



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

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Application: Request for Designation as a Regional Center
Applicants: Walter M. Cummins, Jr. and James R. LaVigne

RE: Designation of the Florida Equity & Growth Fund Regional Center (FEGF-RC) under the Immigrant Investor Pilot Program.

BACKGROUND:

Pursuant to Section 610 of the Appropriations Act of 1993, on December 18, 2007, Florida EB-5, LLP submitted a proposal seeking approval and designation by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) of the Florida Equity & Growth Fund Regional Center (FEGF-RC), with a geographic area focusing on the entire state of Florida. On June 18, 2008, USCIS issued a request for evidence (RFE). On September 12, 2008, and December 3, 2008, responses to the RFE were received which satisfactorily supplied the requested evidence, clarified the target industries and limited the geographic scope of the Regional Center to the Florida High Tech Corridor (FHTC). FHTC is located within the following counties: Alachua, Brevard, Citrus, De Soto, Flagler, Hardee, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Lake, Levy, Manatee, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, Sarasota, Seminole, Sumter, and Volusia. The FEGF-RC, for EB-5 Immigrant Investor purposes shall focus "*investments into a mix of 'new' businesses, 'major expansions' of businesses and 'troubled' businesses*" in the following eight (8) target industry economic clusters:

1. NAICS 721 Traveler Accommodation;
2. NAICS 722 Food Services and Drinking Places;

3. NAICS 44-45 Retail Trade;
4. NAICS 531 Real Estate;
5. NAICS 31-33 Manufacturing;
6. NAICS 711 Performing Arts;
7. NAICS 712 Museums, Historical Sites and Similar Institutions; and
8. NAICS 541 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services.

It is noted that in order to gain credit for a major expansion to at least 140% of pre-investment net worth or number of employees each investor must also be credited with ten jobs created.

The proposal and subsequent submissions contained the following evidence in support of its requested designation:

- A Job Creation Analysis and Econometric Model prepared by a professional economic analysis firm;
- A business plan;
- A sample Limited Partnership Agreement;
- A sample Subscription Agreement; and
- A Marketing Plan and Budget.

DECISION:

Based on its review and analysis of your proposal, and of your response to the USCIS Request For Evidence to which you provided a generally satisfactory response, USCIS hereby approves and designates FEGF-RC as a Regional Center within the Immigrant Investor Pilot Program. FEGF-RC shall have a geographic scope which includes the Florida High Tech Corridor (FHTC), as described above.

FOCUS OF INVESTMENT ACTIVITY AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT THRESHOLD:

The USCIS-approved focus of the FEGF-RC business plan and job creation analysis and multipliers is to generate immigrant investor capital into the following target industry commercial enterprise activities within the FHTC:

The FEGF-RC, for EB-5 Immigrant Investor purposes shall focus "*investments into a mix of 'new' businesses, 'major expansions' of businesses and 'troubled' businesses*" in the following eight (8) target industry economic clusters:

1. NAICS 721 Traveler Accommodation;
2. NAICS 722 Food Services and Drinking Places;
3. NAICS 44-45 Retail Trade;
4. NAICS 531 Real Estate;
5. NAICS 31-33 Manufacturing;
6. NAICS 711 Performing Arts;
7. NAICS 712 Museums, Historical Sites and Similar Institutions; and
8. NAICS 541 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services.

It is noted that in order to gain credit for a major expansion to at least 140% of pre-investment net worth or number of employees each investor must also be creditable with ten continuous, full time jobs created. Full time equivalents, seasonal and part time jobs no not count.

If any investment opportunities arise that are beyond the scope of the approved industry clusters, then an amendment would be required to add that cluster.

As such, aliens seeking immigrant visas through the Immigrant Investor Pilot Program may file individual petitions with USCIS for these commercial enterprises located within the FEGF-RC area. The geographic focus of this area may contain some High Unemployment Targeted Employment Areas (TEAs) as designated by the State of Florida, and rural TEAs as defined in 8 CFR 204.6(e). **Therefore, the minimum capital investment threshold for any individual immigrant investment into an approved commercial enterprise throughout the Regional Center shall be not less than \$500,000, if the investment target is located within a TEA or \$1,000,000 if located outside of a TEA. No debt arrangement will be acceptable unless it is secured by assets owned by the alien entrepreneur. A full capital investment must be made and placed at risk.**

EMPLOYMENT CREATION:

Immigrant investors who file petitions for commercial enterprises located in the FEGF-RC area must fulfill all of the requirements set forth in 8 CFR 204.6, except that the petition need not show that the new commercial enterprises created ten new jobs indirectly as a result of the immigrant investor's investment. This determination has been established by way of USCIS' acceptance of the final economic analysis that is contained as part of the approved FEGF-RC proposal and its indirect job creation model and multipliers contained within the final approved FEGF-RC application package.

