A Guide to Canada’s Changing Immigration Policy
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250,000 new immigrants come to Canada every year. They come from more than 200 countries. Canada accepts more immigrants than most other countries in the world. Canada has a long history of immigration going back to its beginning as a nation. Immigration is an important issue in Canada because many things are affected by immigration policy: The economy, society and politics.

**Introduction**

How do immigrants come to Canada?

There are three ways:

- **ECONOMIC**
  - Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP)
  - Federal Skilled Trades Program
  - Provincial Nominee Program
  - Immigrant Investor Program
  - Entrepreneurship Program
  - Canadian Experience Class
  - Temporary Foreign Workers

- **HUMANITARIAN**
  - Government-Assisted Refugee Program
  - Privately Sponsored Refugees
  - Refugee Claimants

- **FAMILY**
  - Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program – Family Stream
  - Federal Family Reunification Plan
  - Parents and Grandparents
  - Sponsorship of Spouses
Most immigrants come to Canada through the Federal Skilled Worker Program or under a Provincial Nominee Program. Nearly 70 per cent of immigrants to Canada are economic immigrants.

Parents, grandparents, children and/or spouses (husband or wife) of a Permanent Resident living in Canada come through the Family Reunification Program. 18.2 per cent of immigrants to Canada come through the Family Reunification Program.

Canada has a humanitarian pathway for refugees who are leaving dangerous or difficult situations in their home countries to come to Canada. 9 per cent of immigrants to Canada come as refugees.

Since 2008 immigration policy in Canada has changed a lot. These changes will have big impacts on immigrants living in Canada. It will also affect those who would like to move here.

**What does this guide do?**

- The guide explains changes to Canadian immigration policy.
- The guide explains terms related to immigration and immigration policy.
- The guide gives information so you can think about and discuss the changes.

*This guide contains words and terms that may be new to some readers. There is a list of terms at the end of this guide that explains what these words mean. Throughout the document you will see some words in bold font these can be found in the list on page 27.*
Eight Things Everyone Needs to Know about Canadian Immigration Policy

1. Changing the way immigration policy decisions are made

2. Fewer Permanent Residents, more Temporary Foreign Workers

3. Changes to the Federal Skilled Worker Program: Expression of Interest

4. Changes to the Family Reunification Program: Family Super Visa

5. Changes to the Family Reunification Program: Sponsoring a Spouse

6. Refugees: Shorter Timelines, Designated Countries of Origin and Irregular Arrivals

7. Refugees: Interim Federal Health Program

8. Changes to the Canadian Citizenship Exam
1. Changing the way immigration policy decisions are made

Before we can discuss the specific changes to immigration policy, we need to understand how policy is created. We also need to understand who is responsible for immigration policy in Canada and who gets to make decisions. As we will see, this has changed a lot since 2008.

Who makes decisions about immigration policy?

In Canada, immigration policy is the responsibility of the Federal Government. There is a Federal Minister in charge of immigration policy. That minister is the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism. The most important immigration legislation is the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA).

Before 2008, changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act happened in several ways:

- Canadians would share their opinions through public consultations.
- Changes were debated in discussion papers and at Federal committee hearings.
- Changes were made in legislation that went through the Parliament.

So what’s changed?

In 2008, a bill passed the House of Commons that changed this. This bill created something called “Ministerial Instructions.” Ministerial Instructions make it possible for the Minister to give instructions directly to immigration officers. This means that instead of having to go through Parliament, the Minister has the power to make decisions by himself, without going through Parliament. These instructions have been used since 2008 to make many significant changes to Canadian immigration policy.

The government has also started using budget bills to make changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA). Budget bills are very long and complex bills. The 2012 Omnibus Budget Bill was more than 400 pages long. These bills contain changes to many different aspects of policy.

Ministerial Instructions and budget bills have made it easier for the government to make big changes to immigration policy. These changes do not go through the same process as before. This makes policy change happen faster.
The first major change that we will talk about in this guide is the increase in the number of Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) in Canada. There are many different kinds of Temporary Foreign Workers.

