



**USCIS Announces on April 9th - H-1B Visas for FY2011 still available**

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services recently reported that there are a significant number of H-1B visas still available. As of April 9th, only approximately 13,500 H-1B petitions counting towards the 65,000 cap had been received in. The USCIS received approximately 5,600 petitions for individuals with advanced degrees. Fiscal Year 2011 begins October 1.

USCIS will continue to accept H-1B petitions for Fiscal Year 2011 until the cap is exhausted. For cases filed for premium processing during the initial five-day filing window of April 1 through 7, the 15-day premium processing period began on April 7. For cases filed for premium processing after the filing window, the premium processing period begins on the date the petition is physically received at the correct USCIS Service Center.

H-1B visas are reserved for foreign nationals who are coming to the U.S. to work in a "specialty occupation." A "specialty occupation" is defined as a position for which a bachelor's or higher degree or equivalent is normally the minimum requirement for entry into the particular position.

For more information, please contact our law firm.

**DHS Secretary Napolitano Announces New Enhanced Security Measures for International Flights to the U.S.**

On April 2, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano announced that the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) will begin implementing new enhanced security measures for all air carriers with international flights to the U.S. These measures will supersede the emergency measures put in place immediately following the attempted terrorist attack on December 25, 2009.

The new, enhanced measures are part of a dynamic, threat-based aviation security system covering all passengers traveling by air to the United States while focusing security measures in a more effective and efficient manner to ensure the safety and security of the traveling public. Passengers traveling to the United States from international destinations may notice enhanced security and random screening measures throughout the passenger check-in and boarding process, including the use of explosives trace detection, advanced imaging technology, canine teams, or pat downs, among other security measures.

For additional information on this topic, please contact our law firm.

**U.S. Passport Card – Alternative to the traditional passport book under certain circumstances**

Do you frequently travel to Canada or Mexico by land, or the Caribbean by sea? If so, the U.S. Passport Card may be a good alternative to the standard passport book for entry into the United States.

The Department of State began producing U.S. Passport Cards on July 14, 2008. The passport cards are wallet sized like a typical driver's license. It is a travel document that can be used to enter the U.S. from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Bermuda at land border crossings or sea ports-of-entry. **The passport card cannot be used for international air travel.**

The U.S. Passport Card has the same period of validity as the Passport Book – 10 years for adults and 5 years for minors under the age of 16. The card costs \$45 for a first-time adult passport applicant and \$35 for all minor applicants under the age of 16, regardless of whether they are previous passport book or card holders. U.S. citizens, whether or not they have a passport book, may apply for a passport card. Adults who already have a fully valid passport book may apply for a passport card as a renewal by mail for a cost of \$20. Unlike the passport book, the card cannot be shipped using overnight delivery, but will be returned using First Class Mail.

The passport card contains a vicinity-read radio frequency identification (RFID) chip. This chip points to a stored record in secure government databases. There is no personal information written to the RFID chip itself. The RFID technology allows Customs and Border Protection (CBP) inspectors at ports of entry to access photographs and other biographical information stored in secure government databases as the traveler approaches an inspection station.

For additional information on this topic, please contact our law firm.

The information contained in this e-newsletter is intended as information only, and is not to be construed as legal advice.



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