

Canadian Immigration as Option

By Reuben S. Seguritan

Filipinos who may not qualify for U.S. immigration under the new immigration law may think of Canadian immigration as an option. Canada's policy is to attract immigrants who will advance business development, generate employment and exert a positive influence on the labor market. There are no country quotas and it is not necessary to have a job offer or labor certification. New immigrants may sponsor particular family members once they are settled. Only three years of residence are needed to become a Canadian citizen.

Certain requirements have to be met by the applicants. Business applicants are usually required to have business experience and significant net worth. Applicants who are skilled workers or professionals are chosen based on a point system and they must receive 70 points to be admitted. The following factors are used to evaluate the applicants in this latter classification: (1) age, (2) language, (3) kinship bonus, (4) personal suitability, (5) demographic factor, (6) education, (7) arranged employment/designated occupation, (8) occupational demand, (9) specific vocational preparation (S.V.P.), (10) experience, and (11) discretionary authority.

Skilled workers or professionals who are between 21 and 44 years of age are assigned 10 points. If he is under or over said age bracket, two points are subtracted for each year over or under.

Language or the ability to speak, read and write in English and French is allocated up to 15 points. Nine points are accorded for the first official language and six points for the second.

There is a five point bonus if the applicant has a secondary relative (such as a brother/sister, aunt/uncle, niece/nephew, etc.) who resides in Canada either as a permanent resident or a Canadian citizen.

Personal suitability is the only factor which is subjective in nature. A maximum of 10 points is allocated. The visa officer makes a personal evaluation of the applicant's adaptability, motivation, resourcefulness and likelihood of successful settlement in Canada.

Demographic factor is assigned 8 points but may be altered by the government to either increase or decrease the number of applicants who can fulfill the passmark. Points are awarded to all applicants to guarantee that actual immigrant arrivals are numerically compatible with the declared immigration levels.

With regard to education, 5 to 10 points are allocated for high school completion hinging on whether the diploma leads to university admission. 10 to 13 points are awarded for full time post secondary school training or apprenticeship and 15 points are assigned for a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree. A maximum of 16 points are given to one which is specifically in high demand.

As regards the arranged employment or designated occupation, a maximum of 10 points is allocated if the applicant has a job offer which is approved by a Canada Employment Center or has a job recognized by a province as one specifically in high demand.

Occupational demand refers to an occupation which a qualified applicant intends to work in and which is listed in the General Occupation List. The occupations in the list are designated from 1 to 10 points.

With regard to specific vocational preparation (S.V.P.), a numerical rating is designated to every occupation conceivable. The rating is intended to be a gauge of the duration of training requirements to obtain the fundamental skills for minimal performance of the occupation under which the applicant has been appraised. The training requirements may be formal, professional, vocational, apprenticeship, in-plant or on-the-job.

Points are also assigned for experience in the job under which the applicant is being considered. A formula is used which is weighted in favor of S.V.P. occupations with higher ratings. The experience factor carries two points per year for a maximum of eight points or four years.

Discretion is also used by an immigration officer to approve an application even if it fails to meet the established standards if he is convinced that the standards do not indicate the applicant's actual proficiency. For instance, significance may be given to the fact that foreign graduates in the U.S. have obtained similar education and have lived in an environment that is akin to Canada's. Also, post graduate research or practical training undertaken or an H-1 status may help considerably.