TFWs enter Canada on temporary work visas. These visas are given out depending on the applicant’s skill level. Skill levels fall into five categories. These categories are called “National Occupation Codes.” There are five NOC Codes: 0, A, B, C and D. See the chart below for details:

**NATIONAL OCCUPATION CLASSIFICATION (NOC) MATRIX**

- **Skill Type**: Management Occupations
  - **Skill Level**: 0

- **Skill Type**: Professional Occupations requiring a university degree
  - **Skill Level**: A

- **Skill Type**: Skilled Work requiring two or more years post-secondary education, two or more years of apprenticeship training or on-the-job occupation-specific training, or occupations with significant health and safety responsibilities
  - **Skill Level**: B

- **Skill Type**: Occupations requiring the completion of secondary school and up to two years of occupation-specific training
  - **Skill Level**: C

- **Skill Type**: Occupations which can be performed after receiving a short work demonstration or on-the-job training
  - **Skill Level**: D
What is a Temporary Foreign Worker?

For the purposes of this guide, we will mostly be talking about the changes that affect low-skilled Temporary Foreign Workers (NOC C&D). Approximately 40 per cent of TFWs are considered ‘low-skill’ and fall into the National Occupation Code C&D.

Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) come to Canada on a temporary work permit. Temporary Foreign Workers are only allowed to stay in Canada for the length of their work permit. They must return to their country of origin after their work permit ends.

How do Low-Skilled Temporary Foreign Workers enter Canada?

There are four pathways that Temporary Foreign Workers in NOC C&D use to enter Canada:

- Live-in Caregiver Program
- Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program
- “Pilot Project for Occupations Requiring Lower Levels of Formal Training” (for example, meat cutter, food counter attendant)
- Agricultural Stream of NOC C&D

How are these Temporary Foreign Workers different from Permanent Residents?

Temporary Foreign Workers do not have access to settlement services such as Language Instruction for Newcomers (LINC). It is very difficult for low-skilled Temporary Foreign Workers to become Permanent Residents. They can only stay in Canada for four years. After four years they must return home and wait another four years before returning to Canada.

TFWs can also be ‘tied’ to their employer through their work permit. This means that if they lose their jobs they might have to leave the country. There are restrictions on the kinds of jobs that Temporary Foreign Workers are allowed to do. Low-skilled Temporary Foreign Workers are also different from Permanent Residents because they are not able to bring their families to Canada.
How has the TFW Program changed?

The Temporary Foreign Worker program is not new to Canada. Temporary Foreign Workers have been coming to Canada for many years. In the past, most temporary workers came as ‘seasonal agricultural workers’ (farmers) from Mexico and Jamaica.

What has changed is the number of Temporary Foreign Workers in Canada today. The number of Temporary Foreign Workers has tripled since 2000. There are approximately 300,000 Temporary Foreign Workers in Canada. This is a lot more than the approximately 90,000 that were here in 2000.

In 2006, for the first time in Canadian history, there were more people entering Canada as TFWs than immigrants with Permanent Residence.
Economic Class Permanent Residents, Temporary Foreign Worker Entries and Temporary Foreign Workers Present (all skill levels), 2000-2011

**Permanent Residents (Economic Immigrants)**

**Temporary Foreign Worker Entries***

**Temporary Foreign Workers Present**

***"Temporary Foreign Worker Entries" refers to the sum of all temporary workers who enter Canada for the first time (initial entry) on a valid immigration document such as a work permit and all temporary workers who re-enter Canada in the calendar year with a new work permit.

**"Temporary Foreign Workers Present" refers to all temporary workers with a valid work permit who are present in Canada on 1 December of a given year and includes workers whose permit began in an earlier year but remains valid in the observation year."
3. Changes to the Federal Skilled Worker Program

Most immigrants come Canada through the economic pathway. Of these economic immigrants, 37 per cent come through Federal Skilled Worker Program. There have been many changes to this program. We will discuss these changes below.

What is the Federal Skilled Worker Program?

The Federal Skilled Worker Program is part of the economic pathway to Canadian residence. This includes engineers, lawyers, doctors and other highly skilled professionals. In the past, some of these professionals have found it difficult to find work in their field and end up working in survival jobs to support their families.

