

BNA

Immigration

April 2010

65,502 Foreign Workers Got Green Cards In 2009, Down 13.7 Percent From 2008

The number of foreign-born workers granted legal permanent resident status under employer-based preferences declined 13.7 percent in fiscal year 2009 following a 7.8 percent increase the prior fiscal year, according to figures <<http://op.bna.com/dlrcases.nsf/r?Open=lswr-84fqb7>> released April 8 by the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Immigration Statistics.

Green cards were issued to 65,502 workers, 10,404 fewer than the 75,906 workers in FY 2008, OIS said in an annual report.

Last year's decrease coincided with a reduction in the annual limit of employment-based visas under the Immigration and Nationality Act, from 162,704 to 140,000 plus unused family-based preferences from previous years, OIS said.

Including spouses and children, a total of 144,034 foreign-born residents became legal permanent residents under employer-based preferences in the fiscal year ended Sept. 30, 2009, or about 13 percent of all new green card recipients, down from 15 percent of green card recipients in FY 2008.

Among the five types of employer-based preferences, the number of foreign-born workers who were granted legal permanent resident status fell in two of the three largest categories—professionals with advanced degrees and aliens of exceptional ability (12,437); and skilled workers, professionals, and needed unskilled workers (2,237).

The number of green cards increased for special immigrants (1,785), who include ministers and certain Iraqis employed by the U.S. government; priority workers, including multinational executives and managers and outstanding professors and researchers (1,622); and investors (863).

The top three employer-based preferences in terms of green cards issued remained the same in 2009 as the prior year—professionals with advanced degrees and aliens of exceptional ability (22,098), skilled workers, professionals, and needed unskilled workers (18,359), and multinational executives and managers and other priority workers (16,806).