How I Obtained the Green Card (EB-1A) in 5 Months

written by Mert SARICA | 22 July 2023

Those who have read my social media posts or my blog article titled “U.S. O-1 Visa: Individuals with Extraordinary Ability or Achievement” may recall that as of October 2022, I settled in the United States with an O-1A visa. In this article, I will briefly discuss how I transitioned from the nonimmigrant visa category of O-1A to the employment-based immigrant visa category of EB-1A Green Card and share my experiences for those interested in this subject.

According to our plans, in order to enter the United States with our dog on October 5, 2022, with an O-1A visa, we needed to obtain a CDC Dog Import Permit due to Turkey being classified as a high-risk country for rabies by the CDC. Although I had filled out this form weeks in advance, unfortunately, our form was not approved due to an error I made on the form. Even if I were to fill out the form again, the waiting time for approval was 4-6 weeks at that time, and we didn’t have enough time for that. As a result, we had to make our first entry into the United States without our little companion.

After settling in our home in the United States with my spouse, we began to wait for the approval from the CDC for our little companion. As soon as we received the happy news on October 19, 2022, we immediately purchased our flight tickets for October 24, 2022, to pick up our dog and headed towards Istanbul. After picking up our dog, we returned to the United States on November 1, 2022.

Since the O-1A visa is a dual intent visa, after entering the United States, I decided to start working towards obtaining the document that grants permanent residence and work authorization, commonly known as the Green Card.

Dual intent is a United States immigration law concept. It generally refers to the fact that certain U.S. visas allow foreigners to be temporarily present in the U.S. with lawful status and immigrant intent. This allows those visa holders to enter the U.S. while simultaneously seeking lawful permanent resident status (green card status) at a port of entry. Otherwise, visa holders may be presumed to have immigrant intent and can be kept from entry (summarily excluded) as a matter of law. (Reference: Wikipedia)

As my first step, of course, I decided to consult with attorney Muhammed UZUM from Grape Law Firm, who is also registered with the New York Bar Association. During our meeting, he emphasized that it would be a correct choice for me to apply for the EB-1A visa (Green Card) since I already held an O-1A visa, which is granted to individuals with extraordinary abilities.

The EB-1A visa is a subcategory of the EB-1 employment-based Green Card and is granted to individuals with extraordinary abilities in the fields of science, arts, education, business, or athletics.

In order to demonstrate the applicant has sustained national or international acclaim and that his or her achievements have been recognized in his or her field of expertise, the applicant must either include evidence of a one-time achievement (i.e., Pulitzer, Oscar, Olympic Medal) or 3 of the 10 listed criteria below (or comparable evidence if any of the criteria do not readily apply):

1. Evidence of receipt of lesser nationally or internationally recognized prizes or awards for excellence
2. Evidence of your membership in associations in the field which demand outstanding achievement of their members
3. Evidence of published material about you in professional or major trade publications or other major media
4. Evidence that you have been asked to judge the work of others, either individually or on a panel
5. Evidence of your original scientific, scholarly, artistic, athletic, or business-related contributions of major significance to the field
6. Evidence of your authorship of scholarly articles in professional or major trade publications or other major media
7. Evidence that your work has been displayed at artistic exhibitions or showcases
8. Evidence of your performance of a leading or critical role in distinguished organizations
9. Evidence that you command a high salary or other significantly high remuneration in relation to others in the field
10. Evidence of your commercial successes in the performing arts

After deciding to work with Muhammed and his team again for the EB-1A visa on October 25, 2022, I started preparing my personal statement, which I was

familiar with from the O-1A visa.

Due to the requirement that there should be a 3-month gap from the last entry to the United States (November 1, 2022) before submitting the I-140 form (immigrant petition for alien workers), I had to wait until February. I-140 form is the initial and most important stage of the EB-1A visa process.

On February 10, 2023, Muhammed and his team submitted my prepared I-140 form to USCIS. Thanks to the expedited application process (premium processing) which results in a decision within 15 days (for a fee of $2,500), I was delighted to learn that my form was approved on February 23, 2023.

