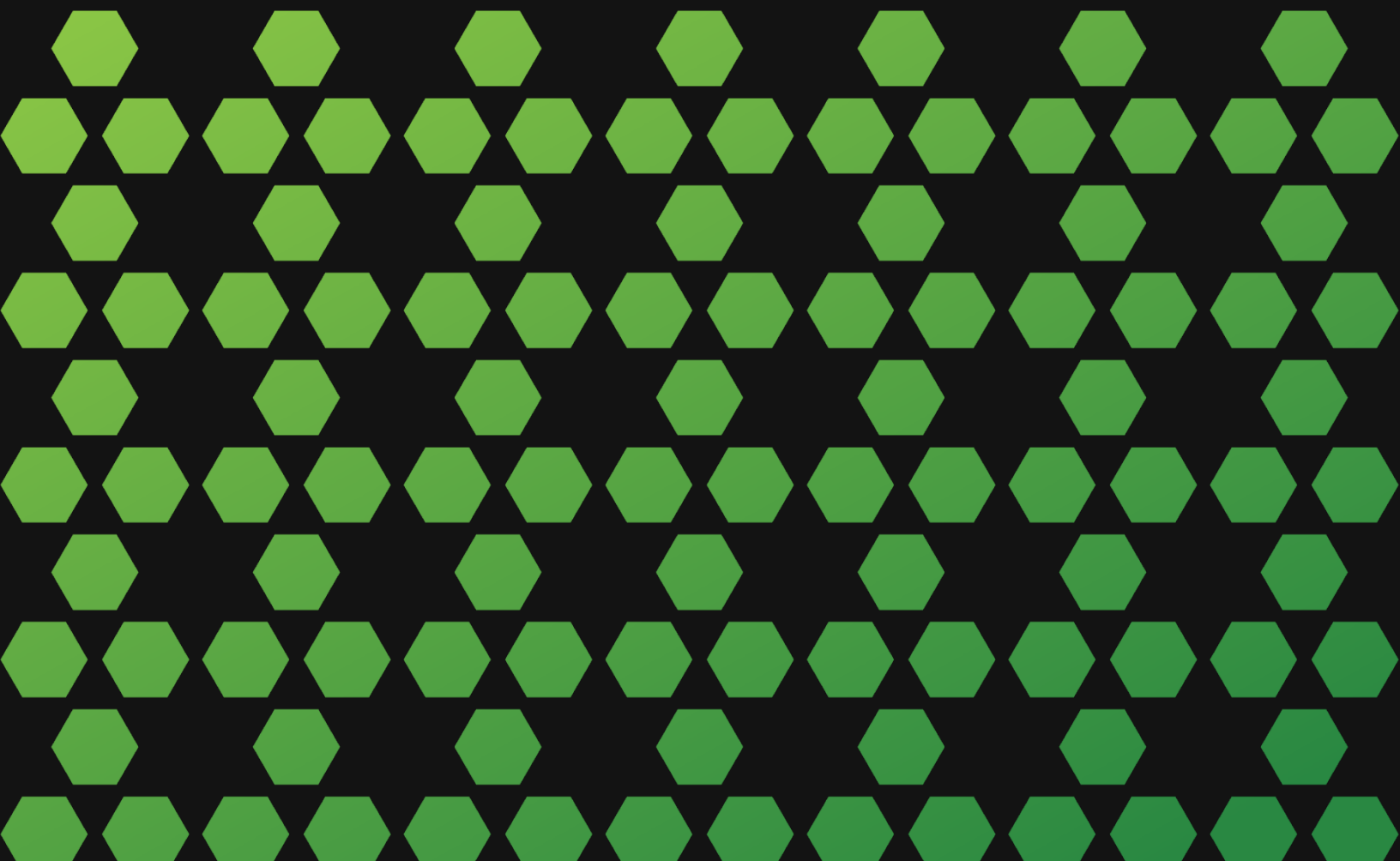


FAQs

Manitoba Innovates Start-Up Visa Program



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Section 1 – Start-up Visa Program Application Guide

a. How can I qualify for the Start-up Visa Program?

Before starting your application with Manitoba Innovates, read through the government qualifications carefully to make sure that you are eligible to apply for this program.

To qualify for the Start-up Visa (SUV) Program, you must meet all [eligibility requirements](#), as well as the admissibility requirements to enter Canada.

You can apply for the Start-up Visa Program as an individual or as part of a group of up to 5 owners. Consequently, for the Manitoba Innovates Start-Up Visa Program, we accept teams between 1 and 5 applicants.

b. What are the admissibility requirements?

