

§ 656.17

20 CFR Ch. V (4–1–25)

the significance of this date). The Immigration Officer must then promptly forward a copy of the *Application for Permanent Employment Certification* form, without attachments, to the Office of Foreign Labor Certification (OFLC) Administrator.

(c) *Alternative filing.* If an application for a shepherd does not meet the requirements of this section, the application may be filed under § 656.17.

[69 FR 77386, Dec. 27, 2004, as amended at 71 FR 35523, June 21, 2006]

§ 656.17 Basic labor certification process.

(a) *Filing applications.* (1) Except as otherwise provided by §§ 656.15, 656.16, and 656.18, an employer who desires to apply for a labor certification on behalf of an alien must file a completed Department of Labor *Application for Permanent Employment Certification* form (ETA Form 9089). The application must be filed with an ETA application processing center. Incomplete applications will be denied. Applications filed and certified electronically must, upon receipt of the labor certification, be signed immediately by the employer in order to be valid. Applications submitted by mail must contain the original signature of the employer, alien, attorney, and/or agent when they are received by the application processing center. DHS will not process petitions unless they are supported by an original certified ETA Form 9089 that has been signed by the employer, alien, attorney and/or agent.

(2) The Department of Labor may issue or require the use of certain identifying information, including user identifiers, passwords, or personal identification numbers (PINS). The purpose of these personal identifiers is to allow the Department of Labor to associate a given electronic submission with a single, specific individual. Personal identifiers can not be issued to a company or business. Rather, a personal identifier can only be issued to specific individual. Any personal identifiers must be used solely by the individual to whom they are assigned and can not be used or transferred to any other individual. An individual assigned a personal identifier must take all reasonable steps to ensure that his or her per-

sonal identifier can not be compromised. If an individual assigned a personal identifier suspects, or becomes aware, that his or her personal identifier has been compromised or is being used by someone else, then the individual must notify the Department of Labor immediately of the incident and cease the electronic transmission of any further submissions under that personal identifier until such time as a new personal identifier is provided. Any electronic transmissions submitted with a personal identifier will be presumed to be a submission by the individual assigned that personal identifier. The Department of Labor's system will notify those making submissions of these requirements at the time of each submission.

(3) Documentation supporting the application for labor certification should not be filed with the application, however in the event the Certifying Officer notifies the employer that its application is to be audited, the employer must furnish required supporting documentation prior to a final determination.

(b) *Processing.* (1) Applications are screened and are certified, are denied, or are selected for audit.

(2) Employers will be notified if their applications have been selected for audit by the issuance of an audit letter under § 656.20.

(3) Applications may be selected for audit in accordance with selection criteria or may be randomly selected.

(c) *Filing date.* Non-electronically filed applications accepted for processing shall be date stamped. Electronically filed applications will be considered filed when submitted.

(d) *Refiling procedures.* (1) Employers that filed applications under the regulations in effect prior to March 28, 2005, may, if a job order has not been placed pursuant to those regulations, refile such applications under this part without loss of the original filing date by:

(i) Submitting an application for an identical job opportunity after complying with all of the filing and recruiting requirements of this part 656; and

(ii) Withdrawing the original application in accordance with ETA procedures. Filing an application under this

part stating the employer's desire to use the original filing date will be deemed to be a withdrawal of the original application. The original application will be deemed withdrawn regardless of whether the employer's request to use the original filing date is approved.

(2) Refilings under this paragraph must be made within 210 days of the withdrawal of the prior application.

(3) A copy of the original application, including amendments, must be sent to the appropriate ETA application processing center when requested by the CO under § 656.20.

(4) For purposes of paragraph (d)(1)(i) of this section, a job opportunity shall be considered identical if the employer, alien, job title, job location, job requirements, and job description are the same as those stated in the original application filed under the regulations in effect prior to March 28, 2005. For purposes of determining identical job opportunity, the original application includes all accepted amendments up to the time the application was withdrawn, including amendments in response to an assessment notice from a SWA pursuant to § 656.21(h) of the regulations in effect prior to March 28, 2005.

(e) *Required pre-filing recruitment.* Except for labor certification applications involving college or university teachers selected pursuant to a competitive recruitment and selection process (§ 656.18), *Schedule A* occupations (§§ 656.5 and 656.15), and sheepherders (§ 656.16), an employer must attest to having conducted the following recruitment prior to filing the application:

(1) *Professional occupations.* If the application is for a professional occupation, the employer must conduct the recruitment steps within 6 months of filing the application for alien employment certification. The employer must maintain documentation of the recruitment and be prepared to submit this documentation in the event of an audit or in response to a request from the Certifying Officer prior to rendering a final determination.