Next, it was time to fill out and submit the final steps, which were the I-693 and I-485 forms. The I-693 form is a public health measure required from candidates applying for Green Cards who are currently in the United States. With this form, the applicant’s health is checked to ensure that they do not have any diseases that would pose a threat to public health. The I-485 form, on the other hand, is used by individuals in the United States who want to change their status from non-immigrant to immigrant.

After scheduling an appointment for a medical examination at a designated civil surgeon’s office and undergoing the examination with my spouse, we obtained our health reports and sent them to Muhammed. We also paid $2,500, which covered the cost of the examination and vaccinations. On April 20, 2023, we received information that our forms had been submitted to USCIS by Muhammed and his team.

On May 10, 2023, USCIS sent a notification by mail confirming the receipt of our forms, including with receipt numbers. After 16 days, on May 26, 2023, we received a letter from USCIS stating that we were invited to the USCIS Application Support Center to provide our biometric data by June 9, 2023.

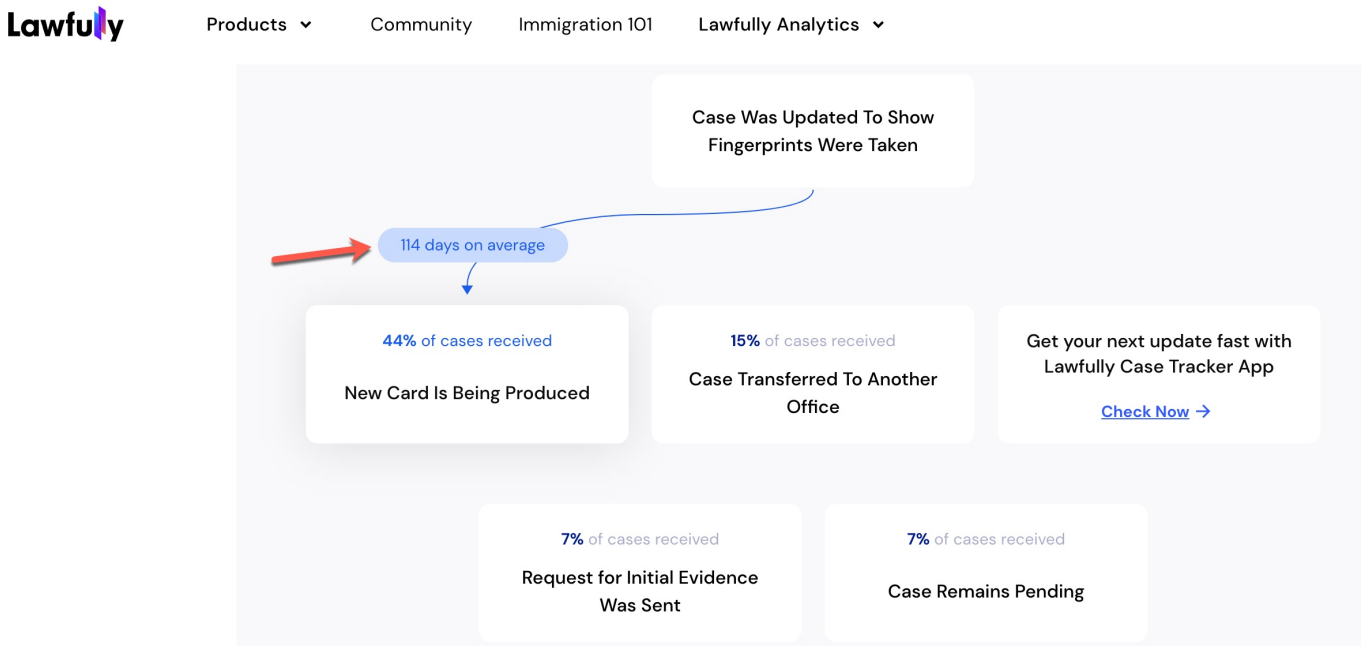
On June 9, 2023, my spouse and I went to the USCIS office early in the morning to provide our fingerprints. We completed the fingerprinting process in a short time, around 30 minutes, and left the office. The next day, when we checked our cases on the USCIS Check Case Status tool with our receipt numbers, we saw that the update reflecting the completion of our fingerprinting process was recorded in their system (Case Was Updated To Show Fingerprints Were Taken).

