



Antigua – Passports, Residency, Incorporation, Blockchain

The following article is a guest post from Edmund John of FlagTheory.com which talks about his visit to NTL immigration conference in Antigua.

St. John's (Antigua and Barbuda) – Mega-yachts, VC Bird, passports, offshore banking, peace of mind, anonymity, 365 beaches for 365 days in the year – welcome to Antigua.

VC Bird is an impressive airport – ultra-modern and constructed just a few years ago directly next to the old airport, you get the immediate sense that the island wants to cater to wealth. Driving around Antigua, which has a population of about 90,000, you'll notice the topography is impressive, and anything but boring. Open fields, hilly and rocky peaks, and the pristine blue ocean will capture your senses, and the place feels much bigger than it is.

The people are what make the island truly great. Showing up in the afternoon without a place to spend the night and finding several hotels booked out, I decided to stop for some lunch. Exhausted from a 7am flight from New York City, and still jet-lagged from my travel from Asia, I asked my waitress if she could suggest a hotel, and she took me around for nearly an hour before we found a nice apartment rented by a local man.

What brought me here was the NTL immigration conference – where the team put together an amazing program where we toured property, met with local lawyers and relevant government officials and where I delivered a presentation entitled Governments as Entrepreneurs.

Most of Antigua and Barbuda's economy is reliant on tourism, and the country is a major yachting destination in the Caribbean. In recent years, however, the country has pioneered a new citizenship-by-investment program that is now being heavily marketed to people from countries around the world. This program, which was introduced in 2013, is aimed at attracting investors to make a significant economic contribution to the country, which will be channeled into national development. In return, investors will be given citizenship and a passport, which grants them [visa-free travel to over 130 countries](#), with a minimal residency requirement.

While in Antigua, I toured Nonsuch Bay, an investment property that was superb. The quality of the land, the project and the construction was far superior to many developments I've toured internationally. When looking at a development, the first thing to do is to look at the developer's track record, which can often clue you in on whether it is working on the project for the long haul, or just trying to make a quick buck (as is the case sometimes).

Specifically within the citizenship-by-immigration business, you should check the developer's finance record, which can indicate whether the project it is undertaking is something

that it can capitalize itself and not cut corners, or whether it is looking to pre-sell units to pay for the operation. Other positive signs include: multiple projects under its belt; and an actual hotel business in operation, one that's not just a development for the purpose of selling timeshare and relying on hefty management fees.

What to look out for when buying citizenship-by-investment property:

- Self-financing by the developer
- Timeshare vs. freehold property
- Potential for ROI
- Reasonable expectation of rent
- Management fees

Nonsuch Bay really focused on attention to detail. It is a resort that also sells individual units that qualify for the citizenship-by-investment program.

Projects such as Nonsuch Bay are primarily capital preservation projects, and the investor will receive a passport and yearly dividends, and will be able to resell the property after five years. They are also allowed to stay in the unit for several weeks. (They can, of course, live in the unit all year, but they won't receive a dividend from the hotel rental.)

Antigua and Barbuda's citizenship-by-investment program has a few eligibility restrictions, but these seem to be slipping away, and the scheme now is open even to citizens of Iran and Iraq, as well as most other countries in the world.

Citizenship is offered for a preliminary period of five years, after which if you have proven that you have committed no criminal offense, you will become a full citizen, with all benefits granted to you. During the initial five years, you are allowed to add other dependents or a spouse to your application. After the preliminary period, you will have to

add them through a normal legal process. The difference between the two is that if you add your children during the preliminary period through the Citizenship by Investment Unit (CIU), you'll need to pay the fees again.

