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CANADA EXPRESS ENTRY & PROVINCIAL NOMINEE PROGRAM

Client Factsheet & Programme Briefing

*Express Entry (FSWP, CEC & FSTP) and the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP)
– Canada's Principal Economic Pathways to Permanent Residence*

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Canada's Express Entry & Provincial Nominee Program

A Briefing on Canada's Points-Tested Pathways to Permanent Residence | 2026 Edition

01 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Express Entry and the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) together form the backbone of Canada's economic immigration system, selecting candidates through the Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) and provincial nomination streams rather than a single fixed occupation list. Express Entry manages three federal programs - the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP), Canadian Experience Class (CEC) and Federal Skilled Trades Program (FSTP) - while the PNP lets each province and territory nominate candidates who meet its own labour-market needs, either through the Express Entry-linked Enhanced stream or a direct Base stream. This factsheet summarizes the settings in force as at August 2026, including current CRS bands, category-based selection, the newly reset 2026-2028 Immigration Levels Plan and provincial nomination mechanics, so clients can plan their application strategy against an accurate and current baseline.

02 THE PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE - 2026

 380,000 TOTAL PERMANENT RESIDENT ADMISSIONS TARGET, 2026	 109,000 EXPRESS ENTRY (FEDERAL HIGH-SKILLED) ALLOCATION	 91,500 PROVINCIAL NOMINEE PROGRAM ALLOCATION (+66%)	 515 LATEST CEC CRS CUT- OFF (APRIL 2026 DRAW)	 10 + North PROVINCES & TERRITORIES RUNNING 80+ PNP STREAMS
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03 WHERE THE 2026 ECONOMIC PLACES SIT

CATEGORY	2026 ALLOCATION	RELEVANT PROGRAMME(S)
Express Entry (Federal High-Skilled)	109,000	FSWP, CEC & FSTP via Express Entry
Provincial Nominee Program	91,500	Enhanced (Express Entry-linked) & Base PNP streams
Federal Economic Pilots	8,175	Rural, agri-food & caregiver pilots
Atlantic Immigration Program	4,000	Employer-driven, four Atlantic provinces
Federal Business	500	Start-up Visa & Self-Employed Persons

Figures reflect the 2026-2028 Immigration Levels Plan, under which total admissions hold steady at 380,000/year while the PNP allocation rises 66% (from 55,000) and temporary resident admissions are reduced toward 5% of Canada's population by end-2027.

04 GENERAL ELIGIBILITY - WHAT WE CHECK FIRST

 SKILLED WORK EXPERIENCE At least one year of continuous, paid work in a NOC TEER 0-3 occupation within the last 10 years.	 LANGUAGE TEST IELTS General, CELPIP or TEF/TCF results no older than two years at the time of application.	 EDUCATIONAL CREDENTIAL ASSESSMENT An ECA from a designated body confirms foreign education is equivalent to a completed Canadian credential.	 PROOF OF FUNDS Settlement funds are required for FSWP candidates without a valid job offer or Canadian work authorization.	 PROFILE VALIDITY An Express Entry profile stays active in the pool for 12 months and must be renewed if not invited.
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05 THE THREE ROUTES TO CANADIAN PR

FEDERAL Express Entry FSWP · CEC · FSTP SPONSORSHIP None - ranked directly by CRS score in the federal pool SELECTION Highest-ranked candidates invited in regular & category-based rounds 2026 CEC CUT-OFF 515 points (April 2026 draw), trending upward BEST SUITED TO Strong CRS scorers with Canadian or skilled foreign experience	ENHANCED PNP - Enhanced Express Entry-Linked Nomination SPONSORSHIP Province or territory nomination adds +600 CRS points SELECTION Near-guaranteed ITA in the next Express Entry round TYPICAL TIMELINE Approximately 6 months to a PR decision BEST SUITED TO Candidates matching a specific province's in-demand occupations	BASE · DIRECT PNP - Base Direct-to-Province Nomination SPONSORSHIP Province nominates outside the Express Entry pool SELECTION Applicant applies for PR directly to IRCC after nomination TYPICAL TIMELINE Approximately 18 months to a PR decision BEST SUITED TO Applicants below competitive CRS bands with a genuine provincial tie
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Across 2026, category-based and provincial draws have dominated invitation activity: 16 PNP draws, 7 CEC draws and 5 French-language draws had been held by mid-April alone, reflecting Ottawa's priority on candidates with a Canadian or provincial connection.

