

# How do People Immigrate to Singapore? Is It Difficult?

Singapore, with its comprehensive healthcare and welfare system, top-tier educational resources, and stable economic and political environment, has always been the top choice for high-net-worth families globally. According to the 2023 Global Passport Index by the International Air Transport Association, the Singapore passport ranks second globally, allowing visa-free access to 192 countries and regions.

Becoming a Permanent Resident (PR) of Singapore is a prerequisite for applying to become a citizen of Singapore. Compared to individuals with various work permits, Singapore PRs can enjoy a variety of benefits and privileges, including purchasing cost-effective public housing and enjoying lower tax rates for property purchases.

With the relaxation of immigration policies post-pandemic, the approval numbers for both citizens and PRs in Singapore saw a slight increase last year. In the recent Parliament session, the Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for Finance and National Development Indranee Rajah, reported the immigration figures for this year: about 23,100 people obtained Singaporean citizenship and another 34,500 became Singapore Permanent Residents in 2022. It was notably revealed what factors the government primarily considers when reviewing citizenship and PR applications.

## What kind of immigrants does Singapore want?

During the recent parliamentary session, the words of Pritam Singh, the leader of the opposition, revealed what kind of new immigrants Singapore desires:

1. People who truly understand and highly accept the Singaporean way of life.
2. People who genuinely want to live in Singapore.
3. Those who have lived in Singapore as a Permanent Resident (PR) for some time, proving they have integrated into Singaporean society.

Yang Li Ming, Minister of State for Communications, Information and Home Affairs, also said that Singapore focuses on the following two aspects when selecting new immigrants:

1. The applicant's integration into Singaporean society, such as whether they have relatives in Singapore, length of residence, whether they have studied in Singaporean schools, and whether they have completed National Service.
2. The individual's economic contribution, age, and educational level.

### **Who is more likely to be approved?**

Combining earlier revelations from the Ministry of Manpower, the main considerations and advantages for PR applicants include:

- Applicant's age;
- Family and educational background;
- Contribution to Singapore's economy (such as taxes and employment);
- Integration into local society;
- Intentions to settle in Singapore permanently;
- Identification with the Singaporean way of life, values, and social norms.

Evidently, Singapore currently prefers younger immigrants, those of child-bearing age, with higher education, and talents in key industries.

Moreover, single individuals with higher education and from key industries have a higher chance of being approved for permanent residency; couples holding work permits with high salaries and fulfilling criteria from key industries, along with their children who are studying, are also favored by the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority.

### **Who can apply to become a Singapore Permanent Resident (PR)?**

#### **PR application:**

In Singapore, whether a foreign individual can successfully apply for PR mainly depends on the applicant's current status and length of residence in Singapore. If you meet any of the following conditions, you can start preparing the necessary documents to apply for PR.

1. Spouse of a Singapore citizen/PR

- Basic information required includes passport details, permit/ID card, birth certificate (with English translation), name change certificate (if any), highest educational certificates (with English translation), and a passport-sized photo.
  - If employed, the applicant needs to prepare divorce certificates from previous marriages and custody documents for children (if applicable), death certificate of former spouse (if applicable), employer's letter, last six months' pay slips, and tax payment proof.
2. Child of a Singapore citizen/PR (unmarried and under 21 years old), or direct relatives of a Singapore citizen
- Similar basic information as above.
  - For direct relatives (PR or citizen), additional documents like marriage certificate, highest education certificates, employer's letter, and last six months' pay slips are required.
3. Holders of EP, SP, PEP, Entre-Pass, Tech.Pass
- Basic information as above.
  - Employment-related information, such as recommendation letters from previous employers and current employer's letter, are needed.
4. *Foreign students*
- Must have resided in Singapore for over 2 years at the time of application and passed at least one national examination (e.g., PSLE, GCE "N"/"O"/"A" Levels) or be part of the Integrated Programme (IP).

The ordinary PR application process usually takes 6 to 8 months. If rejected, one can reapply after six months.

\*Jenga's PR consultants usually plan for the applicant one year in advance, providing detailed application instructions and material considerations. They tailor and draft a formal cover letter based on the applicant's background and assist in organizing and evaluating the applicant's social recommendation letters in advance. They ensure the quality of the application materials to avoid errors or omissions that could lead to missing the application window.

