

Yukon Nominee Program Update

Background

The Yukon Nominee Program was developed in 2001 as a partnership between Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Yukon government. It allows the Yukon government to nominate immigrants to meet the territory's economic and labour market needs.

The Advanced Education Branch in the Yukon Department of Education is responsible for Skilled Worker and Critical Impact Worker categories. The Skilled Worker stream is designed to attract qualified individuals who can help alleviate the shortage of skilled workers in Yukon when workers cannot be found in Yukon or the rest of Canada. The Critical Impact Worker Stream provides Yukon employers with the means to fill entry level or semi-skilled occupations requiring secondary school and/or occupation-specific training or on-the-job training. There is a third category of the Yukon Nominee Program, the business category, which is managed through the Department of Economic Development and not affected by this update.

Proposed Updates to the Yukon Nominee Program

The Department of Education received direction from Citizenship and Immigration Canada that there must be revisions to the program. The goals of the revisions have been to standardize language requirements, to establish a settlement plan that shows that nominees can become economically established in Yukon, and revise the application forms to reflect the overall changes to the program.

To address CIC's recommendations, Advanced Education is proposing some changes:

Guaranteed Employment Offer

This establishes more detailed criteria to make the provisions for a more rigorous up-front assessment of both the genuineness of the job offer and the applicant's ability and likelihood to perform the job. This will help ensure people who are nominated to immigrate to Yukon can successfully integrate. The Guaranteed Employment Offer will ensure that wages must be within the prevailing wages/industry norms as those used by Human Resources Development Canada. Under this provision, the Nominee family income must be above the applicable income threshold based on Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-Offs.

Settlement and Retention Plan

Currently, nominees have the option to either prove they have the financial means to support themselves (\$10,000 in available funds, with an additional \$2,000 for each dependent) or have an Affidavit of Support signed by a friend or relative living in Yukon. A legal review by the Yukon Department of Justice raised the issue of enforceability of such legal obligations, and the inability of staff to enforce these agreements, as a major concern. Last fall, Citizenship and Immigration Canada advised they would no longer accept affidavits of support. We heard from our stakeholders that having a minimum of \$10,000 in available funds presented too much of a barrier for nominees to participate in the program.

As an alternative, Advanced Education negotiated with Citizenship and Immigration Canada a proposal to replace the Affidavit of Support with a Settlement and Retention Plan (SRP), designed to help employers create a positive settlement experience for Yukon nominees, and to shift some of the responsibilities of settlement and integration from family and relatives to employers. Under the

Settlement and Retention Plan, advanced Education will evaluate Employers' plans for accommodation, language training, financial supports and use of local settlement resources.

Revised Memorandum of Understanding

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the employer, employee and Yukon sets standards for the job description, work schedule, wages, travel expenses, housing, medical care, workers' compensation, support services, termination of employment and site visits for monitoring by Advanced Education.

The suggested revisions of the MOU refer to both the content and the structure of the document. The terminology of the MOU was changed to be consistent with the terminology used in the application forms, the website, the assessment form and the program guidelines. The recommendations for the MOU are grouped in 2 categories: ongoing obligations for nominees and ongoing obligations for employers.

Previously the YNP application forms were specific to the Skill Worker (SW) or Critical Impact Worker (CIW) streams. The new application form combines both SW and CIW applications into one document. The changes to the new application form reflect program changes (replacing the Affidavit of Support with a Settlement and Retention Plan and the Guaranteed Employment Offer replacing the Employment Contract) and administrative/procedural changes (changes that arose as a result of day-to-day program delivery). The format was also improved, to be a fillable PDF format, to make it easier to fill out and to process the applications. The form can still be printed and filled in by hand if people prefer.

For further information, please phone the Advanced Education Branch at 667-5131.