



Guide to Residency in The Bahamas

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Preface

We regularly help clients who wish to obtain residency in The Bahamas either by means of an Annual Residence Permit, a Permanent Residence Permit, and a Home Owner's Card. The Annual Residence Permit allows non-Bahamians wishing to reside in The Bahamas to do so on an annual basis while the Permanent Residence Permit allows non-Bahamians to reside permanently in The Bahamas. A Home Owner's Card, issued on an annual basis entitles the owner of a home in The Bahamas, his or her spouse and any minor endorsed on the owner's card, to enter The Bahamas and reside here. It should be noted that residency does not confer citizenship or entitle an applicant to a Bahamian passport. Citizenship entails a more rigorous process and a fairly lengthy residence in the country.

A non-Bahamian may enter The Bahamas as a visitor for an initial period of up to two months. It is during this time the visitor may apply for residency. There are three levels of residency available:

- Annual Residence Permit;
- Permanent Residence Permit; and
- A Home Owner's Card

Generally applicants must be of good character and at least eighteen (18) years of age. However it should be noted that the success of any application is subject to the discretion of the Board of Immigration (the "**Board**") and in the case of Home Owner's Cards, the Director of Immigration.

ANNUAL RESIDENCE PERMIT

This permit is for non-Bahamians wishing to reside in The Bahamas on an annual basis. The Bahamas Government is responsive to applicants for annual residence, and although it is not a requirement for the applicant to indicate a commitment to the leasing or purchase of a "second home", it is our feeling that such a position is helpful to a successful outcome. The Government Fee for this permit is one thousand Bahamian Dollars (**B\$1,000**) for the head of the household and twenty-five Bahamian Dollars (**B\$25**) for each dependent. Higgs & Johnson's fee for the initial application is three thousand five hundred Bahamian dollars (**B\$3,500**) (minimum) subject to increase in complex or lengthy cases and payment on account of one thousand five hundred Bahamian Dollars (**B\$1,500**) should be made upon our being instructed. The following documents are required:

- Immigration Form completed and notarized with a ten dollar (**B\$10.00**) Bahamian postage stamp affixed thereon;
- Two (2) passport-size photographs with signature on reverse of prints;
- Police certificate covering five (5) years' residence dated not older than 6 months

before the submission of application;

- Original Fingerprint Card
- Medical certificate dated not earlier than thirty (30) days before this application;
- Two (2) testimonials of good character;
- Copy of lease or deed (if available);
- Financial reference from a reputable bank verifying economic worth, i.e., citing a figure range;
- Confirmation of whether or not the applicant owns a home or property in The Bahamas, and if yes, the address;
- A statement of net worth stating a figure range and how it is comprised (asset classes);
- Source of income including whether derived from employment, pension, investments, trust funds, etc.;
- Amount of time to be spent in The Bahamas;
- Civic or charitable affiliations;
- Reasons for seeking residence in The Bahamas;
- Ticket evidencing intended departure (if applicable); and
- Processing Fee of one hundred Bahamian dollars (**B\$100**).

Separate application forms must be submitted on behalf of the applicant's spouse and child (children, if more than one). The application must be accompanied by a marriage certificate in the case of a spouse and a birth certificate or any other certificate evidencing the dependence of the subject of the application in the case of a dependent.

PERMANENT RESIDENCE PERMIT

The following persons are among the category of persons who may apply for permanent residence:

- Spouse of a Bahamian after 5 years of

marriage; the marriage must be subsisting; and the couple must also be cohabiting as husband and wife

- Persons born legitimately outside of The Bahamas to a married woman, who is a citizen of The Bahamas, and whose husband is not a citizen of The Bahamas
- Financially independent individuals or investors who are legitimate owners of a residence in The Bahamas (please note that persons purchasing a residence for B\$1.5 million or more will get speedy consideration)
- Doctors / Medical professionals after having been employed for a minimum of 20 years
- Persons who have held legal status (work or resident permit) for more than 20 consecutive years

Applicants must be at least 18 years of age and of good character and must state in the application that he or she intends to reside permanently in The Bahamas.