What changes is the government making to this program?

The government has proposed major changes to the Federal Skilled Worker Program to address these challenges. These changes include:

- Creation of Occupation Lists: A list of 24 occupations (down from 35) limiting who can apply through the Federal Skilled Worker Program.
- Emphasizing English/French language skills in selection criteria (Requiring Canadian Benchmark Level 7).
- Giving preference to applicants with Canadian work experience.
- Giving preference to younger applicants (18-35 given preference, over 47 years of age get no points).
- Requiring that internationally educated professionals have their credentials evaluated before coming to Canada.
Expression of Interest Model

Another proposed change involves moving to an “Expression of Interest” Model. Under this model, applicants complete an ‘expression of interest’ before being invited to apply to come to Canada.

How is the ‘expression of interest’ model different from what happens now?

In the past, professionals (NOC Codes 0, A and B) who wanted to come to Canada applied through the Federal Government. Anyone could apply and the government read all of the applications. With the expression of interest model, professionals send a short letter of interest to the government. This expression of interest is put into a pool (group) with other expressions of interest. The pool is then opened to Canadian employers who can choose which applicants they like best.

Once the employer has chosen, the applicant is asked to submit a full application to come to Canada. The pool is emptied regularly to prevent too many applications from piling up. This program will begin in 2014.

In order to make these changes, Citizenship and Immigration Canada decided to send back 280,000 Federal Skilled Worker applications submitted before 2008.

Changes to the Federal Skilled Worker Program (Before and After 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal Skilled Worker Program</th>
<th>BEFORE 2012</th>
<th>AFTER 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupation Lists</td>
<td>35 occupations</td>
<td>24 occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Level</td>
<td>Not required</td>
<td>Benchmark 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Work Experience</td>
<td>Less relevant</td>
<td>Preference given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Less relevant</td>
<td>18-35 year olds get full points, 47 years and older get 0 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credential Assessment</td>
<td>Not required</td>
<td>Evaluated before coming to Canada</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Changes to the Family Reunification Program: Family Super Visa:

Changes to immigration policy do not just affect economic immigrants. There have also been major changes to the family stream of immigration.

How did family members come to Canada before?

It used to be that a permanent resident could sponsor their parents, grandparents, siblings, spouses (husbands and wives) and children through one of two ways:

- Provincial Nominee Program
- Federal Family Reunification Program
So what’s changed?

/// Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program: ///
In Alberta, the Family Stream of the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program has been closed as of August 2010. This means that family members of Canadian citizens or permanent residents living in Alberta are not able to come to Canada through the Alberta Provincial Nominee Program. The government returned the applications of people who applied before August 2010.

/// The Federal Family Reunification Plan: ///
This plan has also changed. Like the Alberta government, the Federal government also put a moratorium on (closed) the Federal sponsorship program for parents and grandparents. This program will re-open in January 2014 with many changes.
How has the program changed?

The first major change is that the government has placed a limit on how many parents and grandparents they will accept each year. This limit is set at 5000 parents and grandparents per year.

The government has also changed the rules around who can apply to sponsor their parents and grandparents. Another way of saying this is that there have been changes to the qualifying criteria for people who want to sponsor their parents or grandparents. These changes include:

- In order to be able to sponsor a parent or grandparent, an individual must be able to show that they have what’s called a “minimum necessary income.” This means that an individual or family has enough money to support the sponsored relative. Under the new qualifying criteria, individuals and families must have 30% more than the minimum necessary income.

- The length of time to demonstrate having the minimum necessary income has increased from one year to three years. This means that individuals and families must prove that they have 30% more than the minimum necessary income for three years.

- The sponsorship undertaking period has increased to 20 years from 10 years. This means sponsors will be responsible for repaying any provincial social assistance benefit paid to the parent and grandparent for 20 years (this includes health care benefits not covered by provincial health care).
Another change to the Family Reunification Plan is the creation of the Family Super Visa. This visa allows Canadian citizens and permanent residents to bring parents and grandparents to Canada over for a period of two years before they have to renew their visa. Parents and grandparents with the Super Visa can renew the visa every two years for a maximum of ten years. Individuals with the Super Visa are not eligible for permanent residence. At the end of ten years, they must return to their home country.

