
About the College

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For many newcomers to Canada, working with a professional immigration or citizenship consultant is a step toward a better future.

Belonging to a self-regulated profession that helps so many people is a privilege. With that privilege comes the responsibility to know and meet the professional and ethical obligations demanded of an immigration and citizenship consultant.

Who we are

The College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants (the College) licenses and regulates Canadian immigration and citizenship consultants in the public interest.

There are 2 types of immigration and citizenship consultants we regulate:

- Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultants (RCICs), and
- Regulated International Student Immigration Advisors (RISIAs).

The College's role, its statutory authority, and its powers are set out in:

- The *College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants Act*,
- The *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, and
- The *Citizenship Act*.

Our statutory authority applies to immigration and citizenship consultants whether they practise in Canada or abroad.

NOTE: The College regulates Canadian immigration and citizenship consultants. We do not provide immigration advice, process immigration applications, or influence any decision related to immigration.

Anyone who wants to provide Canadian immigration or citizenship advice or representation for a fee (or for any other benefit) must be one of the following:

- A licensee in good standing with the College,
- A member of a Canadian law society, or
- A member of the Chambre des notaires du Québec.

In other words, if someone is not already a lawyer or a *notaire*, they must have a licence from the College to work as a Regulated Canadian immigration consultant.

What we do

The College regulates immigration and citizenship consultants in the public interest and protects the public by:

- Establishing and administering qualification standards, standards of practice, and continuing education requirements for licensees;
- Ensuring compliance with the Code of Professional Conduct; and
- Undertaking public awareness activities.

Licensing

We license RCICs and RISIAs, ensuring they meet and follow high standards of education, competence and professional ethics.

Ongoing education

We support the lifelong learning needs of licensees. All RCICs and RISIAs must participate in ongoing learning opportunities every year to maintain their licence.

Complaints and Discipline

Licensees must comply with the College's Code of Professional Conduct (the Code).

We investigate complaints about RCICs and RISIAs whose conduct fails to meet the standards of the profession.

We also maintain a professional discipline process to sanction licensees (when appropriate to do so) who do not comply with the Code.

Compensation Fund

The Federal Government will set out regulations for the establishment of a Compensation Fund that will be operated by the College. The purpose of the fund is to help people who have been adversely affected by the activities of a licensee.

Once the Fund is operational, we will release more details about who will be eligible to apply and how they can make a claim.

What is a regulatory college?

In Canada, a regulatory college is a self-regulatory organization (SRO) that regulates its own profession in the public interest.

SROs are already common in healthcare, education, and professional services.

SROs are granted specific powers and responsibilities by acts of Parliament. They are charged with:

- Setting standards for who can become a member or licensee of the regulated profession,
- Protecting the public by investigating incidents of misconduct by licensees,
- Sanctioning licensees who engage in misconduct, and
- Improving their licensees' skills and competencies.

Self-regulation is a privilege granted to professions that show they can put the interests of the public ahead of their own.

The College's role as a regulator

The College was created as an SRO because it is understood that:

- Immigration and citizenship consultants have specialized knowledge and expertise, and
- Immigration and citizenship consulting can be trusted as a regulated profession.

As a regulator, the College sets standards of education, professional practice and ethics for its licensees. By doing so, we can

- Ensure the fairest outcomes for people who want to immigrate to Canada, and
- Demonstrate that licensed immigration and citizenship consultants are trustworthy and ethical.

We achieve this by:

- Providing resources, education, training, professional development and licensing for RCICs, RISIAs, and people who want to become licensed.
- Requiring that anyone who wants to provide immigration and citizenship consultant services must be licensed.
- Ensuring that people worldwide can easily find an RCIC or a RISIA using our up-to-date Public Register of licensees.
- Disciplining RCICs and RISIAs who breach the Code of Professional Conduct.
- Talking about our role as an SRO with the public, the media, and stakeholder organizations.
- Working with the federal government to continually strengthen regulation in the public interest.

Why trust a licensed immigration and citizenship consultant?

RCICs and RISIAs are licensed professionals who meet educational, professional and ethical standards. As professionals who help people come to Canada, they understand the responsibility they have to their clients.

As a regulator, we mandate and enforce the standards that RCICs and RISIAs must meet and hold licensees accountable for meeting them.

If a member of the public or the College has concerns about a licensee's conduct or competency, we have the full legal authority to launch an investigation. If we find an RCIC or a RISIA has breached the Code, they will be subject to rehabilitation or discipline. At our discretion, we may also involve law enforcement, where necessary.

This oversight and enforcement help build trust and confidence in the profession and its role as part of Canada's immigration system.

Why regulation matters to the public

Regulation protects the interests of Canadians and newcomers to Canada by ensuring that Canadian immigration and citizenship consultants operate ethically and competently.

Regulation also helps Canada facilitate immigration and provide protection to refugees. This, in turn, enhances the country's reputation around the world.

Why regulation matters to newcomers

For people looking to immigrate to Canada or become Canadian citizens, we mandate competent and ethical behaviour by RCICs and RISIAs.

Our licensees must adhere to the College's strict Code of Professional Conduct and maintain high standards of education.

We also work with offshore partners to ensure that people around the world know how to use our up-to-date online Public Register of licensed RCICs and RISIAs as well as the dangers of using unauthorized practitioners.

These measures help people gain access to quality Canadian immigration and citizenship advice.

Why regulation matters to licensees (RCICs and RISIAs)

Effective regulation builds public trust. It also strengthens the profession by ensuring that licensees meet the educational, ethical and professional standards required of trusted, regulated professionals.

Finally, our authority to discipline sub-standard licensees protects the reputation of other RCICs and RISIAs.

The College's transition from ICCRC

The College was created by an act of the Canadian Parliament: *The College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants Act* (Canada) ("the College Act").

The College Act was passed by Parliament in June 2019.

Pursuant to an order of the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, the Immigration Consultants of Canada Regulatory Council (ICCRC) was continued as the College on November 23, 2021.

"The Government of Canada works to protect the integrity of our immigration system. Part of this means ensuring consultants are properly licensed, so that applicants who use their services can count on high quality advice," said the Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. "The opening of this College is an important milestone, and I look forward to its success in supporting the renewal of Canada's population and workforce."

The College Act gives the College investigation and enforcement powers like other professional regulatory bodies (for example, provincial law societies, accounting regulators and professional colleges in the healthcare sector).

The College is governed by a Board of Directors comprising 4 licensees of the College and 5 public representatives appointed by the Minister.