In addition, where job creation or preservation of existing jobs is claimed based on a multiplier rooted in underlying new "direct jobs" in support of an immigrant investor's individual I-526 petition affiliated with the FEGF-RC, then:

- To be credited with projected creation of new “direct” jobs for “qualifying employees” upon filing the I-526 petition, then the petition must be supported by a comprehensive detailed business plan and supporting financial, marketing and related data and analysis providing a reasonable basis for projecting creation of any new direct jobs for “qualifying employees” to be achieved/realized within two years pursuant to 8 CFR 204.6(j)(4)(B).

An alien investor’s I-829 petition to remove the conditions which was based on an I-526 petition approval that involved the creation of new direct jobs or the creation of new indirect jobs based on a multiplier tied to underlying new direct jobs needs to be properly supported by evidence of job creation. To support the full number of direct and indirect new jobs being claimed in connection with removal of conditions, the petition will need to be supported by probative evidence of the number of new direct full time (35 hours per week) jobs for qualified employees whose positions have been created as a result of the alien’s investment. Such evidence may include copies of quarterly state employment tax reports, Forms W-2, Forms I-9, and any other pertinent employment records sufficient to demonstrate the number of qualified employees whose jobs were created directly.

Each individual petition, in order to demonstrate that it is associated with the NJRC, in conjunction with addressing all the requirements for an individual immigrant investor petition, shall also contain as supporting evidence relating to this amended regional center designation, the following:

1. A copy of this letter for the FEGF-RC approval and designation.
2. A copy of the USCIS approved regional center narrative proposal and business plan.
3. A copy of the job creation methodology required in 8 CFR 204.6(j)(4)(iii), as contained in the final regional center economic analysis which has been approved by USCIS, which reflects that investment by an individual immigrant investor will create not fewer than ten (10) full-time employment positions, either directly or indirectly, per immigrant investor.
4. A legally executed copy of the USCIS approved:
 - a. Private Placement Memorandum;
 - b. Subscription Agreement; and
 - c. Limited Partnership Agreement.

DESIGNEE’S RESPONSIBILITIES INHERENT IN CONDUCT OF THE FEGF REGIONAL CENTER:

The law, as reflected in the regulations at 8 CFR 204.6(m)(6), requires that an approved regional center in order to maintain the validity of its approval and designation must continue to meet the statutory requirements of the Immigrant Investor Pilot Program by serving the purpose of promoting economic growth, including increased export sales (where applicable), improved regional productivity, job creation, and increased domestic capital investment. Therefore, in order for USCIS to determine whether your regional center is in compliance with the above cited regulation, and in order to continue to operate as a USCIS approved and designated regional center, your administration, oversight, and management of your regional center shall be such as to monitor all investment activities under the sponsorship of your regional center and to maintain records, data and information on a quarterly basis in order to report to USCIS upon request the following year to date information for each Federal Fiscal Year¹, commencing with the initial year as follows:

1. Provide the principal authorized official and point of contact of the regional center responsible for the normal operation, management and administration of the regional center.
2. Be prepared to explain how you are administering the regional center and how you will be actively engaged in supporting a due diligence screening of its alien investors' lawful source of capital and the alien investor's ability to fully invest the requisite amount of capital.
3. Be prepared to explain the following:
 - a. How the regional center is actively engaged in the evaluation, oversight and follow up on any proposed commercial activities that will be utilized by alien investors.
 - b. How the regional center is actively engaged in the ongoing monitoring, evaluation, oversight and follow up on any investor commercial activity affiliated through the regional center that will be utilized by alien investors in order to create direct and/or indirect jobs through qualifying EB-5 capital investments into commercial enterprises within the regional center.
4. Be prepared to provide:
 - a. the name, date of birth, petition receipt number, and alien registration number (if one has been assigned by USCIS) of each principal alien investor who has made an investment and has filed an EB-5/I-526 Petition with USCIS, specifying whether:
 - i. the petition was filed,

¹ A Federal Fiscal Year runs for twelve consecutive months from October 1st to September 30th.

