

Canada Immigration Options: General Advice for Nigerian Workers

1. Clarify Current Immigration Status

Before making any decisions, confirm the following:

- What type of visa or permit are you on? (e.g. closed work permit, open work permit)
- When does your current permit expire?
- Are you employed by a Canadian employer (with or without LMIA)?
- Have you applied for permanent residence (PR)?
- Do you have family ties in Canada (spouse, children, siblings, etc.)?

2. Options to Stay in Canada Legally

Here are common legal pathways to extend your stay in Canada:

A. Work Permit Extension:

- Apply to extend your current work permit before it expires.
- You can change conditions (e.g. employer) or switch to a visitor visa if necessary.
- Applying before expiry grants 'implied status' to stay legally while awaiting a decision.

B. Apply for Permanent Residency (PR):

- If you've worked in Canada for at least one year in a skilled occupation (TEER 0, 1, 2, 3), you may qualify under Express Entry (CEC), Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), or other streams.
- Check eligibility: <https://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=003&top=6>

C. Bridging Open Work Permit (BOWP):

- If you apply for PR and your permit is about to expire, you may be eligible for a BOWP to continue working legally.

D. Visitor Visa (Temporary Stay):

- If no other option, apply to stay as a visitor. You cannot work but can remain legally.

E. Humanitarian and Compassionate Grounds (H&C):

- Apply for PR if return to Nigeria causes exceptional hardship. This is complex and time-consuming.

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F. Asylum/Refugee Claim:

- Only applicable if you face serious risk (e.g. political persecution, sexual orientation, violence).
- Risky and not guaranteed. Seek legal help.

3. Immediate Next Steps

- Apply to extend your stay (work permit or visitor visa) before expiry to avoid losing status.
- If eligible, begin PR application immediately (Express Entry, PNP, etc.).
- Document your employment history, Canadian ties, and legal documents.
- Consult a licensed immigration consultant or lawyer.

4. Resources

- IRCC Portal: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/immigration-citizenship.html>
- Immigration Consultant Directory: <https://college-ic.ca/protecting-the-public/find-an-immigration-consultant>
- PR Eligibility Tool: <https://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=003&top=6>
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|---|--------|------------|
| Work | Permit | Extension: |
| https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/work-canada/permit/extend.html | | |

5. Summary Table of Options

Option | Purpose | Risk | Best For

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Work Permit Extension | Extend stay, keep job | Low | Workers with valid permit

Express Entry/PNP | Apply for PR | Medium | Skilled workers

Visitor Visa | Remain in Canada | Low | Temporary stay without work

Asylum | Claim refugee status | High | Those with persecution risk

H&C PR | Apply on hardship grounds | High | Strong Canadian ties