

Opportunities Ontario: Provincial Nominee Program

Overview:

Immigrants bring valuable skills and knowledge to Ontario's labour market, contributing to the province's economy and making Ontario a destination of choice around the world. This program enables Ontario employers to recruit and retain internationally trained individuals, including international students. This is helpful to employers who are having difficulty finding the skilled workers they need.

Both federal and provincial governments play a role in immigration. The Government of Ontario, through the Opportunities Ontario program, will select and nominate individuals to the federal government for permanent resident status. All permanent resident visas for Canada are processed and approved by the Government of Canada by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).

This document is available in 25 different languages, including English and French. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information, some details regarding Opportunities Ontario may have changed since publication. To find out more about Opportunities Ontario, visit the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's (MCI) website at: www.OntarioImmigration.ca for the most up-to-date information regarding eligibility and the application process.

Opportunities Ontario's documents and services, including information on the MCI website, are available in English and French only.

Basic Facts:

- Approved nominee applicants are issued a Provincial Nomination Certificate. Opportunities Ontario can nominate 1000 individuals and their family members annually.
- Opportunities Ontario is employer-driven. This means that as an individual, you can only apply after your employer application is assessed and approved. Once approved, Opportunities Ontario will provide your employer with a nominee application package to send to you.
- Applications are processed on a first-come-first-served basis and are assessed against program criteria. As the number of positions is limited, employers are encouraged to apply early to secure their required positions.
- Opportunities Ontario has two Categories as described below.

1. OPPORTUNITIES ONTARIO – General Category

- The **General Category** is open to eligible Ontario employers who provide permanent full-time job offers to foreign workers. Ontario employers will

need to apply to Opportunities Ontario for pre-screening and approval of nominee positions.

- Opportunities Ontario allows Ontario employers to find the skilled workers they need. Only managerial, professional and skilled trade occupations will be considered.
- Employers may recruit foreign workers or international students for approved positions, whether they are abroad or legally in Canada (as temporary foreign workers, students or visitors). All prospective nominees who are visiting or residing in Canada will be required to provide evidence of their immigration status with their application forms.
- Foreign workers must have at least two years of work experience or have appropriate registration in Ontario, if applying for a position in a regulated profession or trade.
- The General Category also allows investors to bring in key employees. To qualify, investments must be of significant importance to Ontario, create jobs for Ontarians and be endorsed by an Ontario government ministry. If you are an investor, and would like more detailed information, please visit www.OntarioImmigration.ca.

2. OPPORTUNITIES ONTARIO - International Student Category

- The International Student Category targets recent graduates from publicly-funded Canadian colleges and universities.
- International students must have completed at least half of their qualifying degree or diploma in Canada.
- International students may apply in their last semester of their qualifying degree or diploma program or up to two years after graduation.
- There is no work experience requirement for international students.
- Like the General Category, International Students must have a permanent full-time job offer in a managerial, professional and skilled trade occupation.

Eligibility Criteria for Employers:

To be eligible for nominee positions, your company must have:

1. at least 3 years of continuous and active operations as a registered business;

2. business premises in Ontario where the prospective nominee will work;
3. a minimum of \$1,000,000 in gross revenue for the previous fiscal year, for companies located in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA); or have a minimum of \$500,000 in gross revenue for the previous fiscal year, for companies located outside the GTA; and
4. a minimum of 5 permanent full-time employees, for companies located in the GTA; or have a minimum of 3 permanent full-time employees for companies located outside the GTA.

A full-time job consists of 1,560 hours of paid employment in a 12-month period. The following is not considered full-time work, even if you work 1,560 hours in a 12-month period:

- Seasonal, cyclical or part-time employees regardless of their working hours
- Subcontractors or agency workers
- Employees who do not work on the company's premises, such as employees who work from home, or employees who work in a 'virtual' location and serve the employer by telecommuting.

The Application Process:

The application process has two steps: the Pre-screen Application (only for employers) and the Nominee Application (only for individuals).

Step One - Pre-screen Application:

- Employers start the application process by submitting a *Pre-screen Application* to Opportunities Ontario.
- Employer applicants should submit their completed applications as early as possible.
- Opportunities Ontario will only accept pre-screen applications by mail, courier or personal delivery.
- Opportunities Ontario will notify all employer applicants, in writing, of the decision. Our processing target for notification is 90 days of receipt of a complete application.
- Investors should not submit a *Pre-screen Application* to Opportunities Ontario. To qualify, investors must first obtain an endorsement from an Ontario government ministry. For more details, please visit www.OntarioImmigration.ca.

Step Two - Nominee Application:

- If you plan on applying to Opportunities Ontario, you should check the www.OntarioImmigration.ca website for specific details and information on how to complete the application. Only general information is given here.

- You can apply as a nominee only after your employer has completed step one and been approved for a nominee position, and has provided you with the Nominee Application package from Opportunities Ontario.
- All prospective nominees, regardless of category, submit the completed application package to Opportunities Ontario for assessment.
- Opportunities Ontario will notify all nominee applicants, in writing, of the decision. Our processing target for notification is 90 days of receipt of a complete application.
- Successful nominees must then apply to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) for permanent resident status within 6 months of being nominated.
- A provincial nomination in itself does not represent legal immigration status in Canada. Until nominees obtain permanent resident status, they still require proper authorization to be in Canada.
- Individuals nominated by Ontario must satisfy CIC requirements, including medical and background checks for the principal applicant and all accompanying family members.
- Provincial nominees will receive priority processing from CIC.
- A successful provincial nomination replaces the selection component under other immigration classes such as the federal Skilled Worker Class, and the Family Class.
- Opportunities Ontario will support work permit applications for nominees where requested. CIC is responsible for the issuance of work permits and applicants are encouraged to check the work permit requirements which apply to their situation. If granted, the work permit will allow the nominee to travel to Ontario to begin working for his/her employer, while CIC finalises the processing of the permanent residence application.

How to Contact Us:

For more information about Opportunities Ontario, including more detailed contact information, eligibility criteria, application information and common questions about the program, please visit our website at:

www.OntarioImmigration.ca