While they are in Canada, they or their families must pay for private health insurance that costs a minimum of $1200 per year for very basic coverage. There is no monthly plan for this insurance so families have to pay it upfront. There are also minimum income requirements for the family applying for the visa.

The Family Super Visa will only be required for countries that already require a visa for entry to Canada in the first place.

### Current Minimum Necessary Income (MNI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of family unit, including applicants</th>
<th>Current Minimum Necessary Income (MNI)</th>
<th>Minimum Necessary Income plus 30%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$28,182</td>
<td>$36,636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$34,646</td>
<td>$45,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$42,065</td>
<td>$54,684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$47,710</td>
<td>$62,023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$53,808</td>
<td>$69,905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$59,907</td>
<td>$77,879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For each additional person</td>
<td>$6,099</td>
<td>$7,928</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


## What is the Family Super Visa?

Another change to the Family Reunification Plan is the creation of the **Family Super Visa**. This visa allows Canadian citizens and permanent residents to bring parents and grandparents to Canada over for a period of two years before they have to renew their visa. Parents and grandparents with the Super Visa can renew the visa every two years for a maximum of ten years. Individuals with the Super Visa are not eligible for permanent residence. At the end of ten years, they must return to their home country.

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The Family Super Visa will only be required for countries that already require a visa for entry to Canada in the first place.
5. Changes to the Family Reunification Program: Sponsoring Spouses

In the past, citizens and permanent residents could easily bring their spouse and children to Canada. Between 2007 and 2011, the number of sponsored spouses went down from 19 per cent in 2007 to 14.5 per cent in 2011.\(^x\)

**Number of sponsored spouses in Canada**

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**How have the rules changed?**

The rules have changed for Canadian citizens or permanent residents who wish to sponsor their spouse. These rules changed in October 2012. Now, Canadian citizens and permanent residents who wish to sponsor a spouse must prove that they have been living together for two years in Canada before the sponsored spouse can officially become a permanent resident. This rule only applies to couples who have been married for less than two years and who have no children in common.
When the sponsored spouse arrives in Canada they will be given a permanent resident card and will have access to the same settlement services as other permanent residents. The sponsored spouse will have what is called “conditional” permanent residence. This means that their permanent residence status can be taken away if the couple cannot prove that they have lived together in Canada for two years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement Services</th>
<th>Conditional Permanent Residence</th>
<th>Permanent Residence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social support such as health care</td>
<td>Full Access</td>
<td>Full Access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-habitation</td>
<td>Must live with sponsor for two years</td>
<td>Not Required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Why is this important?**

This legislation was created to prevent marriage fraud. Many critics have argued that this law puts the sponsored spouse at risk. The sponsored spouse is dependent on their sponsor and must share a home with their sponsor in order to get permanent residence. The government has said that if there are cases of violence or death, the couple will not be required to live together to get permanent residence. It is not clear how this will be regulated.
The third pathway for immigration is the humanitarian pathway. In 2010, 9 per cent of immigrants to Canada came as refugees through the humanitarian stream. In recent years, there have been many changes to the humanitarian pathway.

### VOLUME OF REFUGEES ADMITTED AS PERMANENT RESIDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011 (Prelim)</th>
<th>2012 (Targeted)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government-assisted refugees</td>
<td>7.424</td>
<td>7.264</td>
<td>7.365</td>
<td>7.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privately sponsored refugees</td>
<td>2.976</td>
<td>4.833</td>
<td>5.564</td>
<td>5.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful refugee claimants</td>
<td>19.935</td>
<td>9.041</td>
<td>10.741</td>
<td>8.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee dependents</td>
<td>5.441</td>
<td>3.558</td>
<td>4.182</td>
<td>4.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total #</strong></td>
<td>35.776</td>
<td>24.696</td>
<td>27.852</td>
<td>26.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total immigrant flow</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Facts and Figures, CIC.

