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Press Release

USCIS to Expand Premium Processing Service *Three Additional Employment-based Immigrant Visa Categories* *Available Starting September 25, 2006*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced today the addition of three new categories to the Premium Processing Service, which allows U.S. businesses to pay a \$1,000 Premium Processing fee in exchange for 15-calendar-day processing of their case.

Starting on September 25, 2006, USCIS will begin accepting Premium Processing requests for Form I-140, Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker, involving the following immigrant visa categories:

- EB-1, outstanding professors and researchers,
- EB-2, members of professions with advanced degrees or exceptional ability *not seeking a National Interest Waiver*, and
- EB-3, workers other than skilled workers and professionals (i.e., unskilled labor requiring less than two years of training or experience).

Under the Premium Processing Service, USCIS guarantees petitioners that, for a \$1,000 processing fee, it will issue either an approval notice, or where appropriate, a notice of intent to deny, a request for evidence or open an investigation for fraud or misrepresentation, within 15 calendar days of receipt. If the petition is not processed within 15 calendar days, USCIS will refund the \$1,000 fee and continue to process the request as part of the Premium Processing Service. In addition to faster processing, petitioners who participate in the program may use a dedicated phone number and e-mail address to check on the status of their petition or ask any other questions they may have concerning their petition. Premium Processing Service continues to be available for previously designated classifications within Form I-140 and Form I-129, Petition for Nonimmigrant Worker.

Since 2001, Premium Processing Service has been available for several classifications within Form I-129, including E Treaty Traders and Investors, H-1B Specialty Occupation Workers, H-2B Temporary Workers performing non-agricultural services, H-3 Trainees, L Intracompany Transferees, O Aliens of Extraordinary Ability and those performing essential support services, P Performers and Athletes and those performing essential support services, and Q international Cultural Exchange Visitors, R Religious Workers and NAFTA Professionals from Canada and Mexico. Form I-129 petitions for those nonimmigrant worker classifications will continue to be eligible for Premium Processing Service unless the filing period has closed (for example, when the annual cap for a specific visa has been reached.)

(more)

Also, since August 28, USCIS began accepting Premium Processing Service requests for petitions involving two other immigrant visa categories, the EB-3 Professionals, (i.e. immigrant workers with bachelor degrees who are members of the professions), and EB-3 Skilled Workers, (i.e. immigrant workers capable of performing skilled labor requiring at least two years of education, training or experience). Employers file for both of these immigrant visa categories using the Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker (Form I-140) as well.

Information about the expanded Premium Processing Service is available on the USCIS website at http://www.uscis.gov/graphics/howdoi/prem_process.htm or by calling the USCIS National Customer Service Center toll free at 1-800-375-5283.

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On March 1, 2003, U.S Citizenship and Immigration Services became one of three legacy INS components to join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. USCIS is charged with fundamentally transforming and improving the delivery of immigration and citizenship services, while enhancing our nation's security.