



HRSDC Announces Termination of the Simplified Entry Process for Information Technology Specialists

by Henry J. Chang

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On May 20, 2010, Human Resources Skills Development Canada ("HRSDC") announced that on September 30, 2010, the Simplified Entry Process for Information Technology Specialists (the "IT Worker Program") would come to an end, except for employers seeking to hire foreign workers for positions in Quebec, where the program will remain in place for a limited time after September 30, 2010.

In response to a perceived shortage of IT workers in Canada, HRSDC, CIC, Industry Canada, and the Software Human Resources Council

initially established the IT Worker Program to exempt certain IT workers from the need to obtain an individual Labour Market Opinion ("LMO"). Instead, these IT workers could apply directly for a work permit through CIC

or the Canadian Border Services Agency ("CBSA"), based on this program. The IT Worker Program included the following seven occupations:

- (a) Embedded Systems Software Designers;
- (b) Software Products Developers;
- (c) MIS Software Designers;
- (d) Multimedia Software Developers;
- (e) Senior Animation Effects Editors;
- (f) Software Developer - Services; and
- (g) Telecommunications Software Designers.

The IT Worker Program became effective on May 5, 1997, and was extended several times. However, effective October 1, 2010, employers who wish to hire temporary foreign workers previously eligible under the IT Worker Program will be required to apply for an individual LMO. Work permit applications received by CIC or by CBSA on or after this date will require an approved LMO for the seven specific IT occupations that were previously included under the pilot program.

On August 5, 2010, CIC issued Operational Bulletin 225, which provided modified processing instructions for IT Worker Program cases filed prior to October 1, 2010. According to the bulletin, requests for an extension of a work permit or a new work permit application filed prior to October 1, 2010, if approved, will only be granted for a maximum duration of one year from the date of issuance of the work permit. ■