DOL E-Government Initiative: H-2A Electronic Filing System
September 2012

Synopsis: As a component of the Department's E-Government initiative, the Employment and Training Administration's Office of Foreign Labor Certification (OFLC) is developing a new web-based tool that will re-engineer the processing of H-2A applications filed by U.S. farmers, ranchers, and associations of agricultural producers. The release of this new H-2A Program Module will be integrated into the OFLC's existing iCERT Visa Portal System (icert.doleta.gov), which supports the filing and processing of more than 450,000 employer H-1B applications and requests for prevailing wage determinations annually.

The Department believes this new electronic filing capability will enhance the accessibility and quality of visa program services, reduce the data collection and reporting burden on small employers, facilitate more streamlined business processes, and establish a greater level of transparency in the OFLC's decision making.

Target Release Date: **December 10, 2012**

Key Design Features:

- **Online Account Management**: Agricultural associations, employers, or authorized attorneys/agents can establish and maintain a customized iCERT account, profile information, and sub-account users; manage client or association membership lists; prepare, submit and track H-2A applications; and *reuse* H-2A applications from previous seasons to reduce data entry time.

- **Automated Data Quality and Integrity Checks**: Strengthens data quality by providing real-time form validation (e-checks) to warn customers of mandatory or missing entries on the ETA Form 9142 that, when not completed, may result in application processing delays. Customers will receive immediate warnings during the data entry and again, in summary form, at the final pre-submission stage of the process.

- **Elimination of Paper-based Submissions**: Significantly reduces administrative time and costs by allowing customers to upload supporting documentation (e.g., ETA Form 790, signed and dated Appendix A.2, FLC registration, surety bond) as part of the ETA Form 9142 submission process in either Microsoft Word, Adobe PDF, or text file formats for more efficient storage and retrieval by the Chicago NPC in processing the application.

- **E-mail Customer Notifications and Correspondence**: Improves transparency of OFLC decisions by providing employer customers with e-mail notifications and other official correspondence (e.g., Notice of Deficiency or Acceptance) during key points of the business process and quick access to check the status of pending applications.

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