

The permanent foreign labor certification program allows employers to apply to hire foreign workers in the United States when there are no qualified, able, and willing U.S. workers available. In order to improve the speed and integrity of the program, the new PERM program put into place the following reforms on March 28, 2005:

- *The application process was reengineered and streamlined*, taking advantage of advances in information technology and eliminating duplicative state and federal roles. This consolidated process allows applications for which there are no issues (i.e., a “clean case”) to be processed in 45-60 days. In certain cases, applications have been certified in as little as 3 days from the date the application was received.
- *Case processing responsibilities, which were previously fragmented across 6 regional offices, have been consolidated* into two National Processing Centers, ensuring continuity of operations across programs, implementation of uniform standard operating procedures, and improved quality and accuracy in program decisions. The Chicago and Atlanta National Processing Centers began production on March 28, 2005.
- *The role of the State Workforce Agency (SWA) has been refocused*. Under PERM, the SWAs no longer receive Applications for Permanent Employment Certification. This new provision reduces government costs and eliminated duplicative review by two levels of government.
- *An attestation-based application process* has increased processing speed by allowing employers to attest to their recruitment efforts and compliance with requirements as opposed to undergoing supervised recruitment with a SWA.