

June 19, 2008

Invite your uncle to pack his arc welder for a new life in Alberta

Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program expands to include family members

Edmonton... In an effort to build the province's workforce, the government is expanding its Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program (AINP) to include family members.

"Albertans have family members with skills and knowledge Alberta needs," said Hector Goudreau, Minister of Employment and Immigration. "Adding this family stream to the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program will help us meet our workforce needs while creating more diverse and welcoming communities for all our families."

Eligible Albertans may sponsor a parent, child, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew for provincial nomination. The family members coming to Alberta will have to meet provincial eligibility criteria and be able to join Alberta's labour market. They must have post-secondary education, work experience, and be between 21 and 45 years old. Applicants do not need to have a job before they apply. The sponsoring family member living in Alberta will act as a vital support system to help the newcomers while they settle in.

The AINP fast-tracks the immigration process for people applying for permanent residency. Applicants will then need to go through the standard federal security and health checks. Citizenship and Immigration Canada makes the final decision on permanent resident visas.

By expanding the program and increasing the number of people living in Alberta, there will be a larger labour force pool employers can draw from. The program is designed to meet the needs of Alberta employers who are unable to fill skilled and select semi-skilled positions with Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada.

More information on the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program and the new family stream is available at www.albertacanada.com/ainp.

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Attachment: Additional information and eligibility criteria

Media inquiries may be directed to:

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To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

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Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program - Family stream

What is the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program?

The Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program (AINP) is an immigration program operated by the Ministry of Employment and Immigration in conjunction with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to expedite the processing of an application for permanent residence.

The AINP helps us more easily and quickly recruit and retain foreign workers on a permanent basis. It supports Alberta's economic growth by attracting workforce-ready immigrants to the province. Individuals nominated by the province, together with their spouse and dependent children, can apply for a permanent resident visa through CIC as a provincial nominee. CIC processes applications for provincial nominees on a priority basis. CIC makes the final decision on the permanent resident visa application.

When did it start?

In 2002, Alberta signed an initial pilot agreement with the Government of Canada allowing the province to nominate 400 individuals over two years. The objective of the pilot was to assist Alberta employers to fill permanent jobs in highly skilled, niche occupations. A permanent agreement was signed May 2007, removing the limit on the number of individuals the province can nominate for permanent residency.

Why expand to include a family stream?

The employer-driven model has worked well, but only processes applications for individuals who already have an employer. We are unlikely to meet our labour needs using the employer-driven model alone. Often residents and Canadian citizens have family members with skills and knowledge Alberta needs. Not employer-based, the family stream criteria focus on individuals most likely to be successful in the workforce, which helps build a larger pool of talent in the province.

How does it work?

The AINP has two main streams - employer and family. The process for applying depends on the stream and sub-category. Candidates must meet all program criteria before submitting an application. For the employer stream, Alberta employers present their business case to the AINP and apply for approval to recruit and/or retain international candidates to fill positions. For the family stream, an eligible close relative in Alberta commits to sponsor a candidate and the candidate applies to the AINP. There are specific criteria to be met by the sponsor and the candidate. Complete details are available at www.albertacanada.com/ainp.

What are the eligibility requirements for the family stream?

An application under the family stream requires both a sponsor and a candidate. Alberta will only assess complete applications from candidates who meet all program requirements.

Requirements are as follows:

| FACTOR | CRITERIA |
|------------|--|
| Connection | You can provide proof of a close relative in Alberta (defined as a mother/father, son/daughter, sister/brother, aunt/uncle, niece/nephew) who is willing to complete a Sponsorship Affidavit of Support on your behalf |

| | |
|--|--|
| Sponsor | Your Sponsor is at least 21 years of age, a Canadian citizen or permanent resident (for at least two years) of Canada, and has been living in Alberta for the past two years |
| Age | You and your spouse or common-law partner are between the ages of 21 and 45 |
| Language Ability | You and your spouse or common-law partner achieved a minimum band score of 4.0 on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). |
| Education/Training and Work Experience | <p>You or your spouse or common-law partner can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate completion of a post-secondary education or training program that is a minimum of 1 year in duration and receipt of a degree, diploma or certificate <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate one of the following: • a minimum of three years of work experience within the past four years, OR • three years of full-time post-secondary school within the past four years, OR • a combination of three years of full-time work experience and post-secondary school within the past four years |
| Adaptability | <p>You or your spouse or common-law partner can satisfactorily demonstrate intention and ability to establish successfully in Alberta, based on your:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accessible funds in a recognized Canadian bank: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least CAD \$10,000 for yourself • at least CAD \$2,000 for each of your dependents <p>If the Candidate or their spouse/common-law partner is unable to demonstrate these funds, the Sponsor may declare their financial support for the Candidate and the family members of the Candidate. In this case, the Sponsor must provide proof that they have the funds indicated above in a recognized Canadian financial institution.</p> |

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