

Residence permits for Vietnamese nationals on the Philippines with close relatives in Norway

The Norwegian authorities have decided to grant residence permits to Vietnamese nationals resident in the Philippines who have close relatives in Norway, and to their spouses and children. The Act enters into force on 1 October 2005.

Who is entitled to a residence permit?

Two main criteria must be satisfied in order to qualify for a residence permit pursuant to the Act:

- 1) Applicants must have arrived in the Philippines before 1998 and be classified as "Remaining Vietnamese Nationals"
- 2) Applicants must have close relatives in Norway. By close relatives is meant:
 - parents
 - children
 - grandchildren
 - siblings
 - first cousins
 - biological aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews

Spouses and children of applicants are also covered by the Act. Spouses and children who are Philippine nationals are not covered by the Act, but they may apply for family reunification through the embassy in Manila. The relatives in Norway must be Norwegian citizens or have a settlement permit, or a residence permit that forms the basis for a settlement permit.

Who is excluded from the right to a residence permit?

Persons who have been sentenced or convicted for an offence that, pursuant to Norwegian law, is punishable by a prison sentence of more than three months are not entitled to a residence permit. This also applies to persons who have been sentenced to shorter terms of imprisonment several times during the last three years.

The contents of the permit

The permit entitles its holder to work in Norway. The permit also forms the basis for family reunification pursuant to the rules applicable to this area. Persons covered by the Act have a right and an obligation to take part in an introductory programme pursuant to the Introduction Act.

Residence permits are granted for one year at a time. The Directorate of Immigration grants the initial permit while the police in the municipality of residence are authorised to renew permits.

After holding a permit for three years pursuant to this Act it is possible to apply for permanent residence in Norway (a settlement permit).

Where and when to apply?

A person who wishes to obtain a residence permit pursuant to this new rule, and who believes he/she satisfies the criteria, must submit an application in person at the Norwegian embassy in Manila.

Applications for a residence permit may be submitted from 1 October 2005 and they must have been received by 1 October 2006 at the latest. No fee will be charged for the processing of applications.

Documentation requirements

- Application form with photo
- Birth certificate or transcript of the register of births
- Copy of passport, if applicant has one
- Documentation of status as "Remaining Vietnamese National" from the "Department of Justice"
- Applicants aged 18 or over must submit a police certificate of good conduct or similar document confirming that the applicant does not have a criminal record.

- Married applicants must submit a wedding certificate.
- When a minor applies for a residence permit along with one of its parents, written consent from the other parent must be submitted. If one of the parents has sole parental responsibility, this must be documented.
- If other adults than the parents have parental responsibility, this must be documented.

Originals of the documentation must be submitted along with an English translation. If none of the documents can be obtained, an explanation must be provided in writing.

For further information contact the Norwegian embassy in Manila or the Directorate of Immigration.

Travel to and settlement in Norway

After an application has been granted, the Directorate of Immigration will try as far as possible to settle Vietnamese nationals near their relative in Norway. The Norwegian authorities will cover the cost of the journey, and the International Migration Organisation (IOM) will make the travel arrangements. The embassy in Manila will issue a visa for the journey to Norway and, if necessary, a letter of passage for persons who do not have a passport. It will normally take between two and six months from an application is approved until the journey to Norway and settlement can take place.

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