

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

monthly newsletter of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights

June 1991

(INTERCEDE)

New Immigration Fees Heavy On FDM Workers

Domestic workers in the Foreign Domestic Movement (FDM) program are finding the recent increases in Immigration fees too steep for their minimum wage budgets. As usual, they feel powerless to do anything about it.

The fee they have to pay for renewing their employment authorization when it expires or everytime they have to change employer is now \$75 instead of the previous \$50.

If they have been in the FDM two years, they must send \$350 along with their application for permanent residence plus an additional \$75 to renew their employment authorization for a third year. Previously, these were \$250 and \$50 respectively. Domestic workers who entered Canada under the FDM before April 1, 1989 are still subject to the previous rate of \$250.

The \$350 fee for application for permanent residence is not returned even if the domestic worker is rejected.

While FDM workers, all of whom are required to show education or skills upgrading, did not have to pay for student authorizations before, now they must pay \$50 to Immigration to be allowed to take credit courses.

Those who must obtain a Minister's permit because of any violation of Immigration rules

must pay \$100 rather than the \$50 before April 1, 1991.

At present, domestic workers generally earn a net salary of \$571.57. Like other employees, they pay taxes, CPP and UIC out of their \$5.40 per hour minimum wage. As obligatory live-in workers they also get deducted \$290.33 for room and board every month.

Assuming that a foreign domestic worker does not change employers for the one year duration of her employment authorization and she applies for a student authorization once a year, then every year for two years she would pay \$125 in Immigration fees. By the third year of her stay in Canada, she would have paid \$675 in Immigration fees after she applied for permanent residence status. If she does not obtain permanent residence on the third year, she will have to apply for an employment authorization for another year, which means adding another \$75.

The added fee she must pay for renewing her employment authorization everytime she leaves an employer would further discourage a domestic worker from changing employers.

As it is, the FDM program effectively restricts the mobility of foreign domestic workers. An employment authorization issued to a foreign

***Come to INTERCEDE monthly meeting on Sunday, June 2, 1991
from 3-5 p.m. at the Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil St
(near corner College & Spadina). We will discuss your questions about the
New Immigration Mail-In System with two Counsellors from
Canada Immigration Centre: HEATHER LEE and
DONNA REID-MONCIREFFE.***

***There will be CLASP Legal Clinic. Applicants for membership or renewal,
come at 2 p.m.; we don't accept application by mail.***

Immigration Fees (continued)

domestic worker is valid for a specific employer for one year. She is discouraged from changing employers not only because she usually has to obtain a letter of "release" from that employer specified in her employment authorization before she is permitted by Immigration to look for another employer and before she can be authorized to work legally again.

She is specially discouraged from changing employers by one of the criteria for permanent residence, that is, a "satisfactory employment record" which is easily interpreted as a prohibition against working for more than one employer while she is in the FDM program.

On their second year anniversary, if all 10,616 domestic workers who entered Canada under the FDM in 1990 apply for permanent residence, the minimal total of immigration fees they would have paid (at \$675 each) would reach \$7,165,800.

In the past, INTERCEDE's appeals to Immigration against fee increases have been rejected for reasons of general application, that is, the fees apply to everyone with no exception.

Nevertheless, it is evident to INTERCEDE that since domestic workers do not have equal status with immigrant workers by virtue of the FDM requirements, they are effectively penalized through the fees they must pay as visitors temporarily working in Canada and who are required to take courses here.

On behalf of FDM workers, therefore,

INTERCEDE through this page of Domestic's Cross-Cultural News, publicly appeals to the Minister of Employment and Immigration, Bernard Valcourt,

- to retain the old rate of \$50 for employment authorization,
- reduce to \$100 application fee for permanent residence, and
- impose no fee for student authorization.

Members, clients and friends are encouraged to write letters to the Minister in support of this request.

**MEETING OF
Domestic Workers From The
Caribbean About Immigration
And Labour Standards**

WHEN? *Sunday, June 9, 1991
from 3 pm to 5 pm*

WHERE? *Coalition of Visible Minority
Women Office
579 St. Clair Ave. West, Ste. 203*

WITH? *Elaine Prescod, INTERCEDE
Vice-President and
Coco Diaz,
INTERCEDE Counsellor*

We wish to thank the Employment and Immigration Canada (Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program); Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Women's Program); Ontario Ministry of Citizenship; Ontario Women's Directorate; the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (Community and Social Services); and the City of Toronto Grants Review Board for their continuing support.

RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION:

NEW SUBSCRIPTION:

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

MAIL TO: INTERCEDE, 489 College St., Suite 402, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1A5

Please send DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS to:

MEMBER ID NUMBER: NAME:

ADDRESS:

CITY/PROVINCE:

POSTAL CODE: TELEPHONE:

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

Intercede Members:	FREE	Non-member Domestic	\$ 5.00
Non-Profit Organizations	FREE	Others	\$10.00

?Question and Answer?

Question: *I have an appointment for assessment interview on July 16; meanwhile, I received a mail-in packet for permanent residence application a week ago. Do I still need to go to Immigration for my July 16 appointment?*

Answer: No, you don't have to go to Immigration anymore for the July 16 interview. Just fill the forms carefully, sign where necessary, attach all required documents including a money order or certified cheque for \$350 payable to the Receiver General; mail or drop off your application for permanent residence to Canada Immigration Centre in North York, 4900 Yonge St.

