

## Step 4 Residence permits

### Who to contact?

The Immigration Department, Ministry of Internal Affairs is responsible for issuing residency permits to foreign investors. All residency permit applications are processed at the Department's head office in Port Vila. Applicants, however, may obtain information and lodge applications at the Department's outer island offices located in Luganville and Isangel. Contact details are as follows:

#### Port Vila

Mailing address: Private Mail Bag 9092  
Port Vila, Vanuatu

Physical location: Tamarama Building  
Lini Highway, Port Vila

Telephone: +678 22 354

E-mail: Mr. Jeffrey Markson, Acting Principle Immigration  
Officer: [jmarkson@vanuatu.gov.vu](mailto:jmarkson@vanuatu.gov.vu)

Website: <https://immigration.gov.vu/>

#### Luganville

Mailing address: Private Mail Bag 635  
Luganville, Santo, Vanuatu

Telephone: +678 36 724

#### Isangel

Mailing address: c/o Police Department  
Isangel, Tanna, Vanuatu

Telephone: +678 68 705

### What is the purpose of the requirement and its legal basis?

The *Immigration Act* No17 of 2010 regulates the entry of foreign citizens into Vanuatu, as well as their residency within the country. Paragraph 42 of the Immigration act states that a Special timing rule for certain foreign investors who has received a foreign investment approval certificate from VIPA is entitled to be issued with the number of residence permits identified in the certificate, as long as they meet the specified requirements under the Act. Dependents of persons identified in a VIPA foreign investment approval certificate are also entitled to residence permits provided that a true copy of the VIPA approval certificate is provided to the principal Immigration Officer.

The purpose of the requirement is to protect public safety by screening out persons with criminal records and communicable diseases, as well as, provide a mechanism to quickly repatriate people should circumstances require it.

Prior to obtaining a residence permit, foreign investors may reside for short periods of time under a visitor's permit as long as they are in possession of a valid passport, a confirmed onward return ticket to a place to which entry is authorized, and have sufficient funds to support themselves. Citizens of countries identified in Annex 1 are exempted from the need to obtain a visa in their passport prior to landing in the country. Citizens of other countries must apply for an entry visa prior to arriving in the country.

Normally, the duration of the residence permit is linked to the duration of the foreign investment approval certificate. However, a foreign investor in good standing that has made a significant investment in the country may be issued with residence permit for a longer duration.

### **How does the application process work?**

Obtaining a residence visa for the first time involves the following steps:

Complete the prescribed application form available from the Department of Immigration, along with the prescribed medical report for each foreign citizen applying for a residence permit.

Compile the following supporting documents:

- valid foreign investment approval certificate (copy)
- police clearance (original) for each person applying for a residence permit over the age of 18
- Passport identification pages (copy) and two passport photos for each person applying for a residence permit
- Letter from local bank verifying deposit in trust covering the total amount of one-way return tickets for those persons applying for residence permits (copy)
- Statutory declaration for each person applying for a residence permit over the age of 18 listing all criminal offences they have been convicted of during past 10 years

Submit the completed application, medical report and supporting documents to the Immigration Department along with the required permit fee.

If approved, receive the residency permit which can either be picked up from the Department of Immigration or received via the mail. If rejected, the applicant may appeal the decision to the Minister for Internal Affairs.

Application to renew a residency permit is less onerous and must be made no less than 6 weeks prior to the permit's expiry. The applicant must submit to the Immigration the residence visa, valid foreign investment approval certificate (copy), valid Business License (copy) and the required permit fee.

**Annex 3** provides detailed information about the residence visa requirements and other immigration rules. Or consult the Immigration Department directly.

**How are decisions made?**

Residence visas are issued if the application is complete and the following criteria are met:

Applicant at the time of entry is not suffering from a contagious or infectious disease, or a mental disorder that would make their presence a danger to the community.

Applicant has not been convicted by a court inside or outside Vanuatu of an offence in respect of which they have been sentenced to imprisonment for a term of 6 months or more.

Applicant has not been refused a residence permit in Vanuatu during the past five years nor had a residence permit cancelled during this period of time.

**How long does it take?**

The Immigration Department's target is to process residence permit applications for foreign investors within 5 working days but depend if he or she comply with all Immigration requirements..

**How much will it cost?**

The fee for a residence permit for one year is 57,600 Vatu (a complete listing of fees is provided in Annex 2).

In addition, a bond to cover the cost of repatriating the foreign investor and their dependents may be required.

**ANNEX 1**

**Citizens of countries for which visas are automatically issued on arrival in Vanuatu**

Citizens of the following countries are exempted from the necessity of having visas in their passports when landing in Vanuatu:

All Commonwealth member countries	All European Union member countries	Vatican
Austria	Bermuda	Cameroon
China	Dependencies of United Kingdom	Dependencies of France
Brazil	Mexico	Tunisia
Peru	Finland	Japan
South Korea	Maldives	Marshall Islands
Federated States of Micronesia	Norway	Chile
Morocco	Russian Federation	United Arab Emirates
Palau	Philippines	Sweden
Switzerland	Thailand	Unites States of America
Kuwait	Poland	South Africa