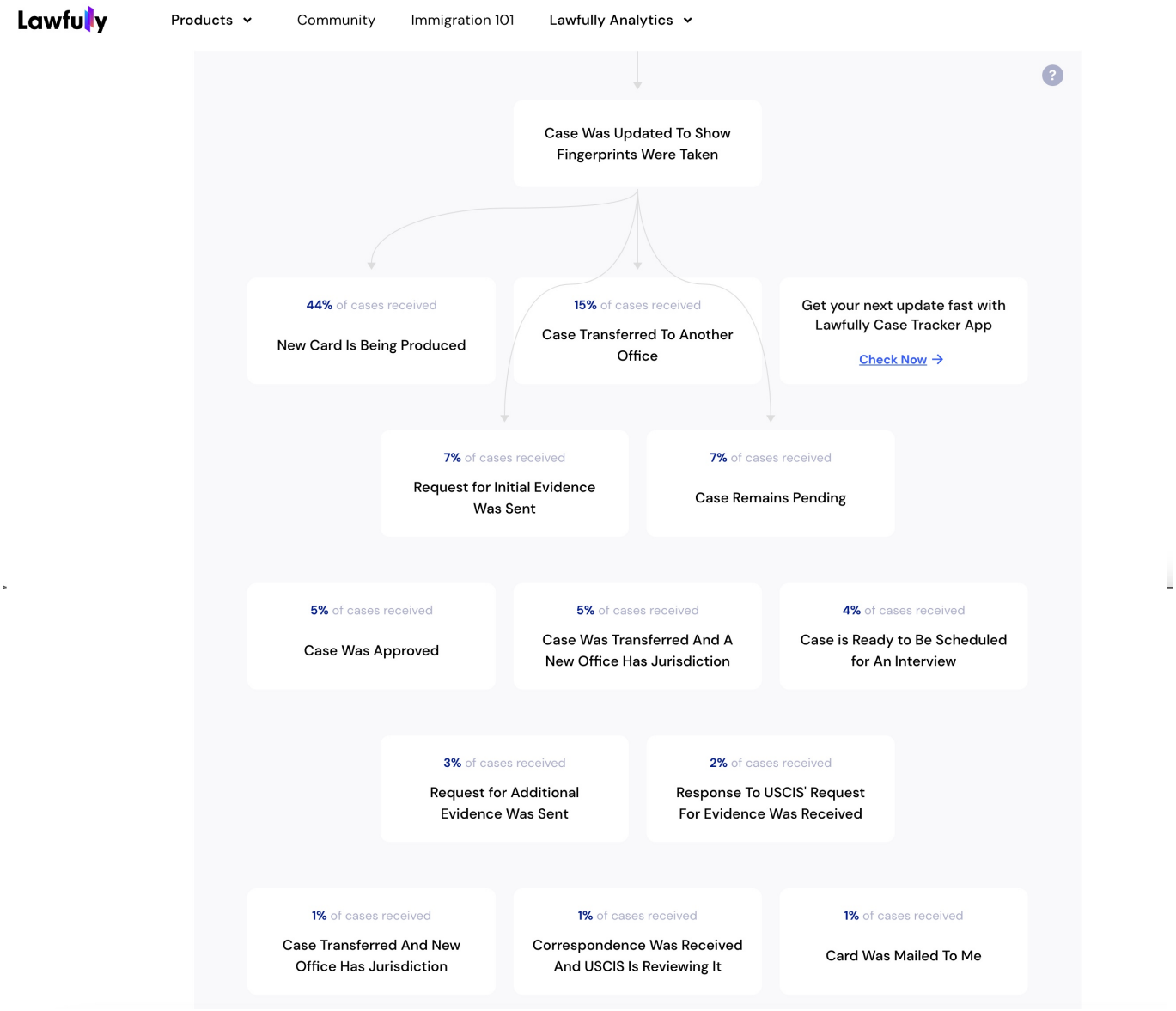
Knowing that a long waiting period awaited us and not wanting to bother checking the USCIS Check Case Status tool every time, I started searching for

