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UI researcher granted U.S. citizenship

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Polish woman had worked on bioterror defenses

MOSCOW - A University of Idaho researcher who worked on bioterrorism defenses - but faced deportation to Poland after U.S. immigration officials denied her residency - says she has now become a legal American resident.

Katarzyna Dziwanowska, who was recruited by the university and worked 14 years before she was told to stop in 2005, said U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services sent her a letter in April confirming her permanent residency status.

Dziwanowska, 64, said her husband, Witold Ferens, and son, Andrew, were also granted U.S. residency. Friends and family will gather in Moscow Saturday to celebrate, said Dziwanowska, who does not know why the decision was reversed.

"They are not obligated to give an explanation," she said.

Immigration officials previously said they rejected the application for permanent residency because Dziwanowska worked eight months without authorization in late 2004 and early 2005.

At the same time immigration officials were denying her authorization to work, Dziwanowska held an FBI clearance for research to counter possible terrorist attacks with the plague.

Dziwanowska arrived at the university in 1994 and worked on a visa for a few years and then was granted outstanding researcher status as a step toward applying for permanent residency, which she did in 2003 with university help.

While immigration officials considered her application, she was required to apply annually for temporary work permits.

In the fall of 2004 her application for such a permit was rejected because she had submitted a profile photo rather than a face-forward one, which is required under new rules. She sent a face-forward photo, but that was rejected because officials said it included glare on one lens of her glasses.

By then, her previous work permit had expired.

Dziwanowska said university officials told her she could keep working during a 240-day grace period, but the advice turned out to be incorrect and immigration officials said her permanent residency application was being rejected.

"They reconsidered their earlier decision, which they can do when they feel they misapplied the law or misconstrued the facts," said Boise attorney Maria Andrade, who represented Dziwanowska in the case.