Benefits of Antigua and Barbuda Citizenship

- Citizenship is in a British Commonwealth country
- Dual citizenship is recognized, so new citizens will not have to give up their current citizenship
- Visa-free access to 131 countries, including the United Kingdom, Canada and Hong Kong
- Antigua and Barbuda has a generous tax regime, with no taxation on wealth, inheritance, foreign income or capital gains
- Offshore bank accounts, investments and companies give unique opportunities for business and tax planning

Options For Investment

Investors must choose one of the following three investment options:

1. A) An investment of at least US\$400,000 in an approved real estate project, to be held for a minimum of five years; OR
1. B) An investment of at least US\$1,500,000 directly into an eligible business, or an investment of US\$5,000,000 split between multiple investors, with a minimum investment of US\$400,000 per person; OR
1. C) A non-refundable contribution of at least US\$200,000 to the country's National Development Fund.

There are talks that the government might remove the third option.

Real Estate Options

The following real estate development projects have been approved by the Antigua and Barbuda government, and will qualify investors for citizenship:

1. [South Point](#), Falmouth Harbour, St. Paul's, Antigua
2. [Nonsuch Bay Resort and Residences](#), Hughes Point, St. Phillip's, Antigua
3. [Tamarind Hills](#), Fryes Beach, St. Mary's, Antigua
4. [Pearn's Point Marina Residences](#), Jolly Harbour, St. Mary's, Antigua

Key Questions

Q: Is there global taxation in Antigua and Barbuda?

A: Antigua and Barbuda does not tax its citizens on a global basis. You will *not* be taxed on global income or on money derived from active business, employment or investment outside the country.

Q: How many days do I need to spend in Antigua and Barbuda to be considered a tax resident?

A: You will need to spend 183 days in a calendar year to be a tax resident of Antigua and Barbuda. However, you should look into whether Antigua has a tax treaty with your country of origin when determining if this tax residency would be valuable. You can check out Antigua's tax treaties [here](#).

Q: Which countries can I travel to visa-free with an Antiguan passport?

A: An Antiguan passport grants its holders visa-free access to

a total of 131 countries, including the UK, Canada, Hong Kong and countries in the European Union. Visas to the United States may be easily obtained upon application.

Q: Can I renounce my Antiguan citizenship if I choose to later?

A: Yes, you can renounce.

Q: Are there other options to becoming an Antiguan citizen?

A: If you are married to an Antiguan national, you can get citizenship after three years of residency.

Q: Is there an official website for this citizenship-by-investment program?

A: <http://www.cip.gov.ag/>

Qualifying Criteria

To qualify for the citizenship-by-investment program, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- The principal applicant must be at least 18 years old.
- Dependent children must be (1) under age 18 and unmarried; or (2) full-time students aged between 18 and 25 who are dependent on their parents; or (3) over age 18, and living with and fully supported by the applicant, due to physical or mental disability
- Dependent parents or grandparents must be over age 65, living with and financially dependent on the principal applicant

There is no minimum net worth required, no education requirement, no maximum age restriction, no business experience needed, and no interview will be conducted for your application.

Exemptions

Program exemptions are currently under review by the government. Until further notice, it is recommended that citizens of the following countries do not apply for the citizenship-by-investment program:

- Afghanistan
- North Korea

Application Process

The application process can be completed in as little as five to six months. Flag Theory works directly with the best lawyer in Antigua who also charges the lowest fees to help our clients with their application.

1. The immigration consultant submits the complete citizenship application including medical reports, supporting documents, and signed forms.
2. Flag Theory reviews the application for accuracy and completeness to ensure fast government processing.
3. The applicant transfers the complete investment amount and fees to the designated escrow account (see included banking instructions).
4. After reviewing the application, Flag Theory submits it to the government of Antigua and Barbuda.
5. The government reviews each application and conducts a due diligence check.
6. Each approved applicant is issued a Certificate of Registration/Naturalization, which completes the citizenship process.
7. A passport application is submitted to the Immigration Department, and passports are issued and couriered to the applicant.
8. To complete his residency requirement, client takes an Oath of Affirmation/Allegiance when he arrives in

Antigua and Barbuda, or at an Antiguan Embassy, High Commission, or Consular Office abroad.

All new citizens must spend at least five days in Antigua and Barbuda in the five years after getting their citizenship.