- ii. was approved,
 - iii. denied, or
 - iv. withdrawn by the petitioner, together with the date(s) of such event.
 - b. The total number of visas represented in each case for the principal alien investor identified in 4.a. above, plus his/her dependents (spouse and children) for whom immigrant status is sought or has been granted.
 - c. The country of nationality of each alien investor who has made an investment and filed an EB-5/I-526 petition with USCIS.
 - d. The U.S. city and state of residence (or intended residence) of each alien investor who has made an investment and filed an EB-5/I-526 petition with USCIS.
 - e. For each alien investor listed in item 4.a., above, identify the following:
 - i. the date(s) of investment in the commercial enterprise;
 - ii. the amount(s) of investment in the commercial enterprise; and
 - iii. the date(s), nature, and amount(s) of any payment/remuneration/profit/return on investment made to the alien investor by the commercial enterprise and/or regional center from when the investment was initiated to the present.
- 5. Be prepared to identify/list each of the target industry categories of business activity within the geographic boundaries of your regional center that have:
 - a. received alien investors' capital, and in what aggregate amounts;
 - b. received non-EB-5 domestic capital that has been combined and invested together, specifying the separate aggregate amounts of the domestic investment capital;
 - c. of the total investor capital (alien and domestic) identified above in 5.a and 5.b, identify and list the following:
 - i. The name and address of each "direct" job creating commercial enterprise.
 - ii. The industry category for each indirect job creating investment activity.
- 6. Be prepared to provide:
 - a. The total aggregate number of approved EB-5 alien investor I-526 petitions per each Federal Fiscal Year to date made through your regional center.

- b. The total aggregate number of approved EB-5 alien investor I-829 petitions per each Federal Fiscal Year to date through your regional center.
7. The total aggregate sum of EB-5 alien capital invested through your regional center for each Federal Fiscal Year to date since your approval and designation.
8. The combined total aggregate of “new” direct and/or indirect jobs created by EB-5 investors through your regional center for each Federal Fiscal Year to date since your approval and designation.
9. If applicable, the total aggregate of “preserved” or saved jobs by EB-5 alien investors into troubled businesses through your regional center for each Federal Fiscal Year to date since your approval and designation.
10. If for any given Federal Fiscal Year your regional center did or does not have investors to report, then provide:
 - a. a detailed written explanation for the inactivity,
 - b. a specific plan which specifies the budget, timelines, milestones and critical steps to:
 - i. actively promote your regional center program,
 - ii. identify and recruit legitimate and viable alien investors, and
 - iii. a strategy to invest into job creating enterprises and/or investment activities within the regional center.
11. Regarding your website, if any, please be prepared to provide a hard copy which represents fully what your regional center has posted on its website, as well as providing your web address. Additionally, please provide a packet containing all of your regional center’s hard copy promotional materials such as brochures, flyers, press articles, advertisements, etc.
12. Finally, please be aware that it is incumbent on each USCIS approved and designated regional center, in order to remain in good standing, to notify the USCIS within 15 business days at USCIS.ImmigrantInvestorProgram@dhs.gov of any change of address or occurrence of any material change in:
 - the name and contact information of the responsible official and/or Point of Contact (POC) for the RC
 - the management and administration of the RC,

- the RC structure,
- the RC mailing address, web site address, email address, phone and fax number,
- the scope of the RC operations and focus,
- the RC business plan,
- any new, reduced or expanded delegation of authority , MOU, agreement, contract, etc. with another party to represent or act on behalf of the RC,
- the economic focus of the RC, or
- any material change relating to your regional center's basis for its most recent designation and/or reaffirmation by USCIS.

If you have any questions concerning the FEGF-RC approval and designation under the Immigrant Investor Pilot Program, please contact the USCIS by Email at USCIS.ImmigrantInvestorProgram@dhs.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Barbara Q. Velarde', written over a circular stamp or mark.

60 Barbara Q. Velarde
Chief
Service Center Operations

cc: Official File