### What’s changed?

#### Safe Countries:
The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration now has the power to call some countries “safe” and make it more difficult for people coming from these countries to claim refugee status in Canada. These are called “Designated Countries of Origin.” People coming from Designated Countries of Origin will go through a different refugee claim process and will not have the right to appeal the decision made by the Immigration and Refugee Board.

Claimants coming from Designated Countries of Origin will not have access to work permits and therefore they will not be able to work legally in Canada. Critics have said that this is unfair because not all countries are safe for all people, even if they are relatively peaceful. For example, some religious, sexual or cultural minorities may be at risk in countries that are otherwise safe for the majority.
Designated Countries of Origin as of February 15, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belgium</th>
<th>Slovak Republic</th>
<th>Lithuania</th>
<th>Norway</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Iceland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Malta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Less time:
All refugee claimants who come to Canada will have 15 days to submit a written version of their refugee claim. Refugee claimants who are not from Designated Countries of Origin will have their refugee hearing after 60 days. Claimants coming from “Designated Countries of Origin” (safe countries) will have their hearing within 30-45 days and will not be able to appeal the decision of the Immigration and Refugee Board. Other claimants will have 15 calendar days to make an appeal in writing to the Refugee Appeal Division.

SOME KEY TIMELINES IN THE NEW REFUGEE SYSTEM
(Regular claimants, not designated country of origin)

Refugee claim made

Hearing at the Immigration and Refugee Board
Deadline: file appeal
Written decision received
Deadline: perfect appeal
Removal Order in force (if no judicial review)

Appeal at the Immigration and Refugee Board

60 days
15 days
30 days
15 days
Detention of ‘irregular arrivals’:
A new law has been passed that allows the government to detain refugees that arrive in large groups (for example, by boat) or through human smuggling chains. These people are now called “Designated Foreign Nationals.” Under the new rules, Designated Foreign Nationals can be detained for up to one year. This is called “mandatory detention for irregular arrivals.”

This includes detaining refugee claimants as young as 16 years of age. Designated Foreign Nationals will not be allowed to apply for Permanent Residence in Canada for five years after their arrival. During this five-year period, Designated Foreign Nationals cannot leave Canada. Children of Designated Foreign Nationals who are detained will be separated from their parents and placed in foster care.

Designated Countries of Origin
Under new refugee law (Bill C-31 which passed in June 2012), the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has the power to say that some countries are safe. These are called ‘Designated Countries of Origin.’ People coming from these countries are eligible to claim refugee status but they have to go through a different process. Refugee claimants from Designated Countries of Origin will have less time to make their claim to the Refugee Board. They will not have access to appeal and they are not eligible for Canadian work permits.

Designated Foreign Nationals
Designated Foreign Nationals is the name given to refugee claimants who arrive through unusual or “irregular” channels. This includes groups of refugees arriving by boat or in large groups. Designated Foreign Nationals can be detained for up to one year. If they have children and are detained their children can be taken away and placed in foster care. If their refugee claim is accepted they can apply for permanent residence after five years. During those five years they may not leave Canada.
7. Refugees: Interim Federal Health Program

One of the major changes that the Federal government has made to the humanitarian stream has been to limit refugee’s access to health care.

What kind of health care coverage did refugees have in the past?

In the past, refugee claimants had access to health care benefits through a program called the “Interim Federal Health Program.” The Interim Federal Health Program was started in 1957 to provide health care to individuals and groups who do not have access to coverage under provincial insurance plans and who could not make a claim through private health insurance. This included refugee claimants.xvi

Interim Federal Health Program Before 2012 Cuts:
- Prescriptions (including heart and diabetes medication)
- Access to physician or nurse
- Diagnostic services
- Access to emergency services

So what’s changed?