The first step before applying for the Manitoba Innovates Start-Up Visa Program is to confirm that you and your team meet the [admissibility requirements](#) to enter Canada. These apply to all applicants.

c. What is considered a qualify business?

The business should:

- Be innovative.
- Create jobs for Canadians.
- Be able to compete on a global scale.

To qualify under this program:

- Each applicant must hold 10% or more of the total voting rights.
- The applicants and the designated organization (in this case, Manitoba Innovates) together must hold more than 50% of the total voting rights.

If your application is successful, you need to:

- Provide active and ongoing management of the business from within Canada.
- Make sure an essential part of business operations is conducted in Canada. Such operations include, but are not limited to:
 - physical location
 - facilities
 - equipment
 - inventory

- warehousing
- management information systems
- staff
- Incorporate your business in Canada.

d. Which are the language requirements for the Start-up Visa Program?

You must meet the language qualifications of being proficient in English and/or French at Benchmark level 5 or higher. This level must be achieved in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Your results need to be from a language test conducted by an [IRCC approved agency](#).

- Please note that the official language of the Manitoba Innovates Start-Up Visa Program is English. To be accepted into the program, all team members must demonstrate proficiency in English by providing English Proficiency test results.

e. Do I need to proof funds?

All applicants MUST have sufficient [settlement funds](#) at the time of application and when the application is finalized. The funds must meet all of the following criteria:

- Be available and transferable
- Be unencumbered by debts or other obligations
- Be sufficient to support your initial establishment in Canada
- Exclude any investment made by a designated entity into the business

Sufficient funds are determined according to the applicant's family size, including both accompanying and non-accompanying family members, as per the table below:

Number of family members	Funds you need (in Canadian dollars)
1	\$14,690
2	\$18,288
3	\$22,483
4	\$27,297
5	\$30,690
6	\$34,917
7	\$38,875
For each additional person, thereafter	\$3,958

All applicants should provide the [proof of fund](#) to Manitoba Innovates, along with their application package. We accept proof of funds on the same format as IRCC, as described below.

For proof, all applicants must get official letters from any banks or financial institutions where they have an account.

These letters must be printed on the financial institution's letterhead and include:

- The bank or institution's contact information (address, telephone number, and email address)
- Your name
- Your outstanding debts (such as credit card debts and loans)
- These details for each current banking and investment account you have with them:
 - Account numbers
 - Date each account was opened
 - Current account balances
 - Average balance for the past 6 months

f. As a designated organization, what documentation is Manitoba Innovates providing me and my team members to apply for the Canadian Start-Up Visa?

If accepted into the Manitoba Innovates Start-Up Visa Program, you will receive a Letter of Support (LOS) from Manitoba Innovates to apply for Canada's Start-up Visa within 6 months after the issuance of the Letter of Support.

The timeline of when you will receive the Letter of Support depends on the applicants sending all the documentation requested by Manitoba Innovates.

Manitoba Innovates will also send a Commitment Certificate (CC) directly to IRCC. **Please ensure all your documents are accurate to avoid delays or refusals.**

g. If I don't apply for my Permanent Residence within 6 months of the Letter of Support issuance, can MI renew it for me?

No, Manitoba Innovates cannot renew the Letter of Support. You must apply for your PR within 6 months from the issuance of the Letter of Support; otherwise, it will no longer be valid.

h. Do all applicants need to be essential?

Yes, all applicants joining the Manitoba Innovates Start-up Visa Program should be essential and actively engaged in the program. This will help you make the most of your time and better prepare your business for a successful launch in Canada.

i. How is IRCC assessing applications?

To receive more details about how IRCC assess the application for the Start-up Visa Program, please check IRCC website: [Assessing the application \(start-up business class\)](#).

j. What are the requirements to be accepted in the Manitoba Innovates's Start-up Visa Program?

In addition to the IRCC Start-up Visa requirements detailed above, the Manitoba Innovates has additional criteria that will be verified before accepting new businesses into the program.

These criteria are:

- All team members (up to a [maximum of 5](#)) must be essential to the business, with relevant experience, education, and expertise.
- Once the business is launched in Canada, it must be headquartered in Manitoba, with its main operations based there.
- The business must be approved by our [Screening Committee*](#), which consists of volunteers from Manitoba's business community, politicians, and government officials.

To determine if your company meets the requirements for the Manitoba Innovates Start-up Visa Program, please complete and return the application package before the screening committee evaluation. Please contact info@mbinnovates.ca for more details about the screening process.

