

MOVING TO T&T MADE EASY



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The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) is well-known as the business hub of the Caribbean. Coupled with beaches, wildlife, and a multicultural society of warm people, our twin-island state offers numerous opportunities to those seeking a new life in a perpetual summer season.

As our country opens its arms to foreign investors, so too do we embrace a diversified workforce. But before you pack your bags, there are several steps that must be completed before you can legally work and live in T&T. These application processes are not cumbersome and can be completed swiftly, once the applicant possesses all required documents for submission to the relevant authorities.

Work Permits

Under the T&T Immigration Act, Chapter 18:01, persons other than citizens and residents may work here without a work permit if they are working in T&T for a maximum of 30 days within a period of 12 consecutive months. Otherwise, a work permit must be obtained by all persons who wish to gain employment within the country.

Work permit applications must be submitted to the Work Permit Secretariat of the Ministry of National Security. The application must be submitted on the applicant's behalf by:

- (1) the T&T based company/institution wishing to employ the non-national, or
- (2) a practising attorney in T&T acting on behalf of self-employed persons or on behalf of foreign companies who do not carry on business locally.

Companies wishing to obtain work permits for foreign nationals must state why they desire such persons and/or why no national was selected for the job.

In addition to the original application form and copies, further obligatory documents

to be supplied in support of the application include:

- A copy of the applicant's valid foreign passport
- Police Certificate of Character from the applicant's country of residence
- Two character references
- Proof of applicant's qualifications
- Photographs of the applicant
- An advertisement for the job as it was listed in a daily T&T newspaper and copy of such advertisement.

A mandatory non-refundable application processing fee of \$600 (approximately US\$100) is required and the evaluation is completed between four to six weeks. Residence visas are issued to the spouse and children of persons holding a work permit. If a spouse also wishes to work, he/she must undertake the same application process to obtain a work permit.

However, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) nationals entering T&T do not require work permits once they have obtained the Certificate of Recognition of CARICOM Skills Qualification. This Certificate facilitates the free movement of skilled persons who wish to seek employment in the 12 participating Member States - Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

To obtain a Certificate of Recognition, applications must be submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Certificate allows entry for an initial six months whereby all qualifications are reviewed by the receiving State. Once approved, such persons will be granted indefinite entry.

Permanent Residency

In compliance with Section 6 of the Immigration Act, to obtain Residence Status in T&T, the applicant must be:

- Working in T&T with a valid work permit for a minimum period of five years
- A spouse of a citizen or resident
- A parent or grandparent of a citizen or resident, who is willing to provide care and maintenance for the applicant.

Persons wishing to apply for residency must be able to demonstrate - by reason of his/her educational qualifications, training or special skills - that they have sufficient



means to support themselves and their immediate family. The Minister of National Security must be satisfied that the applicant has entered the country legally (as evinced by a passport stamp on arrival), is not in a prohibited class of entrants, and is of good character as determined by a Police Certificate of Character from all countries of residence within the last five years.

Two copies of the relevant form must be completed and submitted along with accompanying documents to one of the following: Citizenship and Immigration

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Section in Trinidad, Immigration Office in Tobago or, if abroad, any T&T Overseas Mission. (Go to: <http://www.ttconnect.gov.tt> for full list of T&T Overseas Missions and addresses of Immigration Offices.)

Once the application is processed, the applicant will be scheduled for an interview with an Immigration Officer who will determine if the applicant qualifies for Residence Status. Upon approval of Residence Status, CARICOM nationals are required to pay a fee of \$400 (approx.

US\$64), and non-CARICOM nationals must pay \$1,000 (approx. US\$160). Bear in mind that a person to whom resident status has been granted can lose such status by voluntarily residing outside T&T for a continuous period of more than one year.

Driver's Permits

Several employers provide company cars to employees with spouses and children. Alternatively, a visitor may consider renting/buying a car depending on the length of stay. According to the

Motor Vehicle and Road Traffic Act, Chapter 48:50, persons in possession of a valid international driving permit issued in accordance with any International Convention which applies to T&T, may drive vehicles of the stated authorised class without the requirement of a local permit. However, those who hold valid driving permits issued from other countries are only exempted from holding a local licence for three months. To obtain a T&T Driver's Licence, a written test and a practical examination on the driving regulations

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may be required. If the individual applies for a licence and does the written test before the three-month period is up, he or she will be exempt from doing the practical driving test. If the individual applies after the three-month period, he or she will be required to do both the written and practical tests.

Incorporation and Registration of Companies in T&T

The T&T Companies Act, Chapter 81:01 permits the registration of foreign-based ("external") companies and the incorporation of new companies in T&T. To incorporate a new company in T&T, the applicant must first file a notice with the Registrar of Companies for a name approval. Once the company name is available, the non-exhaustive processes for the registration or incorporation of a company can be done by individuals or by an Attorney-at-Law representing the promoter/applicant in T&T. However, it is advised that the registration of an external company or incorporation of a T&T company be done by an Attorney-at-Law or by an Accountant.

There are no restrictions to non-nationals ("foreign investors") who wish to form a new company and/or register an external

company. The foreign investor is required to give notice (in a prescribed form) to the Minister of Finance of intention to incorporate a private company or to acquire shares in a private company. However, there are no restrictions on a foreign investor being a director or acquiring shares in a T&T company, except in the case of a public company where a licence is required to own more than 30 per cent of its shares. There is also a requirement that the consideration for the acquisition of shares in a T&T company by a foreign investor must be paid in an internationally traded currency.

Taxation

The basic rate of tax in T&T is 25% which applies to both individuals and to companies.

Further information can be obtained from:

T&T Ministry of National Security 1-868-623-2154/44 ext 2250 or 2251 www.immigration.gov.tt

T&T Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1-868-623-6894 www.foreign.gov.tt

T&T Ministry of Legal Affairs - Registrar General's Department 1-868-624-1660 www.legalaffairs.gov.tt

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