The Interim Federal Health Program has been changed. Now only certain categories of refugees will have access to health care through the Interim Federal Health Program. Most refugee claimants in Canada no longer have access to anything more than the most basic health care. The chart on the next page describes the different coverage that different categories of refugee claimants receive. Refugees often come to Canada from countries in conflict. This means that sometimes refugees have different and more complex health issues than other people living in Canada.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Refugee Claimant:</strong></td>
<td>Health-Care Coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preventative care (i.e. medication) only if condition is a public health risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hospital/physician services only in emergency situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Refugee Claimant from a Designated Country of Origin:</strong></td>
<td>Public Health or Public Safety Health-Care Coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No preventative care, no hospital/physician services except when public health or safety is at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Failed Refugee Claimant:</strong></td>
<td>Public Health or Public Safety Health-Care Coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No preventative care, no hospital/physician services except when public health or safety is at risk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Changes to the Canadian Citizenship Exam

In order to become a Canadian citizen, permanent residents between the ages of 18 and 54 have always had to write and pass the Canadian Citizenship Exam.

So what’s changed?  

In November 2012, the government added a language requirement for applicants wishing to become citizens. This means that proof of a Canadian Language Benchmark Level of 4 is now required (applicants 18-54 years). In addition to the language requirement, the test was also changed in March 2010. The test is still twenty questions long and takes 30 minutes to complete but is considered more difficult than the old exam. The pass mark was changed from 60 per cent to 75 per cent. When the new test was introduced the failure rate increased from approximately 4 per cent to 30 per cent.
Accessible: Easy to reach or approach. For example a building is accessible if there are ramps for wheelchairs; a document is accessible if it easy to read and understand.

Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program: Each province in Canada has a Provincial Nominee Program. Each province has a cap (limit) on how many immigrants can be nominated every year. People applying to the Provincial Nominee Program must be ‘nominated’ (sponsored) by a permanent resident or Canadian citizen already in the Canada – for example an employer or niece.

Appeal: The right to challenge a decision made by a decision-making body (such as a court or Board), for example, if a refugee claimant is denied status by the Refugee Board, they have the right to “appeal” the decision and their case will be reviewed by another panel.

Conditional: Used to describe something (such as an agreement) that will happen only if something else also happens. For example, conditional permanent residence requires the sponsored spouse to live with their sponsor for two years before they become official permanent residents.

Consultation: The process of collecting feedback and opinion on a particular issue. For example, the government holds public consultation on changes to immigration policy in order to understand how the public feels about the policy.

Designated Countries of Origin: Under new refugee law (Bill C-31 which passed in June 2012), the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has the power to say that some countries are safe. These are called ‘Designated Countries of Origin.’ People coming from these countries are eligible to claim refugee status but they have to go through a different process. Refugee claimants from Designated Countries of Origin will have less time to make their claim to the Refugee Board. They will not have access to appeal and they are not eligible for Canadian work permits.

Designated Foreign Nationals: Designated Foreign Nationals is the name given to refugee claimants who arrive through unusual or “irregular” channels. This includes groups of refugees arriving by boat or in large groups. Designated Foreign Nationals can be detained for up to one year. If they have children and are detained their children can be taken away an placed in foster care. If their refugee claim is accepted they can apply for permanent residence after five years. During those five years they may not leave Canada.

Detain: The act of keeping someone in prison or similar place where they are confined/unable to move freely.

Domestic Violence: Acts of physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse that take place between a two people in a relationship (husband and wife, common-law partners, boyfriend and girlfriend etc.)

Expression of Interest: New program for the Federal Skilled Worker Program. This program is the same as programs that currently exist in New Zealand and Australia. Under the Expression of Interest Model, skilled workers can submit an ‘expression of interest’ to a national group of applications (called a “pool”). This pool will be evaluated by employers and the Federal Government who will select applicants who can then apply to immigrate to Canada.

Equitable: Just or fair; dealing fairly and equally with everyone.

Family Reunification: Bringing families together through immigration.

Family Super Visa: The Family Super Visa is a new visa introduced in 2012. This visa allows permanent residents and Canadian citizens to bring their parents or grandparents to Canada for up to two years at a time (for a maximum of 10 years).

Federal Skilled Worker Program: The Federal Skilled Worker Program is part of the economic pathway to
Canadian residence. This includes engineers, lawyers, doctors and other highly skilled professionals. Federal Skilled Workers hold National Occupation Codes 0, A and B. In 2011, Federal Skilled Workers made up 37 per cent of economic immigrants to Canada.

