

OCTOBER 6, 2017 BULLETIN TO ALL IMMIGRATION CLIENTS

New USCIS Form I-765 Allows Foreign Nationals to Obtain a Work Authorization Document and a Social Security Number Simultaneously

Based on a new information-sharing partnership between the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the Social Security Administration (SSA), foreign nationals in certain visa categories can now apply for work authorization and a social security number using a single form, i.e., the new version of Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, **effective immediately**.

As background, to lawfully work in the United States, certain foreign workers require both an employment authorization document (EAD) from the USCIS and a Social Security number (SSN) from the SSA. The purpose of an EAD card is to show employers that an individual is authorized to work in the U.S. for a specific time period. SSNs are used to report wages to the government and to determine an individual's eligibility for certain benefits. Previously, applicants were required to first submit a Form I-765 application to the USCIS to obtain an EAD card and, thereafter, submit additional paperwork at their local Social Security office to obtain an SSN. Now, however, foreign nationals in certain immigration classifications can utilize the Form I-765 application to apply for both an EAD card and an SSN, simultaneously.

Common non-immigrant and immigrant visa categories that utilize the Form I-765 application to obtain work authorization in the United States include:

- Foreign Students who apply for Curricular Practical Training (CPT) or Optional Practical Training (OPT)
- Employment-Based Nonimmigrants (i.e., F-2, J-2, Spouse of an E-2, L-2, and certain H-4 dependents)
- Family-Based Nonimmigrants
- Adjustment-of-Status Applicants
- Asylees/Refugees and their Spouses and Children
- Temporary Protected Status (TPS) recipients
- Eligible Dependents of Employees of Diplomatic Missions, International Organization, or NATO

The revised I-765 form includes additional questions that allow applicants to apply for an SSN (or replacement card) without having to visit a Social Security office. As a result of its new partnership with the SSA, the USCIS will now transmit the additional data collected on the form to the SSA for processing so that Form I-765 applicants who receive their approved EADs from the USCIS will then receive their Social Security cards from the SSA within the following two (2) weeks of receiving the EAD.

Please contact any member of the Cohen & Grigsby Immigration Department if you have any questions regarding the above at 412.297.4900. To receive future bulletins and news alerts, please send an e-mail to bulletin@cohenlaw.com.

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