(i) *Mandatory steps.* Two of the steps, a job order and two print advertisements, are mandatory for all applications involving professional occupa-

tions, except applications for college or university teachers selected in a competitive selection and recruitment process as provided in § 656.18. The mandatory recruitment steps must be conducted at least 30 days, but no more than 180 days, before the filing of the application.

(A) *Job order.* Placement of a job order with the SWA serving the area of intended employment for a period of 30 days. The start and end dates of the job order entered on the application shall serve as documentation of this step.

(B) *Advertisements in newspaper or professional journals.* (1) Placing an advertisement on two different Sundays in the newspaper of general circulation in the area of intended employment most appropriate to the occupation and the workers likely to apply for the job opportunity and most likely to bring responses from able, willing, qualified, and available U.S. workers.

(2) If the job opportunity is located in a rural area of intended employment that does not have a newspaper with a Sunday edition, the employer may use the edition with the widest circulation in the area of intended employment.

(3) The advertisements must satisfy the requirements of paragraph (f) of this section. Documentation of this step can be satisfied by furnishing copies of the newspaper pages in which the advertisements appeared or proof of publication furnished by the newspaper.

(4) If the job involved in the application requires experience and an advanced degree, and a professional journal normally would be used to advertise the job opportunity, the employer may, in lieu of one of the Sunday advertisements, place an advertisement in the professional journal most likely to bring responses from able, willing, qualified, and available U.S. workers. Documentation of this step can be satisfied by providing a copy of the page in which the advertisement appeared.

(ii) *Additional recruitment steps.* The employer must select three additional recruitment steps from the alternatives listed in paragraphs (e)(1)(ii)(A)-(J) of this section. Only one of the additional steps may consist

solely of activity that took place within 30 days of the filing of the application. None of the steps may have taken place more than 180 days prior to filing the application.

(A) *Job fairs.* Recruitment at job fairs for the occupation involved in the application, which can be documented by brochures advertising the fair and newspaper advertisements in which the employer is named as a participant in the job fair.

(B) *Employer's Web site.* The use of the employer's Web site as a recruitment medium can be documented by providing dated copies of pages from the site that advertise the occupation involved in the application.

(C) *Job search Web site other than the employer's.* The use of a job search Web site other than the employer's can be documented by providing dated copies of pages from one or more website(s) that advertise the occupation involved in the application. Copies of web pages generated in conjunction with the newspaper advertisements required by paragraph (e)(1)(i)(B) of this section can serve as documentation of the use of a Web site other than the employer's.

(D) *On-campus recruiting.* The employer's on-campus recruiting can be documented by providing copies of the notification issued or posted by the college's or university's placement office naming the employer and the date it conducted interviews for employment in the occupation.

(E) *Trade or professional organizations.* The use of professional or trade organizations as a recruitment source can be documented by providing copies of pages of newsletters or trade journals containing advertisements for the occupation involved in the application for alien employment certification.

(F) *Private employment firms.* The use of private employment firms or placement agencies can be documented by providing documentation sufficient to demonstrate that recruitment has been conducted by a private firm for the occupation for which certification is sought. For example, documentation might consist of copies of contracts between the employer and the private employment firm and copies of advertisements placed by the private em-

ployment firm for the occupation involved in the application.

(G) *Employee referral program with incentives.* The use of an employee referral program with incentives can be documented by providing dated copies of employer notices or memoranda advertising the program and specifying the incentives offered.

(H) *Campus placement offices.* The use of a campus placement office can be documented by providing a copy of the employer's notice of the job opportunity provided to the campus placement office.

(I) *Local and ethnic newspapers.* The use of local and ethnic newspapers can be documented by providing a copy of the page in the newspaper that contains the employer's advertisement.

(J) *Radio and television advertisements.* The use of radio and television advertisements can be documented by providing a copy of the employer's text of the employer's advertisement along with a written confirmation from the radio or television station stating when the advertisement was aired.

(2) *Nonprofessional occupations.* If the application is for a nonprofessional occupation, the employer must at a minimum, place a job order and two newspaper advertisements within 6 months of filing the application. The steps must be conducted at least 30 days but no more than 180 days before the filing of the application.

(i) *Job order.* Placing a job order with the SWA serving the area of intended employment for a period of 30 days. The start and end dates of the job order entered on the application serve as documentation of this step.

(ii) *Newspaper advertisements.* (A) Placing an advertisement on two different Sundays in the newspaper of general circulation in the area of intended employment most appropriate to the occupation and the workers likely to apply for the job opportunity.