Our application package is composed of:

- Application form (Called Manitoba Innovates SUV Application Form)
- Complete Business Plan including an executive summary, market analysis and strategy in Canada, management and organization description, product and services description, operating plan, and financial projections.
- A pitch deck, in PowerPoint presentation or PDF format.
- Resume of all team members.
- Proof of TRL Level 5 or Higher; Must have at least a minimum viable product (MVP).
- Proof of Funds for all team members.
- English test results for all team members. Accepted tests:
 - [CELP: Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program](#)
 - You need to take the **CELP-General** test.
 - [IELTS: International English Language Testing System](#)
 - You need to take the **IELTS General Training** test.
 - [PTE: Pearson Test of English](#)
 - You need to take the **PTE Core** test.

Any applicants who do not submit the complete application package won't be reviewed by our screening committee, and consequently won't be accepted into the Manitoba Innovates Start-up Visa Program.

For examples and templates, please access the application package here: [Manitoba Innovates Start-up Visa Program – Application Package](#).

- Please note that **within 90 days of acceptance** into Manitoba Innovates Start-up Visa Program, applicants will also need to submit:
 - o Incorporation documents
 - o CRA Number/Registration
 - o Share structure/Ownership (Legal)

k. Do I need to reapply if I was already accepted to the program?

Yes, all applicants (whether previously accepted by Manitoba Innovates or not) will need to reapply to our new intake. Manitoba Innovates has updated its intake criteria to better align with the new regulations.

This ensures that all of our clients can be confidently supported under these changes.

l. Can I resubmit my application package that I used to apply previously?

No, Manitoba Innovates has updated its intake criteria and, therefore, our Application Package. We will only accept applications that are completed using our [updated application package](#).

Please note that we will not review or accept any applications submitted with the old templates!

Section 2 – Corporate-Related Questions

m. Do I need to have a company registered/incorporated in my home country to apply to Manitoba Innovates Start-up Visa Program?

No, you do not need to at the time of application. If approved, you will need to incorporate a company in Canada, Manitoba, or other provinces within 90 days of the program start date as part of the program requirements. We will not issue a Letter of Support until we receive these documents.

If you are currently incorporated, you can include that information in your application form.

n. Do I need to incorporate in Manitoba?

No, you do not need to incorporate in Manitoba specifically, however, this is an option. You will need to incorporate a company in Canada.

In order to operate in Manitoba (if you do not choose to incorporate in Manitoba), you may need to set up extra-provincial registration.

For specific incorporation questions, please contact info@mbinnovates.ca.

o. Do I need to have a Canadian Director when I incorporate?

To incorporate in Manitoba, your entity needs to have 25% Canadian Directorship. Other Provinces do not have this requirement.

p. Can Manitoba Innovates help me find a Canadian Director?

While Manitoba Innovates can assist you with the incorporation process and provide guidance on obtaining a power of attorney for extra-provincial registration, we are unable to help with setting up Canadian directorship or finding a Canadian Director. Manitoba Innovates cannot act as a director.

For further inquiries regarding Canadian Directorship, please contact info@mbinnovates.ca.

q. Can Manitoba Innovates help me incorporate, set up bank accounts, and become registered with CRA?

Yes. Manitoba Innovates can help you with these additional business services. Please contact info@mbinnovates.ca for more information.

r. What does “Main Applicant” or “Lead Applicant” mean, and can this be changed?

The Main Applicant or Lead Applicant is listed as the primary business contact on the commitment certificate and cannot be changed.

- Please note that all applicants are required to sign the Start-Up Visa Program Client contract, and all team members will be included in communications, such as invoicing (with a character limit of up to 105), advisor communications, etc.

Section 3 – Where can I live and where can my business be?

s. Do I need to live in Manitoba?

Yes. As part of Manitoba Innovates's new Start-Up Visa Program in 2024, we require all applicants to locate in Manitoba as part of our program. This is required so that we may better support you and your business in person. We can also help introduce you to Manitoba networks/markets and help grow and scale your business.

If you want to locate in Winnipeg, Manitoba Innovates can help you out! We provide free desk space to all active clients, and for 12 months following your graduation. We can also connect you with someone who provides relocation services for finding schools, daycares, apartments/housing, transportation, etc.

t. Does my business need to do all operations in Manitoba?

No. Although we require you to locate your business headquarters in Manitoba, we do encourage and will support expansion and sales activities outside the province.

u. What kind of advantages does Manitoba have for start-ups, in terms of tax deductions and subsidies or other financial support?

Please see this link for information on Winnipeg / Manitoba's competitive advantages:
<https://www.economicdevelopmentwinnipeg.com/site-selection/incentives>

We encourage you to identify other resources to help with your site selection options, but Manitoba Innovates cannot provide support / services to non-clients.

Section 4 – Money questions

v. Will Manitoba Innovates help our company secure investment?

