



# News Release

For Immediate Release

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## Province's Immigration Selection Program Has Serious Deficiencies, Auditor General Says

(TORONTO) Ontario's immigration selection program has serious deficiencies that increase the risk that unqualified people are immigrating to Ontario who may not be of economic benefit to the province, Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk says in her *2014 Annual Report*.

"There is a significant risk that the program might not be nominating qualified people," Lysyk said today after the release of the Report. "As well, there is nothing stopping people who have misrepresented themselves or others from reapplying. There are no processes in place to ban applicants or their representatives who have submitted fraudulent applications."

The Provincial Nominee Program (Program) is delivered by the Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade. Through the Program, immigrants are nominated, or recommended, to the federal government based on their potential economic contribution to the province. Since the Program's inception in 2007, the province has nominated about 6,600 people. As of April 30, 2014, 3,900 nominees and 3,200 of their family members have become permanent residents through the Program.

Other significant findings included the following:

- The Ministry delayed formally reporting potential abuse of the Program to the federal government and the appropriate law enforcement agencies. This potentially delayed any action against people who might have been abusing the Program.
- Program staff did not follow up on questionable files that were approved but flagged for follow-up. About 260 files were flagged between October 2011 and November 2013, but only 8% had been followed up on at the time of our audit. As of April 2014, 71% of all nominees flagged for follow-up had become landed immigrants.
- Thirty immigrant representatives submitted applications that were denied on the basis that they contained misleading or fraudulent information.
- On a follow-up of previous approved foreign worker nominees who had become landed immigrants to Ontario, 38% of the sampled nominees were suspected to have misrepresented themselves.
- Even though the Ministry says publicly that applications are processed on a first-come-first-served basis, certain applications were given priority and processed at least three times faster than others.
- There are significant data integrity issues with the Program's computer system. Controls over the case management system and nomination certificates need to be strengthened.
- In 2013, two-thirds of the nominees were international students who obtained a post-secondary degree in Ontario but did not have a job offer at the time of nomination.

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