an application that could do this for us. While browsing through messages on the unofficial USCIS subreddit community on the popular news and discussion site Reddit, I discovered the Lawfully Case Tracker, which was highly recommended by users.

Lawfully Case Tracker tracks and predicts the US visa application based on A.I. empowered algorithms. Automatic case status tracking of multiple cases and push notification whenever there is an update to the USCIS case status. Provides personalized prediction of USCIS case processing times, case approval rate and RFE probability, based on our big data and algorithms.

One of my favorite features of Lawfully is that it predicts the next step based on other similar cases. For example, after I submitted my fingerprints, it told me that others in a similar situation had moved on to New Card is Being Produced status within 114 days.



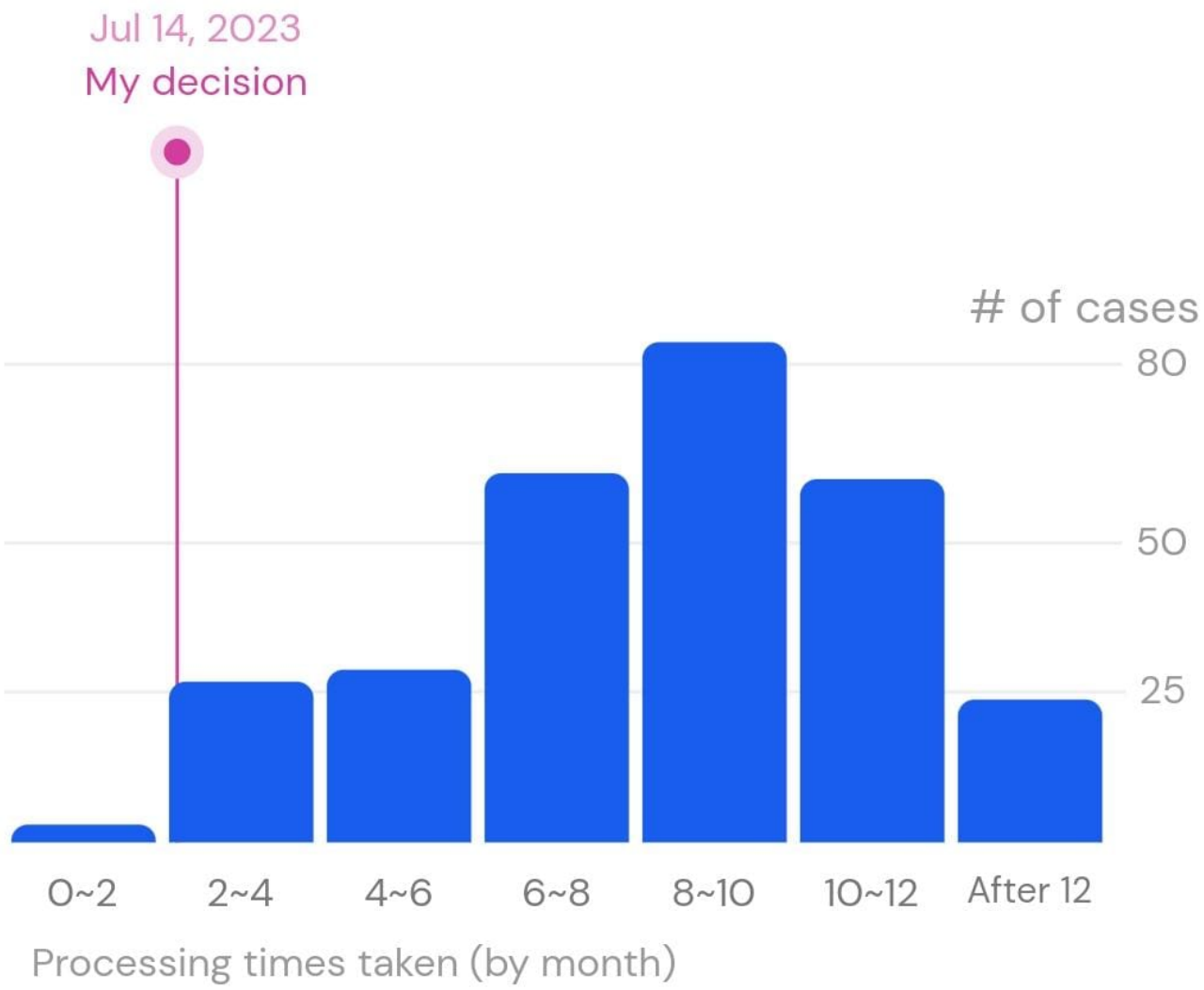


When the calendar showed July 14, 2023, we learned from Lawfully that our I-485 form, which is typically approved in an average of 224 days, was approved by USCIS on the 65th day without even requiring an interview.

History | **Lawfully Analysis**

Set the steps for processing times

Filing Date to **Decision**



History

I-485 submission to USCIS

Application received by USCIS

Fingerprint Fee Was Received

May 10, 2023

On May 10, 2023, we accepted the fingerprint fee for your Form I-485, Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status, Receipt Number [redacted]. Our National Benefits Center location is working on your case. We mailed you a notice describing how we will process your case. Please follow the instructions in the notice. If you move, go to www.uscis.gov/addresschange to give us your new mailing address.

Biometrics, i.e. fingerprinting and photo

Case Was Updated To Show Fingerprints Were Taken

Jun 09, 2023

