

A Few Key Questions About Canada's New Immigration Act

Canada's new immigration law is a distillation of suggestions from thousands of individuals and organizations. It commits Canada to programs supporting national economic, social, demographic and cultural goals and to principles of non-discrimination, family reunification and humanitarian concern for refugees.



Montreal's new Indochinese immigrants.

Who may now come to Canada?

Visitors, students and persons who intend to be permanent residents are all welcomed. There is no discrimination by race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion or sex. All must meet basic admission standards designed to protect public health, safety, order and national security. Visitors must have sufficient funds to support themselves, and those wishing to study or work in Canada for a limited time must obtain authorization from Canadian immigration representatives abroad *before leaving for Canada*. (United States citizens and permanent residents can apply at ports of entry.) Those seeking permanent residence must be screened by Canadian visa officers *before they leave their home countries*. The officers assess their capacity for successful settlement.

How does the selection system work?

Immigrants are divided into three basic groups:

Independent Immigrants are evaluated on employment related and other given factors according to a point system. Points are added for such things as skills, professions or occupations that are needed in Canada, willingness to settle in high-employment areas and ability to speak English or French. Assessing officers may add or

deduct up to five points according to the destination selected. They may award ten points to immigrants who agree to work in designated occupations in specific locations. A maximum of 10 points may be subtracted for years of age over 35. Bonus points are given to those with Canadian relatives who are willing to aid in their settlement.

The Family Class includes certain close relatives of Canadian citizens and permanent residents. The parents and dependent children of Canadian citizens are now admissible in all cases. (Formerly only parents 60 years of age or over were included in the class.) Family-class applicants are not assessed under the point system, but they must meet the basic standards of good health and character.

Convention Refugees are selected, not by the point system, but on their general ability to adapt to Canadian life. They are defined by the United Nations Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. Consideration is given to the assistance available to them from government and non-government sources. Displaced and persecuted people who do not technically qualify as convention refugees may be admitted on humanitarian grounds.

Do all applicants have the same opportunities?

Yes. Immigration levels are set globally. There are no favoured nations, and the same criteria and priorities are used for all applicants. Members of the family class, convention refugees and others who have urgent and specific needs receive the highest processing priority.

How are annual immigration levels set?

They are set after consultation with the provinces and other appropriate groups. They depend on regional demographic and labour-market needs. Medium- and long-term requirements are established, and flexible annual levels are set in harmony with them.

May immigrants choose their own destinations and occupations?

Immigrants who are qualified for more than one occupation may choose the one that is most beneficial to them in Canada. The same applies to their destinations.

How has the status of refugees changed?

For the first time, Canada's international obligations under the United Nations are fixed in law:

Convention refugees legally in Canada may not