**ANNEX 2**

**New Immigration Fees (18 September 2011)**

(1)	Visitor Visa	VT3,600
(2)	Extended Visitor visa less than 4 months	VT6,000
(3)	Extended Visitor visa less than 7 months	VT12,000
(4)	Extended Visitor visa 7 months or more	VT18,000
(5)	Residency visa for 1 year	VT57,600
(6)	Residency visa for more than 1 year but not more than 3 years	VT158,400
(7)	Residency visa for 3 years but less than 5 years	VT259,200
(8)	A permit to reside in Vanuatu for 5 years	VT511,200
(9)	Residency visa for kids less than 18 years	VT2,880
(10)	Residency visa for person born in Vanuatu before 30 July 1980	VT14,400
(11)	Residency visa for person who is owner of Vanuatu offshore company not less than 10 years	VT300,000
(12)	Student visa for person who is less than 18 years old	VT2,880
(13)	Student visa for person who is 18 years old	VT14,400
(14)	Transit visa	VT1,800
(15)	Interim visa	VT10,000
(16)	Special category visa – crew or Government Officers	Exempted
(17)	Yacht fee	VT4,800
(18)	Replacement of visa	VT12,000
(19)	Preparation of document	VT6,000
(20)	Change of status	VT100,000
(21)	Instant fine 1 month to 3 months	VT50,000
(22)	Instant fine 3 months to 3 years	VT250,000
(23)	Instant fine 3 years upwards	VT500,000

**ANNEX 3**

**Applicant Checklist – Residence visa**

<b>1</b>	<b>Residence Application Form</b> – completed and signed by you and each person included in your application aged 18 years and over	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2</b>	<b>Visa application charge</b> paid (per applicant):  If you or a person included in your application seeks to be granted a visa for 1 year & is aged 18 years or over  If you or a person included in your application seeks to be granted a visa for 3 years & is aged 18 years or over  If you or a person included in your application seeks to be granted a visa for 5 years & is aged 18 years or over  If you or a person included in your application seeks to be granted a visa for 10 years & is aged 18 years or over  If you or a person included in your application is aged less than 18 years, for each year they seek to be granted a visa	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3</b>	If you are in Vanuatu: <b>Valid Passport of you and each person included in the application</b> ; or  If you are outside Vanuatu: certified copy of bio-data page and all used passport pages of you and each person included in the application  <b>Note: Passport must be the one you will use on entry to Vanuatu</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4</b>	<del><b>2 recent passport sized photographs</b></del> of you and each visa applicant included in your application with names of the person on the back of their photograph	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>6</b>	<del><b>Deposit of a Security</b></del> – equivalent to the cost of an air ticket from Vanuatu to your country of nationality or another country that you are permitted to reside in, including airport taxes. A Security is required for each person included in the application	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>7</b>	<del><b>If a person included in your application is aged under 18 years:</b></del> certified copy of birth certificate*	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>8</b>	<del><b>If you or a person included in your application is married:</b></del> certified copy of marriage certificate*	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>9</b>	<del><b>If you or a person included in your application has been widowed:</b></del> certified copy of death certificate*	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>10</b>	<del><b>If you or a person included in your application has been divorced:</b></del> certified copy of divorce certificate*	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>11</b>	<b>Partner</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<p>(a) If you are applying for a residence visa on the basis of being married to, or living in a marriage like ('de-facto') relationship with a person of the opposite sex who is a citizen of Vanuatu:</p> <p>If married: certified copy of marriage certificate*;</p> <p>If in a de facto relationship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ statutory declaration* by you and your partner indicating when the partnership commenced and where, that the relationship is ongoing and to the exclusion of all others; <i>and</i></li> <li>○ evidence that the you and your partner have been living together such as a lease agreement, rent receipts, utility and phone bills, bank statements*.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>11 Child</b></p>	<p>(b) If you applying for a residence visa on the basis of being a dependent child of a citizen of Vanuatu:</p> <p>certified copy of birth certificate*</p> <p>certified copy of your Vanuatu citizen's birth certificate or citizenship certificate</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>11 Employee</b></p>	<p>(c) If you are applying for a residence visa on the basis of being an employee of a business operating in Vanuatu:</p> <p>a letter from your Vanuatu employer indicating that they will employ you, subject to you being granted a visa or a copy of your employment contract</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>11 Self funded Resident</b></p>	<p>(d) If you are applying for a residence visa on the basis of being self funded:</p> <p>evidence of income of at least 250 000 Vatu per month or 500 000 Vatu per month if you have included your partner in the application, certified by a bank operating in Vanuatu; <i>or</i></p> <p>if you were the holder of a residence permit on this basis of being a self funded retiree when the Regulations commenced: income of at least 150 000 Vatu per month or 300 000 Vatu per month if you have included your partner in the application, certified by a bank operating in Vanuatu.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>11 Foreign Investor</b></p>	<p>(e) If you are applying for a residence visa on the basis of being a foreign investor:</p> <p>the original or certified copy of your approval certificate as a</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>

	<p>foreign investor issued by VIPA; <i>and</i></p> <p>the original or certified copy of your business licence issued by the relevant official body if VIPA certificate indicates a business licence is required</p>	
<b>11</b>	<b>Land Owner</b>	
(f)	<p>If you are applying for a residence visa on the basis of being the owner of property in Vanuatu:</p> <p>a land lease and title transfer document indicating that you have leasehold ownership of a property/properties in Vanuatu; <i>and</i></p> <p>a valuation by a local bank chartered accountant, indicating that the property/properties are valued at a minimum of 10 million Vatu ; <i>and</i></p> <p>an income of at least 250 000 Vatu per month per person included in the application, up to a maximum of 1 million Vatu per month certified by a bank operating in Vanuatu</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>12</b>	<b>Medical check form for each applicant over 18 years of age</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	completed and signed by the applicant and the registered medical practitioner who undertook the health examination*.	
<b>13</b>	<b>Police clearance certificate(s) for each applicant over 18 years of age.</b> A police clearance certificate must be provided for each country the applicant has lived in for 12 months or more in the past 5 years*.	<input type="checkbox"/>