



USCIS Update

February 4, 2009

NON-MINISTER CATEGORY OF SPECIAL IMMIGRANT RELIGIOUS WORKERS TO EXPIRE ON MARCH 6, 2009

WASHINGTON—U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) reminds its customers that authorization for the non-minister special immigrant religious worker program will expire on March 6, 2009. Individuals applying under the non-minister category of the program, including family members, must either adjust status to permanent resident or be admitted with an immigrant visa before March 6, 2009.

The expiring category covers special immigrant religious workers in professional or non-professional capacities within a religious vocation or occupation, but does not include those workers entering the United States solely to carry on the vocation of a minister of a religious denomination. The expiration date also applies to spouses and children of these non-minister workers who are accompanying the non-minister worker, or who will 'follow to join'.

USCIS continues to receive and process Petitions for Amerasian, Widow(er), or Special Immigrant (Form I-360) for those immigrant religious workers affected by the upcoming expiration date. USCIS is also, to the extent that it can, expeditiously processing Applications to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status (Form I-485), based on approved Form I-360 petitions for non-minister special immigrant religious workers. The applicant requesting 'following to join' on Application for Action on an Approved Application or Petition (I-824) whose basis for the adjustment was an approved I-360 petition for a non-minister category (SR) or who is requesting an approved I-360 SR petition to the Department of State's National Visa Center (NVC), may request expedited processing of Form I-824.

Absent a Congressional extension of the expiration date, USCIS will, beginning on March 6, 2009, suspend further processing of any pending Form I-360, Form I-485, and Form I-824 affected by the expiration date until further notice. Also, unless or until Congress extends the expiration date, USCIS will reject Form I-360 petitions, Form I-485 and Form I-824 applications filed on or after March 6, 2009 that are based on the expired provisions.

Customers are encouraged to check our Web site at www.uscis.gov frequently for updates or call the National Customer Service Center at (800) 375-5283.

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