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Baltimore tech firm wins \$2.5M federal contract

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The federal **Department of Labor** has awarded **Waterfront Technologies** Inc., a small but growing Baltimore technology firm, a \$2.5 million contract to streamline the process for registering foreign-born citizens as U.S. employees.

The deal should enable Waterfront to add as many as 10 staffers to its roster of 14, said Janice Kauffman, Waterfront's founder and president.

This isn't the first time Waterfront has worked with the Department of Labor, either. The seven-year-old firm previously maintained programs for the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. That contract was worth \$3 million and allowed Waterfront to expand its staff from seven to 14.

The Department of Labor found Waterfront through one of the firm's principals, who had worked with the department for several years.

The new registration programs will specifically aid the permanent labor certification process. Waterfront will also assist in uniting the H-1B and temporary labor certification programs.

"With the federal government, for the IT companies out there, that's sort of the Holy Grail," Kauffman said of the contract. "Our mission is to get this work to Maryland, to Baltimore specifically."

Waterfront's work on online registration programs may come as a relief to the immigration law community. Registration for immigrants and non-immigrants has been difficult due to intensive paperwork for foreigners trying to file with different departments for a green card, residency or employment authorization.

"Anything they can do to improve the system would be a blessing," said Frances Taylor of **Taylor & Ryan** LLC, a Reisterstown-based law firm specializing in immigration law. Taylor said the Department of Labor used to take three to five years to process its part of a permanent residence case. The labor department has switched from a paper system to an online documentation system, which reduces time to process immigration cases.

"It's a vast improvement, but it's not perfect. It's very rigid," Taylor said.

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