

## **Introduction of a Regional Labour Market Demand Stream into the Alberta Immigration Nominee Program**

On March 6, 2014, the Government of Nova Scotia introduced a new Regional Labour Market Demand stream in the frame of the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP)<sup>1</sup>. The new stream created a possibility for candidates to be nominated by the province for permanent residency without having to apply for a Labour Market Opinion (LMO) and without having to be offered a job contract before the application. Taking into account specific needs of the Alberta labour market, introducing a similar stream into the Alberta Immigration Nominee Program would help to partially ease negative consequences of changes introduced into LMO application process by the federal government on July 2013.

Each province in Canada is experiencing different labour market needs and Alberta and Saskatchewan lead the nation in the lowest unemployment rates. Alberta is currently at 4.7% unemployment and Saskatchewan at 3.4%. Alberta needs to pursue immigration streams that work to support their labour shortage needs.

The Regional Labour market Demand (RLMD) Stream is addressed for skilled people 0, A and B skill level in the National Occupation Classification), mostly working in engineering, health services (including nursing), skilled trades and food services, Listed among 43 in demand occupations.<sup>2</sup> The main requirements to apply for the RLMD stream is to be between 21 and 55 years old, meet language proficiency requirements, have at least two years of continuous full-time work experience within the past five years in one of the 43 eligible occupations, be legally residing in current country of residency, have sufficient funds for settlement in Nova Scotia and demonstrate an intent to live in Nova Scotia through completing an Employment Settlement Plan<sup>3</sup>. It should be emphasized that the stream does not require the applicant to have lived or worked in the province before, and is aimed to attract and retain needed professionals by offering them residency status. The provincial authorities are planning to accept up to 150 applications for permanent residency in the frame of the RLMD in 2014.

Meanwhile, the two streams available for skilled and semi-skilled immigrants who want to apply for permanent residency in the frame of the Alberta Immigration Nominee Program (AINP) require a full time job offer (Employer Driven Stream), completed certificates conceded by Alberta authorities or hands on work experience in Alberta (Strategic Recruitment Stream). In all of the cases, the applicant has to be already residing in Alberta, frequently for at least two years before applying. The Regional Labour Market Demand (RLMD) Stream gives the provincial government an opportunity to better regulate the provincial labour market, and fill the gap of workers in the most in demand occupations.

### **Recommendations**

That the federal government work with the Government of Alberta to:

1. Introduce a new immigration stream under the framework of the AINP, similar to the one based on the Regional Labour Market Demand Stream implemented in Nova Scotia to allow a determined number of qualified professionals from in-demand occupations to apply for permanent residency without the requirement of presenting a job offer or LMO.

### **SUBMITTED BY THE SPRUCE GROVE & DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

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<sup>1</sup> Citizenship and Immigration Canada News, Nova Scotia announces New Immigration Stream – No Job Offer Needed, <http://www.cicnews.com/2014/03/nova-scotia-announces-immigration-stream-job-offer-needed-033285.html> (Retrieved on March 20, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Regional Labour Market Demand Stream In Demand Occupations, [http://novascotiaimmigration.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/In\\_Demand\\_List\\_of\\_Occupations.pdf](http://novascotiaimmigration.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/In_Demand_List_of_Occupations.pdf) (Retrieved on March 28, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> The settlement plan requires applicants to answer questions regarding intended occupation in Nova Scotia, reasons for choosing Nova Scotia, information where they wish to settle and why.