

Immigration Lawyer

Helping people and employers move to Canada. Federal rules, mountains of paperwork, and a non-lawyer route into the same field.

TYPICAL PAY

\$90,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$55k to \$200k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

7 to 8 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Small firms, immigration boutiques, refugee clinics, corporate law firms

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
English, French and any other language you can pick up.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 3 to 4 years
International relations, languages, political science and social work are common. Any subject works. Write the LSAT (law school admission test).
- 3 Law school (JD, juris doctor)** 3 years
Take immigration and refugee law and administrative law. Several schools run refugee law clinics where students represent real claimants.
- 4 Articling** About 1 year
8 to 10 months at an immigration boutique, a community legal clinic or a big firm's immigration group, plus the barrister and solicitor licensing exams. Ontario's Law Practice Program is the alternative.
- 5 Called to the bar** Ceremony
Many immigration lawyers go solo within a few years. The overhead is low and the clients find you through community and language networks.

Pros and cons

- + You change the course of a family's life, visibly
- + Low overhead and steady demand, easy to go solo
- + Flat fees and remote work suit a flexible life
- Rules and quotas change with every government
- Refugee work is emotionally heavy and poorly paid
- Clients are desperate and the stakes are deportation

Good to know

One set of rules, except Quebec

Immigration is federal, so a lawyer in Halifax and one in Vancouver work under the same law. Quebec is the exception: it selects its own economic immigrants, with its own points system and French require...

The targets move

Canada has planned for hundreds of thousands of new permanent residents a year through the 2020s, and the number rises and falls with politics. Every change to the targets or the points system chang...

Optional boosts

Corporate immigration. Federal Court litigation. Inadmissibility cases. US immigration.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Lawyers and Quebec notaries, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Law Society of Ontario: Becoming a lawyer

Government of Canada: Choosing an immigration representative

Queen's University: Graduate Diploma in Immigration and Citizenship Law, tuition

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/immigration-lawyer>



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