General Documentation Requirements

- All documents must be less than six months old, unless otherwise stated. This includes translation and notarial stamp dates, dates government forms are signed, dates on reference letters, etc.
- All Government Citizenship forms (AB1, AB2, AB3, AB4, and AB5) must be printed in color (these color print-outs are considered originals).
- Forms may be completed either (1) by hand, using capital letters, with blue or black ink; OR (2) typed in a legible font, using Flag Theory's fillable pdfs.
- Each family member must submit his/her own forms.
- Both parents, or the legal guardian, must sign forms for children under 18 years of age.
- All photocopied documents must be certified as a true copy by a notary public. Certification must be authenticated by an apostille, and the certifier may not be closely related to the applicant (see page 1 of form AB1 for specific requirements).
- All documents and forms must be submitted in English. Documents issued in another language must be accompanied by an authenticated English translation (see page 1 of form AB1 for specific requirements).
- All forms and necessary supporting documents should be submitted at the same time. The only exceptions are police certificates, which may be submitted separately.

Important: Please note that fraudulent or forged documents, false information, or false declarations will result in the application being rejected or citizenship being revoked.

Applicants over 18 years old must provide a confirmation from a national law enforcement authority (usually the police) that they do not have a criminal record. The applicant is required to get this document from each country that he has lived in for six consecutive months or more since reaching the age of 18.

This document may be known as a “police certificate,” a “police clearance” or a “record of no information” in different countries. It is easily available upon request from a central police/government office.

In some countries, the police authority will only issue this certificate to the foreign government that is requesting for the document. In such a case, the certificate should be sent to this address: The Citizenship by Investment Unit, 3rd Floor, ABI Financial Centre, Redcliffe Street, St John’s, Antigua.

If possible, applicants should include in their application a copy of the receipt for the police certificate, to assist the CIU in tracking the certificate.

In the event that you are unable to get a certificate from a country where you had lived in, you should submit a written explanation and an original letter from the police authority stating that it will not issue a certificate.

Fees

In addition to the funding of the selected investment option, additional fees are also payable by each family member of the principal applicant. These comprise of the following:

1. Government Fee

The fees applicable are stated in the table below. Ten percent of the government fee is payable (and non-refundable) upon submission of your application, with the balance due following receipt of an approval letter sent to the authorised agent who submitted the application. A government fee is charged for each family member.

2. Due Diligence Fee

All applications are subject to rigorous due diligence to ensure that only meritorious applicants are granted citizenship. The due diligence fee is charged for each family member above the age of 11 as prescribed in the table below. The due diligence fee is payable upon submission of the application by the appointed agent, and it is non-refundable.

Note: If the applicant is a politically exposed person (i.e. a senior government or military official, a senior executive in a state-owned corporation, a senior politician, etc.), an additional due diligence fee of \$5,000 will apply, as extra background checks are required.

3. Passport Fee

Each family member is required to pay the sum outlined for issuance of their passport.

Schedule of Fees

Government fee – Principal Applicant **	\$50,000
Government fee – Spouse	\$50,000

Government fee – Dependent child aged 0-11	\$25,000
Government fee – Dependent child aged 12-17	\$25,000
Government fee – Dependent child aged 18-25	\$50,000
Government fee – Dependent parent aged over 65	\$50,000
Due diligence fee – Principal Applicant	\$7,500
Due diligence fee – Spouse	\$7,500
Due diligence fee – Dependent child aged 0-11	\$0
Due diligence fee – Dependent child aged 12-17	\$2,000
Due diligence fee – Dependent child aged 18-25	\$4,000
Due diligence fee – Dependent parent aged over 65	\$4,000
Passport fee – each person	\$300

****Principal Applicant \$50,000, Spouse \$50,000 and two dependents free until 1st May, 2016 (applies to the NDF investment option only).**

Final Words

Antigua represents an amazing opportunity for those looking for an alternative citizenship opportunity in the Caribbean. The country has sound proper governance which means your and amazing visa free travel opportunities will stay in place for many years to come.

If you are interested in this program or want to compare others side by side, check out Passports.IO, which has a full list of global citizenship and residency-by-investment programs.