

# BECOMING CANADIAN

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Immigration Officer at CIC in Douglas, BC

Walk through the immigration process as a newcomer. Choose an immigration class below:

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- [Skilled workers](#)
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- [Investors](#)
- [Self-employed](#)
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- [Government-sponsored Refugee](#)

## IMMIGRATION TO CANADA: An Overview

Most immigrants to Canada apply under three main categories: family class, independent and refugees.

Close family members already living in Canada usually sponsor [family class](#) applicants. This class also includes foreign adoptions. Sponsors are financially responsible for the applicant for between three (spouse) and 10 (children under 22, parents) years.

**Independent** immigrants include skilled workers, entrepreneurs, investors and the self-employed.

[Skilled workers](#) are usually those who have professional abilities that are highly sought-after or transferable. Sometimes, this person already has a job offer in Canada. They are judged against a points system, requiring 75 points out of 100 to gain entry into Canada. The points are based on education, experience and language.

[Entrepreneurs](#) are people who intend to purchase and run a business in Canada and have a minimum net worth of \$300,000. They have three years in which to meet set conditions. During that time, Citizenship and Immigration Canada keeps a close tab on the business with a series of forms and interviews.

[Investors](#) are those who have at least \$800,000 net worth and are willing to invest \$400,000 through the Receiver General of Canada (which is reimbursed without interest five years after the person lands in Canada). The money is distributed to the provinces for economic development.

[Self-employed](#) is reserved for world-class athletes, well-known artists and those with specialized farm management skills.

There are two classes of refugees: [claimants](#) and [government-sponsored](#).

A refugee claimant is someone who arrives at a Canadian border or port of entry and declares that he/she intends to seek refugee status in the country. They must apply to the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) to be accepted as a – Convention Refugee” as defined by the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

Anyone applying to become a permanent resident must submit to a medical test by a health professional approved by Citizenship and Immigration. The medical test may include: a physical examination, a mental examination, a review of medical history and records and diagnostic tests such as urinalysis, a syphilis blood test, chest x-ray and an HIV test.

[Designated Medical Practitioners List](#)

The claimant must prove to the IRB that he/she has a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group, or faces torture or cruel and unusual treatment if returned home. The process of getting a hearing and also any subsequent appeals could take two years or more.

A government-sponsored refugee is usually someone who is already living in a refugee camp or living in fear in their own country and has been referred to Canada through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. That means Canadian officials get to choose who gets in under this class. Once they are accepted by Canada, they are provided assistance to land in the country, get income assistance for a year and other services to help them adjust and integrate. Under the same class are privately-sponsored refugees where a church or organization agrees to provide all the basic necessities and settlement assistance for up to three years.

LINK: The Immigration and Refugee Act ([PDF](#)) or ([HTML](#))

## FACTS:

According to the 2001 statistics provided by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, out of a total of 250,346 immigrants:

- 66,644 were family sponsorships
- 137,085 came in as skilled workers
- 15,854 came as entrepreneurs, investors or self-employed
- 27,894 as refugees
- 2,869 came in as live-in caregivers, retirees and other smaller categories of immigrants

### TOP 10 SOURCE COUNTRIES OF IMMIGRANTS (1996 - 2000)

1. China
2. India
3. Pakistan
4. Philippines
5. South Korea
6. Sri Lanka
7. U.S.A.
8. Iran
9. Yugoslavia

Immigrants account for 17 per cent of Canada's population.

Only Australia surpasses Canada in terms of the immigrant percentage: 21.1 per cent.

One in eight immigrants has dual citizenship.

More than half of all immigrants (56 per cent) end up in Ontario with about 17.5 per cent in British Columbia and 12.5 per cent in Quebec. One per cent head for the Atlantic provinces.

86 per cent of immigrants can conduct a conversation in either English or French.

Skilled workers from China, Pakistan, India, Taiwan and Iran account for the majority of people immigrating under the Independent Class.

More than half of immigrants aged 25 to 64 have a post-secondary degree.

Male immigrants experience an unemployment rate of 15 to 21 per cent in the first five years after arrival, while women experience a rate of 20 to 26 per cent.

A majority of immigrants end up in sales, service or processing jobs.

59 per cent of immigrant men hold a diploma or degree in the physical sciences, engineering and trades.

35 per cent of immigrant women hold a diploma or degree in the social sciences, education or arts.

28 per cent of immigrants arriving after 1990 own their own homes.

Before 1981, 40 per cent of recent immigrants had a Canadian-born spouse; now it's 16 per cent.

10. Great Britain

20 per cent of recent immigrants are children under 15.

TOP 10 SOURCE COUNTRIES BEFORE 1981

The average household income of recent immigrants is \$46,400 compared to the average of Canadian-born households at \$47,200.

1. United Kingdom

48 per cent of immigrants are between the ages of 25 and 44 years old.

2. Italy

3. U.S.A.

26 per cent of immigrants come from Asia: China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea and Japan.

4. Germany

Nine out of 10 immigrant seniors over the age of 65 live with their relatives compared to 6.7 out of 10 Canadian-born seniors.

5. Portugal

6. Netherlands

One out of four immigrants to Quebec City, Ottawa, Winnipeg and Saskatoon is a refugee.

7. India

Refugees account for 60 per cent of deportations.

8. Poland

85 per cent of immigrants become Canadian citizens.

9. China

150,000 people become citizens every year.

10. Yugoslavia

*SOURCES: 1996 Census Facts and Figures 2001: Immigration Overview*

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*\*This site is a teaching tool meant to educate the public about the process of immigration. For questions about immigration and other related matters please visit the [Citizenship and Immigration Canada](#) website.*

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