Permanent Residence has become very popular and accelerated consideration of application is given to major international investors and owners of residences valued at one million, five hundred thousand Bahamian dollars (**B\$1.5 million**) or more. To qualify for economic permanent residence a person must invest a minimum of five hundred thousand Bahamian dollars (**B\$500,000**) in The Bahamas. Higgs & Johnson's fee for the initial application for the primary applicant is six thousand five hundred Bahamian dollars (**B\$6,500**) (minimum) subject to increase in complex and lengthy cases and payment on account of three thousand Bahamian dollars (**B\$3,000**) should be made upon our being instructed. Although our experience has been positive, as mentioned above, the grant of permanent residency is in the absolute discretion of the Board. In addition to paying the one hundred Bahamian dollar (**B\$100**) processing fee the following documents are required:

- Immigration Form completed and notarized with a ten dollar (**B\$10.00**) Bahamian postage stamp affixed thereon;
- A copy of the bio-data page of the applicant's passport;
- Two (2) passport-sized identical colour photographs of the applicant, with the applicant's name printed on the reverse side (photographs must not be more than 6 months old);
- Police certificate covering five (5) years' residence dated not older than 6 months before the submission of application
- Original Fingerprint Card
- Original birth certificate (In the case of certificates that are written in languages other than English, an English translation should be submitted, sealed by the appropriate Consular Office where applicable, with a ten Bahamian dollar (**B\$10**) postage stamp affixed to it;
- An original medical certificate dated not more than 30 days prior to the submission of the application;
- Two (2) original character references, written by Bahamian citizens known to the applicant for at least 5 years;
- Parents' birth certificate;
- Parents' marriage certificate;
- Certified and apostilled copy of marriage certificate (married persons);
- Spouse's death certificate (widowed persons);
- Divorce decree (divorcees); and
- Financial statements from applicant's financial institution citing a figure range, and verifying economic worth.

The government fee for the permanent residence permit is a one-time fee of ten thousand Bahamian dollars (**B\$10,000**).

A person holding a certificate of permanent residence who wishes to include his wife, or dependent child under the age of eighteen (18) and ordinarily resident in his household, may have them endorsed on the certificate at the time of his original application or at a subsequent date, subject to such conditions as might be laid down by the Board. The government fee for the endorsement is twenty-five Bahamian dollars (**B\$25**) each for an applicant's spouse and dependent minors. Separate application forms must be submitted on behalf of the applicant's spouse and child (children, if more than one).

HOMEOWNER'S CARD

Non-Bahamians who own homes in The Bahamas may apply to the Director of Immigration for an annual home owner's resident card (the "Home Owner's Card") that bears the holder's picture. This card entitles the owner, spouse and any minor endorsed on the owner's card, to enter The Bahamas and reside here for as long as the validity of the card. The government fee for this is two hundred and fifty Bahamian dollars (**B\$250**) per annum. Higgs & Johnson's fees for the initial application is two thousand Bahamian dollars (**B\$2,000**) minimum subject to increase in complex or lengthy cases and payment on account of one thousand Bahamian dollars (**B\$1,000**) should be made upon our being instructed. The intended purpose is to facilitate entry into The Bahamas with minimal formalities. There is no need for a

return ticket and the Home Owner's Card entitles the holder to stay up to one year. The following documents are required:

- Immigration Form duly completed and notarized with a ten dollar (**B\$10.00**) Bahamian postage stamp affixed thereon;
- Two (2) passport size photographs with signature on reverse of prints;
- Police certificate covering five (5) years' residence dated not older than 6 months before the submission of application
- Original Fingerprint Card
- Certificate from The Bahamas Investment Authority;
- Copy of valid passport;
- Proof of ownership of property and/or investment in The Bahamas in the form of copies of conveyances, deeds or contracts; and
- Processing fee of one hundred Bahamian dollars (**B\$100**)

Although the form does not have to be completed and submitted until after the applicant's arrival, please note that there are documents to be submitted with the application which would be appropriate to obtain or request prior to the applicant's departure for The Bahamas.

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