Humanitarian: Efforts to make the world better – humanitarian efforts include ending hunger, poverty etc.

Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA): IRPA is the major piece of legislation concerning immigration policy in Canada.

Interim Federal Health Program: Health Care Program for refugee claimants living in Canada. This program was stopped by the Federal Government in 2012.

Irregular Arrivals: The term created by the current government to describe refugees who come to Canada in large groups or in unusual circumstances. Generally this refers to large groups of refugee claimants who arrive by boat.

Canadian Language Benchmark: The national standard used in Canada for describing, measuring and recognizing the English language proficiency of adult immigrants and prospective immigrants for living and working in Canada.\textsuperscript{xxi}

Marriage Fraud: Marriage Fraud occurs when a Permanent Resident or Canadian citizen lies about their marital status in order to help bring someone to Canada.

Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism: Federal Minister responsible for immigration policy. Currently the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism is Jason Kenney.

Ministerial Instructions: Ministerial Instructions were created in 2008 under the current Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. They allow the Minister to give instructions directly to immigration officers without going through the traditional decision-making channels. Ministerial Instructions have allowed the current government to make big changes to immigration policy very quickly.

Moratorium: A time when a particular activity is not allowed or stopped. For example, there is currently a moratorium on the Federal Family Reunification Program.

Parliament: The Canadian Parliament is where Federal policy decisions are made. It is composed of 308 elected ‘Members of Parliament’ from across the country. These Members of Parliament are elected by Canadian citizens. Members of Parliament belong to different political parties. When a party has more than half the seats in Parliament they are said to have a Majority government. The party with the second highest number of seats is the Official Opposition. Currently, the Conservative Party is the government and the New Democrat Party is the Official Opposition.

Permanent Resident/Residence: A permanent resident is someone who has acquired permanent resident status by immigrating to Canada, but is not yet a Canadian citizen. Permanent residents have rights and privileges in Canada even though they remain citizens of a home country.\textsuperscript{xxii}

Policy: An officially accepted set of rules that guide how things are done. For example, “immigration policy” determines how immigration works in Canada. In this case, policy is created by the Federal Government.

Spouse: Another way of saying ‘husband’ or ‘wife’. Person connected through marriage.

Temporary Foreign Worker: Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) are people who come to Canada on a temporary work permit. Temporary Foreign Workers are only allowed to stay in Canada for the length of their work permit. Temporary Foreign Workers must return to their country of origin after their work permit ends.

Work Permit: Legal document that allows a Temporary Foreign Worker to work in Canada. The Federal Government is responsible for overseeing Work Permits. Work permits are only valid for a certain amount of time, for example, two years.

Qualifying criteria: This refers to the requirements for individuals and families who wish to sponsor a parent or grandparent. There are certain income requirements that each family will have to meet in order to be eligible to sponsor a parent or grandparent.

Minimum Necessary Income (MNI): A sponsor must have a certain level of income to prove to the government that they are able to financially support the person they are sponsoring. This level of income is determined by Statistics Canada and changes depending on the number of people in a household. For example, the Minimum Necessary Income for a household of four people is $42,065.

Sponsorship undertaking period: This refers to the length of time that the sponsor is responsible for paying any social assistance costs attributed to the person being sponsored. For example, if a person sponsors their parent to come to Canada and that parent requires additional health care coverage, the sponsor is responsible for paying for that additional health coverage.


iii. Bill C-50 “Budget Implementation Act” passed June 18, 2008. Granted ‘Ministerial Instructions’ to the Minister and made changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act

iv. Bill C-50 Budget Implementation Act passed June 18, 2008 and Bill C-38 Omnibus Budget Bill passed


viii. This refers to NOC 0, A and B


xii. Canadian Council for Refugees Key timelines in refugee system accessed February 13, 2013

xiii. These changes were implemented through Bill C-31 “An Act to Amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Balanced Refugee Reform Act, the Marine Transportation Security Act and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Act.


xx. Some of the terms in this glossary were adapted with guidance from Merriam-Webster Learner’s Dictionary http://www.lowersdictionary.com/


*Photo References

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