



Office of Communications

U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

USCIS Update

Sept. 19, 2008

TWO CATEGORIES OF SPECIAL IMMIGRANT RELIGIOUS WORKERS TO EXPIRE ON OCTOBER 1

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 Oct. 1, 2008. Individuals applying to serve in the two non-minister categories of the program must either adjust status to permanent residence or apply for, and be admitted with, an immigrant visa before Oct. 1, 2008.

The two expiring categories are special immigrant religious workers in professional or non-professional capacities within a religious vocation or occupation. The expiration date also applies to the accompanying spouses and children of these workers. Special immigrant religious workers entering the United States solely to carry on the vocation of a minister of a religious denomination are not impacted by the expiration date.

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 special immigrant religious workers in the expiring categories.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation on April 14, 2008, extending the expiration date; the Senate is currently considering similar legislation. If congressional action results in the extension of the expiration date, affected special immigrant religious workers with an approved Form I-360 may be eligible to file Form I-485.

Absent a congressional extension of the expiration date, USCIS will, beginning on Oct. 1, 2008, hold in abeyance any pending Form I-360 and Form I-485 affected by the expiration date until further notice. Also, unless or until Congress extends the expiration date, USCIS will reject Form I-360 petitions and Form I-485 applications filed on or after Oct. 1, 2008, which are based on the expired provisions.

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