



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Wage and Hour Division (WHD)

Press Releases

U.S. Department of Labor
Wage and Hour Division
Release Number: 12-1009-ATL (203)

Date: June 12, 2012
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Norcross, Ga., technology company agrees to pay more than \$740,000 in back wages to 73 H-1B workers following US Department of Labor investigation

NORCROSS, Ga. – Semafor Technologies LLC in Norcross has agreed to pay 73 employees \$741,288 in back wages following an investigation by the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division that found violations of the H-1B visa program, which allows nonimmigrants to work temporarily in the United States. The company specializes in software development, on-site/off-site application outsourcing, infrastructure, consulting and product development services.

An investigation conducted by the division's Atlanta District Office determined that Semafor Technologies failed to pay 54 foreign H-1B guest workers for periods of time during which they were nonproductive because the company did not assign any work. Additionally, five workers were not reimbursed for various processing fees related to their employment, and 14 were not reimbursed for processing fees or paid for periods without assigned work.

"The Labor Department is committed to protecting the rights of all workers employed in this country," said Janet Campbell, director of the division's Atlanta office. "As demonstrated by the resolution of this case, we are using all tools available to remedy violations, promote accountability, and ensure a level playing field for law-abiding employers and legitimate users of the foreign guest worker programs."

Semafor Technologies currently is contacting the affected workers and is paying the wages due under the agreement. Additionally, company President Phani Paladugu has committed to implementing new payroll and time-keeping procedures to ensure future compliance with all applicable provisions of the H-1B program.

The H-1B visa program helps employers who cannot obtain needed business skills and abilities from the U.S. workforce by authorizing the temporary employment of qualified individuals who are not otherwise authorized to work in the United States. Among other requirements, H-1B workers must be paid the required wage rate for all nonproductive time caused by conditions related to employment, such as lack of assigned work, lack of a permit or studying for a licensing exam. The Wage and Hour Division is responsible for enforcing H-1B program provisions and the wage protections provided to H-1B workers. These protections are essential to ensuring that employers do not have an incentive to hire H-1B workers instead of U.S. workers.

Accessible and searchable information on enforcement activities by the Department of Labor is available at <http://ogesdw.dol.gov/search>. Information about the H-1B visa program is available at <http://www.dol.gov/whd/immigration/h1b.htm>, by calling the agency's Atlanta office at 404-893-4600 or through its toll-free helpline at 866-4US-WAGE (487-9243).

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