### **Investment Immigration – Obtaining PR:**

The Global Investor Programme (GIP) is designed for entrepreneurs with a strong business track record and successful entrepreneurial background, offering them Singapore PR status if they intend to drive business and investment growth in Singapore and meet eligibility criteria.

Applicants can obtain a Singapore Permanent Resident (PR) permit by investing in Singapore through one of the following three options under the latest Global Investor Programme (GIP), with the minimum investment amount increased from SGD 2.5 million to SGD 10 million. The details are as follows:

**Option 1:** Applicants must invest at least SGD 10 million in a new business entity or in an existing business in Singapore. After obtaining PR, to renew the re-entry permit in the first five years, the company must employ at least 30 employees, half of whom must be Singaporean citizens, and include 10 new employees. Under current regulations, to renew the re-entry permit, the company must employ at least 10 new employees, half of whom are Singaporean citizens, and have a total business expenditure (TBE) of SGD 2 million.

**Option 2:** Applicants must invest SGD 25 million in a GIP-approved fund, which is ten times the original policy amount of SGD 2.5 million.

**Option 3:** For investors interested in setting up a family office, the applicant must establish a single-family office with a minimum asset management size of SGD 200 million.

Previously, investors only had to invest SGD 2.5 million in a single-family office managing assets of at least SGD 200 million. Under the new regulations, the applicant must establish a single-family office in Singapore with a minimum asset management size of SGD 200 million, of which at least SGD 50 million must be invested in four categories within 12 months of receiving the approval letter. These categories include:

1. Companies listed on exchanges licensed by the Monetary Authority of Singapore, such as those on the Main Board and Catalist of the Singapore Exchange.
2. Qualifying Debt Securities, including bonds, notes, commercial paper, and certificates of deposit.
3. Funds issued by managers registered in Singapore.
4. Private equity funds investing in unlisted Singapore companies.

The Economic Development Board states that raising the threshold for the Global Investor Programme (GIP) will provide more support for local startups and the broader financial sector, creating more good jobs for Singaporeans.

**Additional information about the plan:**

1. The applicant's spouse and children (under 21 years old) can apply for PR as dependents under the Global Investor Programme simultaneously with the applicant.
2. Parents and unmarried children over the age of 21 cannot apply for PR through the applicant's Global Investor Programme but can apply for a Long-Term Visit Pass (LTVP) valid for five years.

**Application process typically takes 4 to 6 months:**

- After meeting the conditions, the applicant must submit the Global Investor Programme application form along with relevant documents.
- Upon receiving the documents, the Singapore Immigration & Checkpoints Authority will immediately process them and invite the applicant for an interview to ensure they meet the requirements.
- If successful, the applicant will receive an Approval-in-Principle letter, valid for six months, within which the applicant must complete the investments promised in the application form.
- After implementing the investments, the applicant must provide the original and photocopies of the investment documents to the Singapore Immigration & Checkpoints Authority.
- Once the documents are received and verified, the Singapore Immigration & Checkpoints Authority will formally grant the applicant Permanent Resident status.

**The Artistic Talent Immigration Scheme – Obtaining PR:**

The Artistic Talent Immigration Scheme for obtaining Singapore Permanent Residency (PR) was jointly launched in 1991 by the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) and the National Arts Council (NAC) of Singapore. The aim is to attract outstanding international arts professionals to acknowledge their cultural significance and contributions. This program is designed to deepen

engagement with the local community and contribute to the diversity of professional knowledge, enabling ambitious and talented individuals to play a key role in advancing the arts and cultural landscape of Singapore.

To apply for this program, applicants must meet the following minimum criteria:

- Relevant training or education in their field of practice.
- Relevant professional experience in the performing arts, visual arts, literary arts, design, and/or media fields, with significant contributions or major awards.
- Significant contributions to the arts and cultural sectors in Singapore, including a good track record in local activities or outstanding leadership.
- Plans for specific future participation in and contribution to the development of Singapore's arts and cultural sectors.

These are the ways to apply for Singapore Permanent Residency. Choosing the most suitable way can make it faster and easier to obtain Singapore PR status.

For a professional assessment report, please contact Jenga consulting experts.



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