

MEDIA BACKGROUNDER

The Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP) has successfully attracted newcomers from around the world.

Since 2007, immigrants from more than 180 countries have settled in 325 communities across Saskatchewan.

The SINP operates under the economic stream of the federal immigration program. The SINP is an economically-driven program and is part of a balanced approach to address emerging economic and demographic needs in the province. Immigrants account for 3.8 per cent of total employment in the provincial labour market.

Retention of newcomers is a key component of Saskatchewan's immigration strategy.

To facilitate access to settlement services the government opened 11 Regional Newcomer Gateways across Saskatchewan. These gateways are multi-channel (in person, by phone, by email) first points of contact for immigrants. They facilitate access to information, resources and services and coordinate appointments for language assessment and settlement advisor services. Gateways are located in communities receiving large numbers of newcomers and serve an area of 150 kilometer radius. Gateways are located in Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, Swift Current, Estevan, North Battleford, Lloydminster, Prince Albert, Tisdale, Humboldt and Yorkton.

Government is committed to the continuous review and improvement of programs. Since 2007, the following enhancements have been made to improve the effectiveness of the immigration program:

- 2008
 - The Program Integrity Unit was established to conduct internal quality assurance reviews, investigate mistreatment or abuse of foreign workers, educate employers and workers on rights and responsibilities, and work with stakeholders to preserve overall program integrity.
 - The skilled worker program file process was streamlined to allow the SINP to increase the number of files processed, while reducing processing time.
- 2009
 - The entrepreneur program process was streamlined to improve efficiencies that allowed the unit to commit to processing times of less than 6 months.
 - The provincial immigration strategy was released.

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- 2010
 - The Ministry launched the award-winning immigration website and the on-line application, the first of its kind in Canada.
 - The entrepreneur program introduced a non-refundable application fee to ensure that only serious and genuine applications are made to the program.
 - The SINP unveiled the international student category for Masters' and PhD students that allow Masters' and PhD students to immediately apply for nomination upon graduating.
- 2011
 - The SINP changed the sponsorship funding requirements for supporting family members referring nominees through the family category at the request of Citizenship and Immigration Canada.
 - AEEI established the Employer Unit to work with employers in Saskatchewan to help them better understand the opportunities available through the SINP and to ensure offers of employment are genuine, legitimate and consistent with program criteria.
 - The SINP employer unit introduced the on-line employer application to streamline vacancy approval processing and reduce the overall time it takes for an employer to fill a skilled position with an immigrant worker.
 - AEEI led public consultations on the development of comprehensive foreign worker protection legislation.
- 2012
 - Citizenship and Immigration Canada introduced minimum language requirements for newcomers arriving with employment offers classified in to the National Occupation Code (NOC) "C" and "D".

The National Occupational Classification (NOC) provides a standardized language for describing the work performed by Canadians in the labour market. The NOC is developed by Human Resource and Skills Development Canada in collaboration with Statistics Canada.

The NOC classifies occupations to a skill type and skill level. NOC "O" classifies management occupations. NOC "A" classifies professional occupations and NOC "B" classifies technical occupations and skilled trades. These are considered high skill positions.

NOC "C" and NOC "D" classify occupations that usually require at most a high school diploma or a maximum of two years of job-specific training; or, no formal training.

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The changes announced today include:

FOREIGN WORKER PROTECTION

- Saskatchewan is proposing new legislation to protect immigrant applicants and foreign workers during the recruitment and immigration process.
- Facilitated consultations on proposed legislative provisions were held in four communities in spring of 2011, with immigrants, immigration consultants/lawyers, foreign worker recruiters, settlement service providers, ethno-cultural organizations, and employers. All groups strongly supported the development of new legislation to protect foreign workers.
- The Ministry has developed additional legislative provisions based upon the feedback received from the consultations and on-line survey in 2011, and further researched legislative models developed by other provinces.
- The Ministry is holding a second round of consultations with key stakeholders and the public to gather views on the new legislative provisions. In-person consultations are being held with immigration consultants and recruiters given their central role in the legislation. An on-line survey is available for other key stakeholders and the general public to obtain their views.
- This legislation was requested by Saskatchewan consultants and will assist Saskatchewan employers by maintaining a list of recruiters and consultants that are in good standing in Saskatchewan.

SKILLED WORKER PRIORITY PROCESSING

- The SINP skilled worker category allows Saskatchewan employers to connect with high skilled foreign workers.
- In order to fill the demand for skilled workers in Saskatchewan, applicants with a high skill (NOC “A”, “B” and “O”) job offer of permanent full-time employment will be prioritized for processing.
- The goal is to continue to ensure high skilled workers are processed as quickly as possible.
- The SINP is designed to support the labour market as a means to sustain long-term economic growth in Saskatchewan.
- Employers have asked for a commitment to faster processing. This change responds to that request.

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FAMILY CATEGORY CHANGES

- The SINP family category allows Saskatchewan residents to recommend their high skilled (NOC “A”, “B”) relatives for nomination for permanent residency. These individuals must be between the ages of 18-49 and be able to economically establish in Canada.
- The federal government recommended that provinces better connect the skills of workers with the needs of the economy by attaching nominations to jobs.
- In order to better connect these high skill individuals to the economy at a level matching their skills, family category nominees will require a high skill job offer.
- The SINP will limit the number of concurrent nominations/applications that can be supported to one per household until the principal applicant successfully settles in Saskatchewan by attaching to the labour market for a minimum of six months.
- 25 per cent of SINP nominations will be allocated for this category.
- These changes clearly distinguish this economically-driven category from the Citizenship and Immigration Canada Federal Family Reunification program.

STUDENT CATEGORY

- Post-secondary graduates from institutions outside of Saskatchewan will now require one year of permanent full-time employment and residency in the province prior to nomination versus six months previously required.
- This change ensures out-of-province graduates attach to the labour market in a meaningful way and are effectively settling in Saskatchewan.
- Students graduating from a Saskatchewan institution will continue to require six months of paid employment in the province to meet the work experience criteria of the program.
- Between January 2011 and November 2011 1,023 applications were received – an increase of 470 per cent over the same time period the year previous.

ENTREPRENEUR CATEGORY

- The SINP entrepreneur category is designed to attract entrepreneurs who will establish and actively manage a business in Saskatchewan.
- Entrepreneurs must demonstrate that they have sufficient net worth and funds available to establish or acquire a business in Saskatchewan. In addition, applicants must have a sound business establishment plan, be able to demonstrate that they will actively manage the business and demonstrate their intention to reside in Saskatchewan.
- Entrepreneurs applying to the program will be required to have net worth and providence of funds verified by an independent third party selected by the Government of

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Saskatchewan prior to being accepted for processing. This change will improve the quality of applications.

The SINP is committed to quality assurance.

By continuously reviewing our programs to ensure they are meeting the needs of our province and making changes on an on-going basis we ensure the continued success of the SINP.

The SINP will continue to be responsive to the needs of employers and communities in Saskatchewan and will continue to provide newcomers with the services and programs they require to make Saskatchewan their permanent home.

As always, interested applicants are invited to consider all federal and provincial categories and apply to those for which they are eligible.