



## The Curaçao Investor Permit Program

In the last two decades we have seen an enormous rise of wealthy individuals worldwide. Wealthy individuals with an ever-increasing demand for travel and investment freedom on a global scale. This new category of wealthy traveling individuals, “Global High Network Citizens”, often originates from Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and Latin America. One of the key concerns amongst these Global Citizens are visa-free travel, family safety, financial security, and where possible a “private” status in society.

In line with the increased global demand for investment opportunities, many countries have adopted a special “Investor Permit” program that provides solutions to one or several of these concerns. In return for often substantial investments in the ‘host’ country, an investor can fairly rapidly obtain either a residency or citizenship and thereby often even a passport of that country. Although the performance of these programs varies substantially, successful programs have resulted in significant increases in foreign direct investment in the ‘host’ country.

Curaçao, a Dutch Caribbean Island part of the Dutch Kingdom also has its own Investor Permit Program. Curaçao is located in the Southern Caribbean, just off the coast of Venezuela. Curaçao is an autonomous country within the Kingdom of The Netherlands and, together with Aruba and Bonaire, it constitutes the “ABC” islands, or the Leeward Antilles. Just 12° north of the Equator, Curaçao has a warm, sunny climate all year round, with an average temperature of about 27°C (81°F).

Curaçao's capital is Willemstad, which takes up most of the central part of the island. You can travel to Curaçao by air with direct flights from North America, Europe, and South America.

The currency used in Curaçao is the Antillean Guilder (ANG), also called the Florin. The Antillean Guilder's exchange rate is fixed to the US Dollar at a price of 1 USD = 1.80 ANG. When exchanging money at a bank the exchange rate is 1.78 or 1.82 ANG, depending on if you are buying or selling.

The local population is known to often speak multiple languages including Dutch, the native language Papiamentu as well as English and Spanish. You will also encounter fractions within the community that understands and speak French, and Portuguese. The multilingual talent of the locals is of great value for international investors that decide to establish their business on the island or wish to seek residence. Another reason to invest in the island is its location. Situated between South America and Central America, it has a strategic and safe location, outside the hurricane belt, making Curaçao an excellent distribution center for the Caribbean area, South, Central and North America, and the European Union.

## About the Curaçao Investor Permit Program

As of 2014, the government of Curaçao issued the Guidelines Investors Permit 2014 in an effort to increase foreign direct investment. As a result, Curaçao opened a gateway for high net worth investors to obtain a residence permit in Curaçao and in principle after five years of eligibility for Dutch (EU) citizenship.

The Curaçao investor permit consists of residency a/o eventual citizenship programs for investments in Real Estate and Business Ventures. The Curaçao Investor Permit offers three basic options which in very brief amount to:

- 1. A 3-year program for investments with a minimum capital of 280,000 USD;**

This investor permit program offers a residence permit of three years and requires a minimum investment of at least USD 280,000 in real estate or (own) business venture. After three years the residence permit can be renewed if the conditions are still met.

- 2. A 5-year program for investments with a minimum capital of 420,000 USD;**

This investor permit program offers a residence permit of five years and requires a minimum investment of at least USD 420,000 in real estate or (own) business venture. After five years the investor permit can be renewed if the conditions are still met. At this point the investor becomes eligible for Dutch citizenship and passport through which the investor becomes an EU citizen providing (under the Dutch passport visa-free travel to 156 countries including amongst others the Schengen countries, United States of America, Canada, and the United Kingdom).

### **3. An Indefinite program for investments with a minimum capital of 838,000 USD;**

This investor permit program offers an indefinite residence permit and requires a minimum investment of at least USD 838,000 in real estate or (own) business venture. After five years the investor becomes eligible for Dutch citizenship and passport through which the investor becomes an EU citizen providing (under the Dutch passport) visa-free travel to 156 countries including amongst others the Schengen countries, United States of America, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

To qualify for the residence permit, the investor must prove that he or she:

- Has enough means to be able to meet the obligations arising from the investment;
- Holds no criminal record;
- Is in possession of a private health insurance policy, and
- In the last phase of the process is able to show official documents that the investor made or can and will make an investment of the amount corresponding to the relevant period of the residence permit.

There are three types of investment that are qualified as being “eligible investments” under the Curaçao Investor Permit Program:

1. Investment in local real estate. The investment can be made by the permit candidate directly or, via his/her (local) investment vehicle.
2. Incorporate or buy shares in a locally operating company, whereby that company actually runs a business on the and as such thus will also have appropriate “local substance” in the sense of a fair amount of local operational costs, local business and/or investment activities, at least one local director and local financial administration.
3. Investment in a company that has been *listed* on the Dutch Caribbean Securities Exchange in Curaçao in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the Exchange. In principle here the Issuer of the securities can be a local company or a foreign entity. Clearly the requirement of “local substance” as described above is required in both cases; i.e. the Issuer is required to have at least one local director or legal representative, have local operational costs like rent and the like, and must have its financial administration done locally. As per the date of this publication further anti-

abuse stipulations are being devised to assure that this third category also protects the investors and has a fair economic spin-off for the Curaçao economy.

## Why choose for the Curaçao Investor Permit Program?

Curaçao is strategically located between North and South America, enjoys a mature financial sector, beautiful tropical weather, solid legal system, excellent airlift and is a country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Dutch passport which can be obtained after the relevant “residence period” has been completed and no facts have come up that would impede such issuance, is ranked the 3rd most powerful passport worldwide in terms of visa-free travel.

The local currency, ANG, is linked to the US\$. The official ANG/US\$ FX rate ranges between 1.78 and 1.82 ANG per US\$.

So after a period of five years, the investor who participates in the Investor Permit Program becomes eligible for Dutch citizenship and passport provided that the investor officially lives and resides in Curaçao, adheres to the minimum investment under the investor permit program and successfully passes the “inburgerings examen.” The latter refers to the fact that the investor shall dominate the basics of the language for instance.

The Curaçao investor permit:

1. is supported by the local financial service sector and Government;
2. contains standardized application requirements and guarantees that upon adequate documentation the permit is automatically released;
3. allows verifiable corporate transactions/funding as proof of investment;
4. provides direct access or visa-free travel to the Netherlands and within the Schengen Area once the passport has been issued.

Complementary to the regular business benefits, Curaçao offers an Investor Permit Program for individuals and families seeking residency, privacy, and asset protection in a well-connected safe living and working environment.

## Final Thoughts

The Curaçao Investor Program offers an alternative for those investors seeking valuable opportunities where investments are coupled to the possibility of obtaining first residency in Curacao and after 5 years the option to apply for a Dutch passport. The island's position in the Dutch Kingdom, its strategic location as a hub between South America and Europe, and its talented multilingual workforce offers a unique package to the corporate global investor and/or residency seeker. In Curacao there are a few professional businesses offering investor permit assistance including some of our local-based listing advisors. Feel free to contact them for more information. You can find the complete list of our listing advisors on our website: <https://www.dcsx.cw/listing-advisors>

## Sources

Transatlantic Capital Group "Investor Permit Solutions" <https://transatlanticcapitalgroup.com/investor-permit-solutions>

PYGG "Curaçao's Open Capital Market" <https://pygg.nl/articles-and-brochures/>

Society of Trust & Estate Planners (STEP) Curaçao "The Curaçao Investor Permit" <https://www.dcsx.cw/the-curacao-investor-permit/>

***This publication is presented to you by the Dutch Caribbean Securities Exchange***

