



[Home](#) > [Research](#) > [Responses to Information Requests](#)

## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

[New Search](#) | [About RIR's](#) | [Help](#)

9 March 2006

**VEN101087.FE**

Venezuela: Obtaining permanent resident status and the rights associated with that status (2005 - February 2006)  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

A representative from the Consular Section of the Venezuela Embassy in Canada explained, during a 3 March 2006 telephone interview, that the status of [translation] "foreign resident" is the closest to that of permanent resident in Venezuela.

Foreign residents receive a national identity card (*cédula*) upon which the word [translation] "foreign" is inscribed (Venezuela 3 Mar. 2006). The identity card is valid for a period of 10 years, after which it must be renewed (*ibid.*). Travel restrictions are lifted for foreign citizens who hold a national identity card (*ibid.*).

The representative from the Consular Section of the Embassy of Venezuela indicated that a foreigner in possession of a non-resident visa (*transeúnte*) is required to have lived in Venezuela for five consecutive years and have renewed his or her non-resident visa each year in order to be eligible to apply for a resident visa (Venezuela 3 Mar. 2006).

After five years of legal permanent residence, a non-resident visa holder who wishes to obtain a [translation] "resident visa" must provide the following documents:

[Translation]

- an application form (*Planilla de solicitud*);
- a passport from the country of origin;
- a photocopy of the entire passport (including blank pages);
- a photocopy of the national identity card (*cédula*);
- two passport-size photographs taken face on;
- proof of employment or a notarized work contract;
- a letter addressed to the director general of the National Office of Identification and Foreigner Status (*Oficina Nacional de Identificación y Extranjería*, ONIDEX) explaining the reasons for the application;
- proof of residence;
- an income tax return;
- proof of studies or a transcript, if the person is a student;
- a photocopy of the trade register (*Registro Mercantil*) and of the report from the most recent general meeting, if the person owns a business;
- the original as well as a photocopy of the birth certificate (*Partida de nacimiento*), if the person has children;
- a standard manila envelope (*sobre manila*);
- revenue stamps (*timbres fiscales*) (Venezuela 10 Feb. 2006; *ibid.* 20 Feb. 2006).

According to the ONIDEX Website, the [translation] "resident visa" must be renewed every five years (Venezuela 2006). Moreover, the site lists the fee to change one's visa status as 134,400 bolivars [approximately CAN\$72 (XE.com 17 Feb. 2006)] (Venezuela 2006).

The representative from the Consular Section of the Embassy of Venezuela indicated that foreign residents have the same rights as Venezuelan citizens, except for the right to vote, which is limited: foreign residents can not vote in presidential or congressional elections (Venezuela 20 Feb. 2006; *ibid.* 17 Nov. 1999). Article 64 of the Venezuelan constitution, which addresses resident foreigners' voting rights, specifies that they are eligible to vote only after 10 years of residence (Venezuela 17 Nov. 1999).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

#### References

Venezuela. 3 March 2006. Venezuela Embassy in Canada, Consular Section. Telephone interview with a representative.

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#### Additional Sources Consulted

**Internet sites, including:** Embassy of Venezuela in the United States, Ministerio del Interior y Justicia de Venezuela.

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