

Ontario To Introduce New Permanent Residence Pilot Program To Attract Foreign Workers To Small And Rural Communities



At a Glance

- Ontario will introduce a new permanent residence pilot program, entitled the Regional Immigration Pilot, in early 2020, which will set aside 150 nominations under the Employer Job Offer Stream for foreign nationals intending to settle in select small and rural communities.
- The pilot program will give foreign nationals who have a job offer from an employer in a small or rural community an additional route to apply for permanent residence.

The situation

The Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) will introduce a new permanent residence pilot program, entitled the [Regional Immigration Pilot](#), in early 2020, which will set aside 150 nominations for permanent residence in the Employer Job Offer stream for foreign nationals intending to settle in selected small and rural communities.

A closer look

Details of the Regional Immigration Pilot include:

- **Purpose.** The pilot is designed to attract foreign nationals to small and rural communities in Ontario in order to fill labor market needs that are not being filled by local talent.
- **Eligibility.** Since the Regional Immigration Pilot program works within the existing Employer Job Offer stream, foreign nationals will have to meet the requirements of one of the three categories within this stream in order to be eligible for the pilot program.
- **Selected communities.** The OINP has selected the following communities to participate in the pilot: Chatham-Kent; Cornwall; and Belleville/Quinte West. These communities were selected based on specific skilled labor challenges; their ability to support foreign nationals settling in their communities and interest from the communities.
- **Application process.** Specific details on the application process are expected to

be released on the [OINP website](#) in early 2020.

Impact for employers

Participating employers in the selected communities will have a larger pool of candidates to hire from in order to fill their labor market needs. Employers who want to participate in the Regional Immigration Pilot should contact OINP at business.immigration@ontario.ca for more information on the program.

Impact for foreign nationals

Foreign nationals who have a job offer from an employer in a small or rural community will have an additional route to apply for permanent residence.

Background

- **Ontario Immigration Nominee Program.** Foreign nationals with qualifying skills, experience and education who would like to obtain permanent residence in Canada by settling in Ontario can apply to Ontario's economic immigration program, [OINP](#), under one of its streams, which includes the Employer Job Offer program. OINP then nominates select foreign nationals from this pool to the federal government who makes a final decision on the permanent residence applications.
- **Other rural pilot programs.** In January 2019, the IRCC launched the [Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot program](#) which is similarly intended to facilitate economic immigration to less-populated communities in Canada, but at a federal level. However, processing times under the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot program is much faster since foreign nationals do not need to go through the provincial nomination step.
- **Ontario labor shortage.** Ontario is currently experiencing a skilled labor shortage and the introduction of this pilot program may help to alleviate the lack of qualified personnel.

Looking ahead

The Ontario government has requested additional nominations under the provincial allocation system due to their skilled labor shortage. If the Regional Immigration Pilot is successful and the Ontario government is granted additional nominations, it is likely that the government would increase the number of nominations under the pilot program.

Fragomen will provide further details on the Ontario Regional Pilot program as they become available.

by Fragomen