As of June 9, 2023, fingerprints relating to your Form I-485, Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status, Receipt Number [redacted], have been applied to your case. If you move, go to www.uscis.gov/addresschange to give us your new mailing address.

Interview

Decision (Approval or Denial)

New Card Is Being Produced

Jul 14, 2023

On July 14, 2023, we ordered your new card for Receipt Number [redacted], and will mail it to the address you gave us. If you move, go to www.uscis.gov/addresschange to give us your new mailing address.

As a result, our EB-1A Green Card process, which started with the I-140 application form on February 10, 2023, concluded in a relatively short period of about 5 months, including everything for two individuals (expedited application fee, medical examination fee, attorney fees, etc.), with a total cost of approximately $15,000.

Please Read This Notice. It has important information. We also recommend that you keep this notice for your records.

Your Application Has Been Approved.
Here is your new card. The expiration date is shown on the front.

Please Check Your Card to Verify That the Information Is Correct.

If any information on this card is missing or incorrect, please call the USCIS Contact Center (UCC) at **1-800-375-5283** or check our Website at **www.uscis.gov** for instructions.

Please Protect Your Card.

Additional Information About Your Card

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) issues several kinds of cards for d
how to use your card. If you are 18 years of age or older, you are required to carry
Resident Card or other proof of alien registration in the United States with you at al
Permanent Resident Card or Combination Employment Authorization and Advance
travel outside the United States so you can show it to a U.S. Customs and Border Pro
you forget to take your card or lose it while traveling outside the United States, cont

Permanent Resident Card (PRC)

Your card has an expiration date.

