
5th	C	C	C	C	C
Targeted Employment Areas/ Regional Centers	C	C	C	C	C



Immi says:

Oh!! Employers, you need to know that the USCIS has expanded and improved the E-Verify program.

USCIS ANNOUNCES IMPROVEMENTS FOR E-VERIFY TELEPHONE CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE

Source: AMERICAN IMMIGRATION LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (AILA)

Strengthening the Employment Eligibility Document Review Process for the Nation's Employers U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced efforts to expand and improve contact services for customers to obtain important information and assistance on the E-Verify program.

Beginning today, E-Verify will expand the available hours for customers to reach program support by utilizing the USCIS National Customer Service Center (NCSC). Employers and others requesting information on E-Verify can contact the program through NCSC by calling the E-Verify program number at (888) 464-4218 from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday-Friday, regardless from which time zone the call originates.

By using a "tiered" call handling process through the National Customer Service Center, USCIS is able to reduce wait times for customers. Routine calls will be handled by agents assigned at the NCSC, while more complex issues will be transferred directly to analysts assigned to the USCIS E-Verify program in Washington, D.C. In the coming months, USCIS will offer additional access methods for E-Verify customers. In addition, USCIS will proactively call new E-Verify customers within 24-48 hours of registration to offer additional information and instructions.

E-Verify, formerly known as the Basic Pilot employment eligibility verification program, is a free Web-based system that allows participating employers to electronically verify the employment eligibility of newly-hired employees. The program electronically

compares new employee information taken from the Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9) against more than 425 million records in the Social Security Administration's database and more than 60 million records in the Department of Homeland Security's immigration databases.

More than 43,000 employers are currently enrolled in the program – with an average of 1,000 joining each week. Details on the program are available on the E-Verify Web site at www.uscis.gov/e-verify.



Citizen Immi says:

U.S. citizens, you may begin applying for the new U.S Passport Card on February 1, 2008.

DOS ANNOUNCES U.S. CITIZENS MAY APPLY FOR NEW U.S. PASSPORT CARD BEGINNING 02/01/2008

Source: **AMERICAN IMMIGRATION LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (AILA)**

U.S. citizens may begin applying in advance for the new U.S. Passport Card beginning February 1, 2008, in anticipation of land border travel document requirements. We expect cards will be available and mailed to applicants in spring 2008.

The passport card will facilitate entry and expedite document processing at U.S. land and sea ports-of-entry when arriving from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda. The card may not be used to travel by air. It will otherwise carry the rights and privileges of the U.S. passport book and will be adjudicated to the exact same standards.

The Department of State is issuing this passport card in response to the needs of border resident communities for a less expensive and more portable alternative to the traditional passport book. The card will have the same validity period as a passport book: 10 years for an adult, five for children 15 and younger. For adults who already have a passport book, they may apply for the card as a passport renewal and pay only \$20. First-time applicants will pay \$45 for adult cards and \$35 for children.

To facilitate the frequent travel of U.S. citizens living in border communities and to meet DHS's operational needs at land borders, the passport card will contain a vicinity-read radio frequency identification (RFID) chip. This chip will link the card to a stored record in secure government databases. There will be no personal information written to the RFID chip itself.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT APPLYING FOR A U.S. PASSPORT CARD OR PASSPORT, PLEASE VISIT: TRAVEL.STATE.GOV

QUICK INFORMATION BYTES

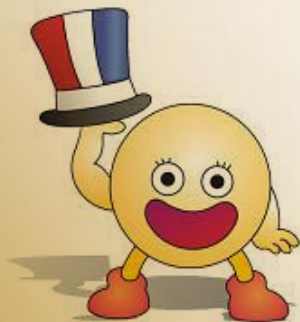


Immi, Jr. says: It is best to always check that your name is consistently spelled correctly on all official documents related to F-1 status.

Immi says: It is best to keep a file of all official documents related to all non-immigrant and immigrant matters for future reference.



Citizen Immi says: For the naturalization process, the permanent resident must be ready to present evidence of valid permanent resident status.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Explanation:

If you have questions concerning immigration related issues or concerns and are of a non-advice and pure general interest nature, please e-mail them to tolsen@tlolaw.com

IMPORTANT IMMIGRATION RELATED WEB SITES

- US Citizenship and Immigration Services
<http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis>
- Department of Labor
<http://www.dol.gov/>
- Department of State
<http://www.state.gov/>
- Embassies in Washington D.C.
<http://www.embassy.org/>
- Visa Bulletin
http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/bulletin/bulletin_1360.html



OLSEN LAW FIRM

Attorney: Terrence L. Olsen, Esq.
E-mail: tolsen@tlolaw.com
Web site: www.tlolaw.com
Phone: (423) 648-9390
(423) 648-9370 (for Chinese and Taiwanese language assistance)
Fax: (615) 250-4904

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