(B) If the job opportunity is located in a rural area of intended employment that does not have a newspaper that publishes a Sunday edition, the employer may use the newspaper edition with the widest circulation in the area of intended employment.

(C) Placement of the newspaper advertisements can be documented in the

same way as provided in paragraph (e)(1)(i)(B)(3) of this section for professional occupations.

(D) The advertisements must satisfy the requirements of paragraph (f) of this section.

(f) *Advertising requirements.* Advertisements placed in newspapers of general circulation or in professional journals before filing the *Application for Permanent Employment Certification* must:

- (1) Name the employer;
- (2) Direct applicants to report or send resumes, as appropriate for the occupation, to the employer;
- (3) Provide a description of the vacancy specific enough to apprise the U.S. workers of the job opportunity for which certification is sought;
- (4) Indicate the geographic area of employment with enough specificity to apprise applicants of any travel requirements and where applicants will likely have to reside to perform the job opportunity;
- (5) Not contain a wage rate lower than the prevailing wage rate;
- (6) Not contain any job requirements or duties which exceed the job requirements or duties listed on the ETA Form 9089; and
- (7) Not contain wages or terms and conditions of employment that are less favorable than those offered to the alien.

(g) *Recruitment report.* (1) The employer must prepare a recruitment report signed by the employer or the employer's representative noted in § 656.10(b)(2)(ii) describing the recruitment steps undertaken and the results achieved, the number of hires, and, if applicable, the number of U.S. workers rejected, categorized by the lawful job related reasons for such rejections. The Certifying Officer, after reviewing the employer's recruitment report, may request the U.S. workers' resumes or applications, sorted by the reasons the workers were rejected.

(2) A U.S. worker is able and qualified for the job opportunity if the worker can acquire the skills necessary to perform the duties involved in the occupation during a reasonable period of on-the-job training. Rejecting U.S. workers for lacking skills necessary to perform the duties involved in the occupation, where the U.S. workers are

capable of acquiring the skills during a reasonable period of on-the-job training is not a lawful job-related reason for rejection of the U.S. workers.

(h) *Job duties and requirements.* (1) The job opportunity's requirements, unless adequately documented as arising from business necessity, must be those normally required for the occupation and must not exceed the Specific Vocational Preparation level assigned to the occupation as shown in the O*NET Job Zones. To establish a business necessity, an employer must demonstrate the job duties and requirements bear a reasonable relationship to the occupation in the context of the employer's business and are essential to perform the job in a reasonable manner.

(2) A foreign language requirement can not be included, unless it is justified by business necessity. Demonstrating business necessity for a foreign language requirement may be based upon the following:

- (i) The nature of the occupation, e.g., translator; or
- (ii) The need to communicate with a large majority of the employer's customers, contractors, or employees who can not communicate effectively in English, as documented by:

(A) The employer furnishing the number and proportion of its clients, contractors, or employees who can not communicate in English, and/or a detailed plan to market products or services in a foreign country; and

(B) A detailed explanation of why the duties of the position for which certification is sought requires frequent contact and communication with customers, employees or contractors who can not communicate in English and why it is reasonable to believe the allegedly foreign-language-speaking customers, employees, and contractors can not communicate in English.

(3) If the job opportunity involves a combination of occupations, the employer must document that it has normally employed persons for that combination of occupations, and/or workers customarily perform the combination of occupations in the area of intended employment, and/or the combination job opportunity is based on a business necessity. Combination occupations

§ 656.17

20 CFR Ch. V (4-1-25)

can be documented by position descriptions and relevant payroll records, and/or letters from other employers stating their workers normally perform the combination of occupations in the area of intended employment, and/or documentation that the combination occupation arises from a business necessity.

(4)(i) Alternative experience requirements must be substantially equivalent to the primary requirements of the job opportunity for which certification is sought; and

(ii) If the alien beneficiary already is employed by the employer, and the alien does not meet the primary job requirements and only potentially qualifies for the job by virtue of the employer's alternative requirements, certification will be denied unless the application states that any suitable combination of education, training, or experience is acceptable.

(i) *Actual minimum requirements.* DOL will evaluate the employer's actual minimum requirements in accordance with this paragraph (i).

(1) The job requirements, as described, must represent the employer's actual minimum requirements for the job opportunity.

(2) The employer must not have hired workers with less training or experience for jobs substantially comparable to that involved in the job opportunity.

(3) If the alien beneficiary already is employed by the employer, in considering whether the job requirements represent the employer's actual minimums, DOL will review the training and experience possessed by the alien beneficiary at the time of hiring by the employer, including as a contract employee. The employer can not require domestic worker applicants to possess training and/or experience beyond what the alien possessed at the time of hire unless:

(i) The alien gained the experience while working for the employer, including as a contract employee, in a position not substantially comparable to the position for which certification is being sought, or

(ii) The employer can demonstrate that it is no longer feasible to train a worker to qualify for the position.

