



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

**Non-Precedent Decision of the
Administrative Appeals Office**

In Re: 24826197

Date: MAR. 21, 2023

Appeal of Texas Service Center Decision

Form I-140, Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker (National Interest Waiver)

The Petitioner, an electrical engineering researcher, seeks second preference immigrant classification as a member of the professions holding an advanced degree, as well as a national interest waiver of the job offer requirement attached to this EB-2 classification. *See* Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act) section 203(b)(2), 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(2).

The Director of the Texas Service Center denied the petition, concluding that the Petitioner qualified for classification as a member of the professions holding an advanced degree, but that he had not established that a waiver of the required job offer, and thus of the labor certification, would be in the national interest. The matter is now before us on appeal. 8 C.F.R. § 103.3.

On appeal, the Petitioner submits additional documentation and a brief asserting that he is eligible for a national interest waiver. The Petitioner bears the burden of proof to demonstrate eligibility by a preponderance of the evidence. *Matter of Chawathe*, 25 I&N Dec. 369, 375-76 (AAO 2010). We review the questions in this matter de novo. *Matter of Christo's, Inc.*, 26 I&N Dec. 537, 537 n.2 (AAO 2015). Upon de novo review, we will sustain the appeal.

I. LAW

To establish eligibility for a national interest waiver, a petitioner must first demonstrate qualification for the underlying EB-2 visa classification, as either an advanced degree professional or an individual of exceptional ability in the sciences, arts, or business. Because this classification requires that the individual's services be sought by a U.S. employer, a separate showing is required to establish that a waiver of the job offer requirement is in the national interest.

Section 203(b) of the Act sets out this sequential framework:

- (2) Aliens who are members of the professions holding advanced degrees or aliens of exceptional ability. –
 - (A) In general. – Visas shall be made available . . . to qualified immigrants who are members of the professions holding advanced degrees or their equivalent or

who because of their exceptional ability in the sciences, arts, or business, will substantially benefit prospectively the national economy, cultural or educational interests, or welfare of the United States, and whose services in the sciences, arts, professions, or business are sought by an employer in the United States.

(B) Waiver of job offer –

(i) National interest waiver. . . . [T]he Attorney General may, when the Attorney General deems it to be in the national interest, waive the requirements of subparagraph (A) that an alien’s services in the sciences, arts, professions, or business be sought by an employer in the United States.

While neither the statute nor the pertinent regulations define the term “national interest,” we set forth a framework for adjudicating national interest waiver petitions in the precedent decision *Matter of Dhanasar*, 26 I&N Dec. 884 (AAO 2016). *Dhanasar* states that after a petitioner has established eligibility for EB-2 classification, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) may, as a matter of discretion,¹ grant a national interest waiver if the petitioner demonstrates: (1) that the foreign national’s proposed endeavor has both substantial merit and national importance; (2) that the foreign national is well positioned to advance the proposed endeavor; and (3) that, on balance, it would be beneficial to the United States to waive the requirements of a job offer and thus of a labor certification.

The first prong, substantial merit and national importance, focuses on the specific endeavor that the foreign national proposes to undertake. The endeavor’s merit may be demonstrated in a range of areas such as business, entrepreneurialism, science, technology, culture, health, or education. In determining whether the proposed endeavor has national importance, we consider its potential prospective impact.

The second prong shifts the focus from the proposed endeavor to the foreign national. To determine whether he or she is well positioned to advance the proposed endeavor, we consider factors including, but not limited to: the individual’s education, skills, knowledge and record of success in related or similar efforts; a model or plan for future activities; any progress towards achieving the proposed endeavor; and the interest of potential customers, users, investors, or other relevant entities or individuals.

The third prong requires the petitioner to demonstrate that, on balance, it would be beneficial to the United States to waive the requirements of a job offer and thus of a labor certification. In performing this analysis, USCIS may evaluate factors such as: whether, in light of the nature of the foreign national’s qualifications or the proposed endeavor, it would be impractical either for the foreign national to secure a job offer or for the petitioner to obtain a labor certification; whether, even assuming that other qualified U.S. workers are available, the United States would still benefit from the foreign national’s contributions; and whether the national interest in the foreign national’s contributions is sufficiently urgent to warrant forgoing the labor certification process. In each case, the factor(s)

¹ See also *Poursina v. USCIS*, No. 17-16579, 2019 WL 4051593 (Aug. 28, 2019) (finding USCIS’ decision to grant or deny a national interest waiver to be discretionary in nature).

considered must, taken together, indicate that on balance, it would be beneficial to the United States to waive the requirements of a job offer and thus of a labor certification.²

II. ANALYSIS

The Director found that the Petitioner qualifies as a member of the professions holding an advanced degree.³ The sole issue to be determined is whether the Petitioner has established that a waiver of the requirement of a job offer, and thus a labor certification, would be in the national interest.

At the time of filing, the Petitioner was serving as an assistant professor and researcher at the [redacted] University [redacted] Iran. Regarding his work at [redacted] University, the Petitioner stated:

My main research focus has been the introduction, design, formulation, implementation, and development of new numerical algorithms for solving integral equations, integro-differential and differential equations, and computational electromagnetics problems. I have published more than 30 peer reviewed articles in various international journals as the outcome of my research.