- If you are a conditional permanent resident, you should apply to remov
- If you are a lawful permanent resident, the expiration date does not affec
  Replace Permanent Resident Card, to apply for a new PRC as early as 6 m

As a lawful permanent resident, you should be aware that:

- If your PRC is lost, stolen, or becomes damaged, or your name or other in
  for a new card.
- If you are going to travel and believe you may be outside of the United St
  You must be physically present in the United States when you file the re
  requirement. See Form I-131, Application for Travel Document, for inforr
- You may be able to file an immigrant petition on behalf of certain relative
- Lawful permanent residents can apply to become U.S. citizens after a certa
  be a lawful permanent resident for 5 years, but in some circumstances yo
  or visit the Citizenship Resource Center at **www.uscis.gov/citizenship.**

USCIS has a guide for new lawful permanent residents called "Welcome to the Unite
information about your rights and responsibilities. The guide is available at **www.us**

Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

You are authorized to work consistent with any conditions shown on the card until it

- If you are hired for a job, you may show your EAD to the employer to sho
  is acceptable as a List A document showing evidence of identity and authori
  Employment Eligibility Verification.
- If you are already employed, you may present the EAD to your employer t
- Certain applicants seeking renewal of their employment authorization and/or
  Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, is pending. In this case
  documentation (such as the receipt notice for the Form I-765 renewal applica
  Form I-9 completion. See www.uscis.gov/eadautoextend for more informatio

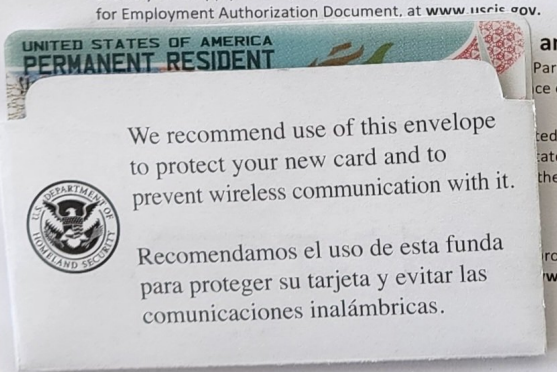
You may apply for a renewal EAD if your current card EAD expires before USCIS make
Permanent Residence or Adjust Status; Form I-881, Application for Suspension of De
Application for Asylum and for Withholding of Removal; Form I-131 Application for T
allows you to apply for employment authorization while your application is pen
for Employment Authorization Document, at **www.uscis.gov.**

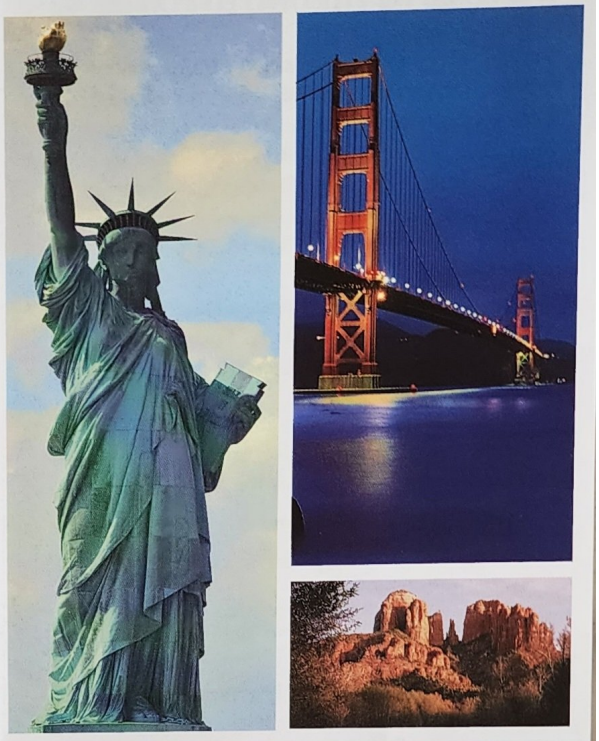
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Parole Card (combo card
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ates so you can present
the enclosed Form I-931

rocedures or wish to ha
w.uscis.gov.





Welcome to the United States

A Guide for New Immigrants

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

M-617 (rev. 09/20)

I hope that this article will be enlightening for those who have been searching for resources on the EB-1A Green Card experience, just like my previous article on the U.S. O-1 Visa: Individuals with Extraordinary Ability or Achievement.

Hope to see you in the following articles.