We want to work with clients in the Start-up Visa Program who have sufficient capital (on their own or through investors they already have) for the company to reach a minimum viable product and secure initial users or beta customers in Canada.

If those milestones are met, then Manitoba Innovates may become involved to help our clients secure additional capital through our angel investor group or venture capital/private equity partners.

w. Do I need to be in the program and pay every month?

Start-up Visa Program clients must be actively engaged with the business incubator/accelerator during the time they are waiting for a work permit and permanent residence for a minimum of 18 months. Therefore, yes, Start-up Visa Program clients need to be in the program and pay every month.

In order for Manitoba Innovates to continue to support your business, we need to see progress being made monthly to establish roots in Canada.

x. Can I pre-pay for Manitoba Innovates's Start-up Visa Program?

Manitoba Innovates can accept a maximum of 3-months prepayment from Start-up Visa Program clients. Beyond that, Manitoba Innovates cannot accept prepayment.

y. How long is the program?

The Manitoba Innovates Start-up Visa Program runs for 18 months.

A client may terminate the contract according to the provisions of termination in the contract. Early termination by the applicant is possible, but in that case, Manitoba Innovates may withdraw our letter of support depending on the reason for termination.

Manitoba Innovates does not control the processing times for PR, nor the outcome. This website states the current processing time: [Immigrate with a start-up visa: About the process - Canada.ca](#)

If clients wish to continue in the program past 18-months, that option is available as well.

z. What happens after I finish the 18-month program?

At 18 months, Manitoba Innovates will email you to see if you are interested in continuing or would like to graduate from our program.

- If you wish to graduate, we will assemble a graduation package for you comprised of a graduation letter, certificate, and all of your monthly status reports (documenting your business progress throughout the program).
- If you wish to continue, you will still get your complete graduation package, however, we will issue you a new contract and continue to provide business advisory hours.

Either way, Manitoba Innovates will still support you until you obtain PR as long as you are a client in good standing, and meeting program guidelines throughout your time in our program.

aa. What happens if I don't pay my monthly fee before the deadline?

Manitoba Innovates reserves the right to suspend your services due non-payment. If your services are suspended, you will not receive an invoice for that month, and it will extend your graduation timeline.

If your services are paused for a month and payment is still not made, unfortunately, we might have to terminate the contract between Manitoba Innovates and the client and discontinue any services that we are providing for you. We hope to avoid taking this step and encourage all clients to make timely payments so that we can continue to work together to achieve your goals.

bb. Can I take a break from the Manitoba Innovates program through my contract term?

Breaks or “pauses” within the program are not recommended. IRCC will often look at progress, continuity, and dedication to your business. For that reason, we assess pauses on a case-by-case basis (as we realize there may be external factors inhibiting clients from being able to access our programs).

Please note that pauses are not granted for reasons such as IRCC delays, travel plans, product development delays, or any other non-emergency situations.

For more information, please contact accounting@mbinnovates.ca.

cc. What will the total fees to Manitoba Innovates be?

Manitoba Innovates charges \$4100 per month per team. A team can range from 1-5 people. These fees are what Manitoba Innovates charges and do not include fees to the Canadian Government or any business costs such as legal and accounting that your company may incur.

If you are not physically present in Canada and have not yet incorporated your business, you might be eligible to apply for a GST (Goods and Services Tax) exemption. For more questions about GST exemptions, please reach out to info@mbinnovates.ca.

Section 5 – Type of Applicants

dd. What type of companies do you work with?

We want to work with companies that have innovation that empowers the company to do something better, faster, or cheaper.

We are looking specifically for international companies that are looking to establish in Manitoba. We will assess each company for product-market fit within Canada, and Manitoba.

Please feel free to ask us about your idea to see if it is a good fit if you are still unsure.

For more information, please reach out to info@mbinnovates.ca.

ee. During the program, can I add or remove team members respecting my limit of up to 5 applicants?

No, changes to your team structure after you submit your application to join the Manitoba Innovates Start-up Visa Program are not permitted. Exceptions may apply.

If you have any questions or concerns about your team structure, please contact us at info@mbinnovates.ca.

Section 6 – Notes

If you have any other questions or need further assistance, feel free to reach out to us! Contact us via email at info@mbinnovates.ca, and we'll be happy to help.

Please note that Manitoba Innovates is not an immigration consultant firm. We encourage all clients to hire an immigration consultant or immigration lawyer for their immigration questions, as immigration questions are out of scope from the Manitoba Innovates services agreement. However, we can provide some information based on our experience so far, with the understanding that this is not legal or formal advice.

** Our screening committees review all applications to determine if the business is a good fit for the program. They will then make a recommendation for Manitoba Innovates to accept the client or provide suggestions for improving the application.*