06 THE 2026 CRS POINTS TEST

CORE / HUMAN CAPITAL FACTORS	MAX POINTS	SKILL TRANSFERABILITY & ADDITIONAL POINTS	POINTS
Age (no spouse/partner)	110	Skill transferability combinations	Up to 100
Level of education	150	Provincial nomination	600
Official first language ability	160	Valid job offer - senior management (TEER 0)	200
Canadian work experience	80	Valid job offer - other eligible TEER 0-3	50
		Canadian post-secondary credential	15-30
		Sibling in Canada (citizen or PR)	15
		French language proficiency (NCLC 7+)	25-50
SPOUSE / PARTNER FACTORS	MAX POINTS		
Education	10		
Language ability	20		
Canadian work experience	10		

(Combined spouse factors capped at 40; core factor maximums reduce slightly when a spouse is included.)

Maximum possible score: 1,200 points. A provincial nomination is decisive - at +600 points it sits well above every published 2026 general draw cut-off, which is why the Enhanced PNP route is now the fastest reliable path to an ITA for most clients.



BEYOND PR - THE PATH TO CITIZENSHIP

Canadian permanent residents are generally eligible to apply for citizenship once they have been physically present in Canada for at least 1,095 days within the five years immediately before applying, and meet applicable language and citizenship-knowledge test requirements for applicants aged 18-54. We build this into the long-term roadmap we set with every client from day one.

07 2026 CATEGORY-BASED SELECTION - PRIORITY OCCUPATIONS

CATEGORY	2026 FOCUS	INDICATIVE CRS RANGE
French-Language Proficiency	Francophone candidates outside Quebec (policy target: 9% of admissions)	379-446
Healthcare & Social Services	Physicians, nurses, therapists, pharmacists & support roles	Varies by round
Skilled Trades	Electricians, welders, carpenters, machinists & equipment mechanics	Below all-programme average
STEM Occupations	Software engineers, data scientists, mathematicians & engineers	Highly competitive
Transport	Commercial truck drivers, aviation & rail roles	Varies by round
Agriculture & Agri-Food	Farm supervisors, butchers & meat-processing workers	Varies by round

Exact CRS cut-offs and invitation numbers vary by round and are confirmed only on IRCC's official rounds page at the time of each draw; the ranges above reflect the pattern of 2026 rounds to date. We track every round for active clients and flag category matches against each profile as soon as a round is announced.

08 PROCESSING & INDICATIVE GOVERNMENT FEES

ROUTE	TYPICAL TIMELINE	FEES (FROM 30 APR 2026), PRINCIPAL APPLICANT	CAD
Express Entry (FSWP/CEC/FSTP)	~6 months	Right of Permanent Residence Fee (RPRF)	600
PNP - Enhanced (Express Entry-linked)	~6 months	Processing fee - PNP-linked application	990
PNP - Base (direct-to-province)	~18 months	Processing fee - Federal Business stream	1,895

Timelines are IRCC service-standard estimates from profile/nomination to PR decision and vary with application volume.

Spouse and dependent fees apply in addition and are confirmed against IRCC's current fee schedule at engagement.



ON THE HORIZON - WHAT THE 2026-2028 LEVELS RESET MEANS

Canada's 2026-2028 Immigration Levels Plan marks a deliberate "reset": total admissions hold flat at 380,000 a year while the Provincial Nominee Program allocation jumps 66% (from 55,000 to 91,500), making provincial nomination the primary door to PR for most economic candidates. In parallel, international student admissions fall nearly 50% (to 155,000) and Temporary Foreign Worker admissions drop to 60,000, while International Mobility Program work permits rise 32% (to 170,000) - part of a broader push to bring the temporary resident share of Canada's population down to 5% by the end of 2027. For clients, this means CRS-only strategies are becoming less reliable and a genuine provincial-nomination strategy is now essential groundwork.

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This factsheet summarizes publicly available Government of Canada immigration settings as at August 2026 and is provided for general information purposes only. It does not constitute migration assistance, legal advice, or a guarantee of visa outcomes, and should not be relied upon as a substitute for individual assessment. CRS scoring, category-based selection, processing times and fees are set and revised by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and by provincial and territorial governments, and are subject to change without notice. The Veritas House recommends clients obtain current, personalized advice before submitting an Express Entry profile or PNP application. © 2026 The Veritas House Private Limited. All rights reserved.