

Tech Staffing Firm Ordered to Pay \$5 Million

Friday, March 11, 2005

The Labor Department has ordered a Southfield, Michigan, firm that places computer professionals at locations throughout the United States to pay \$4,500,503 in back wages to 232 non-immigrant computer professionals and \$1,222,000 in fines for immigration-law violations the department says it found during an investigation.

The department alleges that Computech Inc. brought non-immigrant H-1B workers into the U.S., but failed to pay them the required wage rate in the areas where they were employed. Investigators also say that Computech frequently paid nothing at all to the H-1B workers when there were no work assignments available.

The Labor Department ordered that the \$4.5 million in back wages be paid to 232 workers. If the workers cannot be located, the wages are to be paid into the U.S. Treasury.

The \$1,222,000 in fines were assessed for alleged "willful" violations of the wage requirements of the H-1B visa program and for alleged inaccurate information on the H-1B application materials submitted by the company. The company must pay the back wages and fines within 15 days unless it files a request for a formal hearing before a Department of Labor administrative law judge.

The H-1B visa program allows foreign workers to enter and work temporarily in the United States in professional level jobs such as computer programmers, engineers, medical doctors, and teachers. H-1B workers must be paid either the actual wage paid by the employer to others for the same work or the prevailing wage paid to U.S. workers for that job in the local area, whichever is higher.