With regard to his proposed endeavor, the Petitioner indicated that he intended to continue his research on the above numerical analysis and computational methods in the United States, and “will focus particularly on linear Fredholm integral equations, which are widely used for modeling and analysis of many physical and engineering problems; linear differential equations of arbitrary order and coefficients, which are widely used in many engineering applications; and electromagnetic scattering analysis, which supports a wide variety of real-world applications.” The Petitioner submitted evidence that he has applied with the [redacted] research group of the [redacted] [redacted] for the positions of “postdoctoral associate in wireless sensing and electromagnetics” and “postdoctoral associate in wireless biomedical sensing and antennae.”⁴ On appeal, he presents additional information about the work of [redacted] research group. For the reasons discussed below, we conclude the Petitioner has established eligibility for a national interest waiver under the analytical framework set forth in *Dhanasar*.

A. Substantial Merit and National Importance of the Proposed Endeavor

As evidence that his proposed research has substantial merit and national importance, the Petitioner presented letters of support discussing his development of high-speed algorithms for solving integro-differential, differential, and integral equations and lower-difficulty methods for analyzing problems related to electromagnetic scattering and radiation structures, and indicating his work has applications

² See *Dhanasar*, 26 I&N Dec. at 888-91, for elaboration on these three prongs.

³ The Petitioner presented his Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering from [redacted] University in Iran. He also submitted an academic evaluation report which concluded that the aforementioned degree is the foreign equivalent of a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering from an accredited college or university in the United States.

⁴ As the Petitioner is applying for a waiver of the job offer requirement, it is not necessary for him to have a job offer from a specific employer. However, we will consider information about his position at [redacted] University in Iran and his desired positions at [redacted] to illustrate the capacity in which he intends to work in order to determine whether his proposed endeavor meets the requirements of the *Dhanasar* framework.

in diverse applications including improving the efficiency of electricity generation, measuring pollutants in an environment, and enhancing medical imaging technology. Additionally, the Petitioner has submitted documentation indicating that the benefit of his proposed research involving computational electromagnetics has broader implications for the field, as the results are disseminated to others in the field through scientific journals and conferences. As the Petitioner has demonstrated both the substantial merit and national importance of his proposed research, he has established that he meets the first prong of the *Dhanasar* framework.

B. Well Positioned to Advance the Proposed Endeavor

The second prong shifts the focus from the proposed endeavor to the Petitioner. The record includes his curriculum vitae, academic records (including his Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering), published work, peer review activity, and documentation of numerous articles that cited to his research findings.⁵ In addition, the Petitioner offered reference letters describing his expertise in numerical analysis and computational electromagnetics and his past record of success in those research areas. Several expert references identify specific examples of how the Petitioner's research progress relating to those research areas has affected his field. As corroborating documentation regarding the significance of his work, the Petitioner provided evidence showing that his published work has been frequently cited by independent researchers. On appeal, he presents the 2022 U.S. National Science and Technology Council's updated list of critical and emerging technologies. His experience and expertise as an electrical engineering researcher, published articles, citation evidence, and progress in his field position him well to advance his proposed endeavor. Accordingly, the Petitioner has demonstrated that he satisfies the second prong of the *Dhanasar* framework.

C. Balancing Factors to Determine Waiver's Benefit to the United States

As explained above, the third prong requires the petitioner to demonstrate that, on balance, it would be beneficial to the United States to waive the requirements of a job offer and thus of a labor certification.⁶ As an electrical engineering researcher with a Ph.D., the Petitioner possesses considerable experience and expertise in his research field. The Petitioner has documented his past successes in advancing research relating to numerical analysis and computational electromagnetics and publishing influential research findings. The record also demonstrates the widespread scientific benefits associated with research progress in the development of efficient numerical algorithms to address problems in the field of electrical engineering. Based on the Petitioner's track record of successful research and the significance of his proposed work to advance U.S. scientific interests, we conclude that he offers contributions of such value that, on balance, they would benefit the United States even assuming that

⁵ "USCIS considers an advanced degree, particularly a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), in a STEM field tied to the proposed endeavor and related to work furthering a critical and emerging technology or other STEM area important to U.S. competitiveness or national security, an especially positive factor to be considered along with other evidence for purposes of the assessment under the second prong." See 6 *USCIS Policy Manual* F.5(D)(2), <https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual>.

⁶ When evaluating the third prong, USCIS considers the following combination of facts contained in the record to be a strong positive factor:

- The person possesses an advanced STEM degree, particularly a Ph.D.;
- The person will be engaged in work furthering a critical and emerging technology or other STEM area important to U.S. competitiveness; and
- The person is well positioned to advance the proposed STEM endeavor of national importance.

See *USCIS Policy Manual*, *supra*, at F.5(D)(2).

other qualified U.S. workers are available. The Petitioner, therefore, meets the third prong of the *Dhanasar* framework.

III. CONCLUSION

The Petitioner has met the requisite three prongs set forth in the *Dhanasar* analytical framework. We conclude that he has established he is eligible for and otherwise merits a national interest waiver as a matter of discretion.

ORDER: The appeal is sustained.