Because your application should not arrive before your anniversary, it is recommended that you mail or drop it off on the day of or after the second anniversary of your arrival in Canada under the FDM.

Question: *Is it true there is no need for a Police Clearance as part of my documentation when I apply for permanent residence if I worked in Singapore or Hongkong? How do I get a Police Clearance from the Philippines?*

Answer: When applying for permanent residence you must provide police clearance from all of the countries in which you resided during the past ten years. Contact the consulates or embassies of these countries for your request. If they don't issue or facilitate these clearances, get a letter from them saying so and send this letter as part of your documentation.

Contact the Philippine Consulate for an NBI clearance at tel. 922-7181.

Question: *How much amount of savings exactly is required for our assessment?*

Answer: There is no specific amount of money required. It is advisable to show that you manage your finances well and can show a pattern of savings.

Question: *My sister is a domestic worker in Vancouver and wants to come to Toronto in September. What are the procedures for her to follow to get her documents transferred?*

Answer: Your sister should report to Immigration in Vancouver where she will most probably be required to show a "release letter" from her current employer before she is given authorization to seek employment in Toronto. Once she receives a confirmation of offer of employment from a Toronto employer, she should report to the appropriate Immigration office in Toronto to get a new employment authorization. Your sister may want to contact the West Coast Domestic Workers Association, tel. (604) 669-4482.

Question: *My employer does not believe that I need to do volunteer work. Can you advise me how I can convince her to give me time off for this?*

Answer: Certificates you get for volunteer work are considered proof of your "integration into the community". Most domestic workers in the FDM do volunteer work during their day off and don't need any permission from their employer to do anything they want to do when they are off work.

Question: *I receive less than minimum wage, \$500 a month of net income. How can I get minimum wage?*

Answer: Calculate the number of hours you work and multiply by the minimum wage rate of \$5.40 per hour; if you are paid less then you should be, talk to your employer and ask to be paid this legal minimum wage. If your employer refuses, you can call the Ministry of Labour, Employment Standards Branch to complain and you can make a claim for back wages owed to you.

SESSION

HOW TO PREPARE A RESUME; INTERVIEWING TIPS For Domestic Workers On Open Employment Authorization

WHEN: *Wednesday, June 5
and Thursday, June 6, 1991*

WHERE: *INTERCEDE office,
489 College St. Rm. 402
from 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.*

WITH: *Nora Angeles-Richardson
Volunteer*

*Call 324-8751 to register, maximum 8
people each session*

**PETITION TO IMMIGRATION MINISTER
BY DOMESTIC WORKERS IN THE FDM**

The Honourable Bernard Valcourt
Minister of Employment and Immigration
Ottawa, Ontario
K1J 0J9

Dear Minister:

For more than a year now we have been appealing and waiting for your ministry to adopt INTERCEDE's recommendations in your review of the Foreign Domestic Movement program (FDM).

This program discriminates against us domestic workers, mostly women coming from so-called developing countries in Asia such as and Philippines and Hongkong, in the Caribbean such as Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and other parts of the world. The requirements imposed on us by the FDM do not apply to any other group of women, immigrants or workers whose labour is in great demand in Canada.

While demand for our work has been permanently

consistent an increasing, we are not qualified to enter as permanent residents because of the low points given to our occupation and corresponding education.

We are adults who, during the two to three years of temporary status, do not have the right to choose our home but are forced to "live-in" our employer's home. This absence of choice creates many problems for us including excessively long hours of work as it makes us easily vulnerable to sexual harassment if not attacks.

Because our status is contingent on a specific employer, our right to freely change employers is severely limited.

We are required to go to school, do volunteer work, save thousands of dollars, all on our limited time and income, to prove our fitness to be immigrants.

If we are good enough to take care of Canadian children and Canadian homes, if we are good enough to work, we should be good enough to have equal rights.

**Calling All Facilitator Workshop
Participants And All Interested
Members**

Please help gather signatures for our petition to Immigration Minister Bernard Valcourt to adopt INTERCEDE recommendations to the Foreign Domestic Movement program

WHEN: *Saturday, June 8, 1991
Philippine National Day Picnic*

WHERE: *Seton Park (enter through
Thornclyffe Park Drive,
take Bus from Pape Subway)*

TIME: *11 am - 6 pm
(program starts at 1 pm)*

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Place: 489 College St., Suite 402, Toronto, Ontario
Time: Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Telephone: (416) 324-8751

INTERCEDE STAFF

Coordinator/Editor: Fely Villasin
Counsellors: Columbia Tarape-Diaz
Karen Serwonka

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Canada Immigration Centre	973-4444
Educ & Skills Training Ctr, Labour Council	971-5893
Employment Standards Enforcement	326-7160
Immigrant Women's Health Centre	367-1388
Immigrant Women's Job Placement Centre	656-8933
OHIP	Toronto 482-1111
	Scarborough 1-800-263-3814
	Mississauga 275-2730
Ontario Human Rights Commission	326-9511
Revenue Canada (Taxation)	869-1500
Toronto Rape Crisis Centre (24-hour line)	597-8808
Unemployment Insurance	730-1211
Workers' Compensation	927-9555
EMERGENCY HOUSING	
Nellie's Hostel	461-1084
Evangeline's	762-9636
LEGAL SERVICES	
Parkdale Community Legal Services	531-2411
CLASP (Osgoode Law School) Legal Clinic	736-5028
Kensington-Bellwoods	
Metro Tor. Chinese & SI	
Toronto Workers' Health	

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