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MAURA T. HEALEY
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April 30, 2024

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
300 7th Street Southwest
Washington, DC, 20024

RECEIVED
By ESEC at 9:50 am, May 01, 2024

Dear Secretary Mayorkas,

I write to request a waiver from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to permit expedited work authorizations, temporary work authorizations or provisional work authorizations, as statutorily required by the Massachusetts State Legislature.

Work authorizations are pivotal in moving immigrants out of Massachusetts' emergency family shelter system that is already stretched past capacity and for long-term success as residents in the United States. My administration has seen strong results in our efforts to assist immigrants with applying for their work authorizations and connecting them with legal services, job training and placement programs. We greatly appreciate DHS's assistance in hosting a work authorization clinic for immigrants in November of 2023 that helped fast track thousands of applications. Since then, we have assisted 3,559 immigrants with work authorization applications, and because of the hard work of your team to drastically improve this process, we expect the vast majority have been approved.

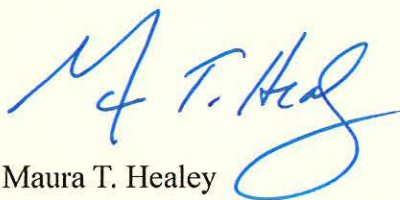
Our efforts to connect immigrants with work authorizations and jobs has benefitted our economic growth as we can help companies address critical workforce needs and grow their businesses. But in the intervening months, Massachusetts continues to see an unabating influx of immigrant arrivals. We need more federal assistance to support these families and connect them with job opportunities. Granting a waiver to meet the growing demand of work authorizations will help address the burdensome and costly application process.

In August 2023, I declared a state of emergency and sent a letter to you detailing the rapidly rising numbers of immigrant families arriving and the severe lack of shelter availability in the state. My declaration served as a notice that Massachusetts's shelter system was expanding at an unsustainable rate, and further financial assistance was quickly needed. I subsequently sent you a letter in September of 2023 outlining requests for changes to the work authorization process. As we have experienced in Massachusetts, the best way to help families exit the shelter system is to get them on a path to self-sufficiency the moment they arrive. In the absence of significant financial or structural assistance from Congress, we ask that you allow for work authorizations to be steadily expedited in order to alleviate this unsustainable situation.

These immigrants are ready to join the workforce and we need to support them in the process.

I appreciate your swift assistance in this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. T. Healey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Maura T. Healey
Governor of Massachusetts



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

August 5, 2024

The Honorable Maura T. Healey
Governor of Massachusetts
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Healey:

Thank you for your April 30, 2024 letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). I am responding on behalf of the Department.

DHS recognizes the importance of employment authorization to eligible noncitizens as well as to U.S. employers and communities. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) remains committed to reducing our Employment Authorization Document (EAD) processing times. This commitment includes a focus on adjudicating applications for employment authorization that may be outside of normal processing times.

On April 8, 2024, USCIS published a temporary final rule (TFR), “Temporary Increase of the Automatic Extension Period of Employment Authorization and Documentation for Certain Employment Authorization Document Renewal Applicants.” This TFR temporarily increases the automatic extension period from up to 180 days to up to 540 days for certain renewal applicants who have timely and properly filed EAD renewal applications.¹ This TFR will help prevent lapses in employment authorization and documentation for qualifying EAD renewal applicants and support the continuity of operations for the U.S. businesses that employ them.

In addition, USCIS has taken several other actions, including:

- Increasing the maximum available validity period to five years for both initial and renewal EADs for certain noncitizens, including applicants for asylum and those granted asylum;
- For the period beginning October 2023 and continuing through June 2024, completing 90.5 percent of initial EAD applications filed by asylum applicants within 30 days, and 98.4 percent within 60 days;
- Launching a national campaign in September 2023 for noncitizens who are work-eligible but who have yet to apply for an EAD. As of early April 2024, USCIS sent nearly 2.2 million email and text notifications in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole,

¹ See 89 Fed. Reg. 24,628 (Apr. 8, 2024).

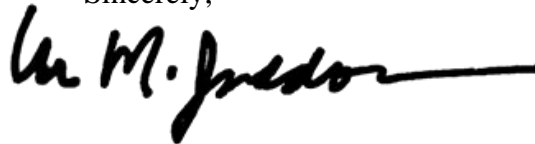
- Ukrainian, and Russian to several groups of individuals to remind them of their eligibility to apply for employment authorization;
- Delivering on a commitment to a reduce EAD median processing times from 90 days to 30 days for noncitizens paroled under the processes for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans or after scheduling a CBP One appointment; and
 - Since November 2023, USCIS has supported the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in its efforts to provide application assistance to new arrivals by providing USCIS services at clinics and in coordination with the state biometrics services in a centralized location.

USCIS has also prioritized stakeholder engagement, hosting several outreach events, both in-person and virtual, in partnership with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, public libraries and immigrant-serving organizations. Since September 2023, USCIS has held over 160 national and local outreach events for nearly 11,700 participants. In Boston, USCIS has held 11 outreach events specifically on employment authorization.

Through these actions, USCIS aims to significantly reduce both processing times and backlogs. We will continue to seek ways to increase efficiencies and decrease adjudication times. We will also continue to engage with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on these issues.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Should you require any additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ur M. Jaddou", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ur M. Jaddou
Director