(4) In evaluating whether the alien beneficiary satisfies the employer's ac-

tual minimum requirements, DOL will not consider any education or training obtained by the alien beneficiary at the employer's expense unless the employer offers similar training to domestic worker applicants.

(5) For purposes of this paragraph (i):

(i) The term "employer" means an entity with the same Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN), provided it meets the definition of an employer at § 656.3.

(ii) A "substantially comparable" job or position means a job or position requiring performance of the same job duties more than 50 percent of the time. This requirement can be documented by furnishing position descriptions, the percentage of time spent on the various duties, organization charts, and payroll records.

(j) *Conditions of employment.* (1) Working conditions must be normal to the occupation in the area and industry.

(2) Live-in requirements are acceptable for household domestic service workers only if the employer can demonstrate the requirement is essential to perform, in a reasonable manner, the job duties as described by the employer and there are not cost-effective alternatives to a live-in household requirement. Mere employer assertions do not constitute acceptable documentation. For example, a live-in requirement could be supported by documenting two working parents and young children in the household, and/or the existence of erratic work schedules requiring frequent travel and a need to entertain business associates and clients on short notice. Depending upon the situation, acceptable documentation could consist of travel vouchers, written estimates of costs of alternatives such as babysitters, or a detailed listing of the frequency and length of absences of the employer from the home.

(k) *Layoffs.* (1) If there has been a layoff by the employer applicant in the area of intended employment within 6 months of filing an application involving the occupation for which certification is sought or in a related occupation, the employer must document it

has notified and considered all potentially qualified laid off (employer applicant) U.S. workers of the job opportunity involved in the application and the results of the notification and consideration. A layoff shall be considered any involuntary separation of one or more employees without cause or prejudice.

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (k)(1) of this section, a related occupation is any occupation that requires workers to perform a majority of the essential duties involved in the occupation for which certification is sought.

(1) *Alien influence and control over job opportunity.* If the employer is a closely held corporation or partnership in which the alien has an ownership interest, or if there is a familial relationship between the stockholders, corporate officers, incorporators, or partners, and the alien, or if the alien is one of a small number of employees, the employer in the event of an audit must be able to demonstrate the existence of a bona fide job opportunity, *i.e.*, the job is available to all U.S. workers, and must provide to the Certifying Officer, the following supporting documentation:

(1) A copy of the articles of incorporation, partnership agreement, business license or similar documents that establish the business entity;

(2) A list of all corporate/company officers and shareholders/partners of the corporation/firm/business, their titles and positions in the business' structure, and a description of the relationships to each other and to the alien beneficiary;

(3) The financial history of the corporation/company/partnership, including the total investment in the business entity and the amount of investment of each officer, incorporator/partner and the alien beneficiary; and

(4) The name of the business' official with primary responsibility for interviewing and hiring applicants for positions within the organization and the name(s) of the business' official(s) having control or influence over hiring decisions involving the position for which labor certification is sought.

(5) If the alien is one of 10 or fewer employees, the employer must docu-

ment any family relationship between the employees and the alien.

§ 656.18 Optional special recruitment and documentation procedures for college and university teachers.

(a) *Filing requirements.* Applications for certification of employment of college and university teachers must be filed by submitting a completed *Application for Permanent Employment Certification* form to the appropriate ETA application processing center.

(b) *Recruitment.* The employer may recruit for college and university teachers under § 656.17 or must be able to document the alien was selected for the job opportunity in a competitive recruitment and selection process through which the alien was found to be more qualified than any of the United States workers who applied for the job. For purposes of this paragraph (b), documentation of the "competitive recruitment and selection process" must include:

(1) A statement, signed by an official who has actual hiring authority from the employer outlining in detail the complete recruitment procedures undertaken; and which must set forth:

(i) The total number of applicants for the job opportunity;

(ii) The specific lawful job-related reasons why the alien is more qualified than each U.S. worker who applied for the job; and

(2) A final report of the faculty, student, and/or administrative body making the recommendation or selection of the alien, at the completion of the competitive recruitment and selection process;

(3) A copy of at least one advertisement for the job opportunity placed in a national professional journal, giving the name and the date(s) of publication; and which states the job title, duties, and requirements;

(4) Evidence of all other recruitment sources utilized; and

(5) A written statement attesting to the degree of the alien's educational or professional qualifications and academic achievements.

(c) *Time limit for filing.* Applications for permanent alien labor certification for job opportunities as college and