



Rural Entrepreneur Stream

Community guide

This community guide is for the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program - Rural Entrepreneur Stream.

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[Alberta.ca/aaip-rural-entrepreneur-stream-eligibility.aspx](https://alberta.ca/aaip-rural-entrepreneur-stream-eligibility.aspx)

This Community Guide outlines the community's role as well as general information on the Expression of Interest (EOI) and Business Application process for the Rural Entrepreneur Stream. Please note that program criteria may change without notice and the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program will assess Business Applications according to the criteria posted on the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program website.

For more information, please contact:

Government of Alberta
Alberta Advantage Immigration Program

Email: entrepreneur.supportservice@gov.ab.ca

Rural Entrepreneur Stream Community Guide | Labour and Immigration

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Acronyms used in the community guide

EOI	Expression of Interest
CIO	Centralized Intake Office
IRCC	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Introduction

The Alberta Advantage Immigration Program is an economic immigration program that nominates foreign nationals for permanent residence in Alberta. Nominees must have the skills and abilities to fill labour shortages or demonstrate they have the skills to own and operate a business in Alberta. Nominees must also demonstrate they have the ability to economically establish and support themselves and their families while living and working in Alberta.

Both the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada administer the program jointly. Individuals nominated through the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program then apply for permanent residence status together with their spouse or common-law partner and dependent children to the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Alberta Advantage Immigration Program nominees must also meet medical, criminal, and security checks to be eligible for a permanent resident visa. IRCC manages all applications for permanent residence. The Government of Canada makes the final decisions on these applications.

Current Alberta Advantage Immigration Program Streams

For information on current Alberta Advantage Immigration Program streams and streams accepting EOIs, and applications, please refer to the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program website at:

<https://www.alberta.ca/aaip-application-streams.aspx>

Rural Entrepreneur Stream

The Rural Entrepreneur Stream is an economic immigration pathway that allows the province of Alberta to nominate qualified and capable immigrant entrepreneurs who want to start a new or buy an existing business in a rural Alberta community.

The Alberta Advantage Immigration Program defines rural Alberta communities as any community with a population of less than 100,000. In addition, the community must be outside of the Calgary and Edmonton Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs). The Alberta Advantage

Immigration Program uses the most recent census data from Statistics Canada to determine a community's population.

To learn more about the Calgary and Edmonton Census Metropolitan Areas or for more information on Rural Entrepreneur Stream eligibility criteria, visit the [Alberta Advantage Immigration Program website](#).

Rural Community's Role

The community plays an important role in the implementation and success of the Rural Entrepreneur Stream. The Alberta Advantage Immigration Program recommends that each community reviews the [Rural Entrepreneur Stream eligibility criteria](#) and understand program requirements before making a decision to participate.

How can a community apply to the Rural Entrepreneur Stream?

Interested communities will complete the [Community Enrolment Form](#) and designate a community contact person and a community representative. The community may choose to either designate the same person as both the community contact person and the community representative, or designate different individuals to each role.

The community contact person will field inquiries from entrepreneurs and gather the necessary information for the community representative to make a decision. The community representative will determine whether to invite an entrepreneur for an exploratory visit. The community must designate a community representative who has the authority to sign on behalf of the community to participate in the program.

Once the Community Enrolment Form is complete, the form will be sent by email to the local community [workforce consultant](#). The workforce consultant will confirm the information on the Community Enrolment Form and forward it to the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program. The following information on the Community Enrolment Form will be published on the [Alberta Advantage Immigration Program website](#):

- Community name
- Community website
- Community contact person name and phone number

What happens if a community is not listed?

If an entrepreneur is considering establishing their business in a community not listed on the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program website, the entrepreneur may connect with that community to inquire if that community is interested in participating. If the community chooses to participate, that community can submit the [Community Enrolment Form](#) to their local workforce consultant. The Community Enrolment Form is available on the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program website.

Each community will establish their own selection processes and will determine if the community is supportive of the entrepreneur and their business venture. As each community will have first-hand knowledge on their community's demographics, labour market gaps and needs, the community is in the best position to communicate to the entrepreneur and determine if the business is a fit for the community.

During the initial inquiry from the entrepreneur, the community contact person may look to confirm that an entrepreneur meets the minimum [Rural Entrepreneur Stream eligibility criteria](#) before proceeding with gathering further information to decide on business fit for the community. As part of the community's review process, the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program recommends the community gather documents such as the entrepreneur's resume, language test and an outline of the business proposal to assist them in determining business fit with the community. If further information is required, additional steps may include video based- web conferencing calls, video submission or supporting documentation relevant to making a decision.

If the community is satisfied that the proposed business will be a benefit, the community can issue an invitation to meet for an exploratory visit. The exploratory visit is mandatory. The entrepreneur may require a visitor visa (Temporary Resident Visa) to travel to Canada for the exploratory visit*. The Alberta Advantage Immigration Program and participating communities will not provide a letter of support for the entrepreneur to obtain a Temporary Resident Visa to conduct the exploratory visit.

The Alberta Advantage Immigration Program suggests participating communities continue to review eligibility criteria on the website regularly, as information and criteria may be updated or

change without notice. The information on the [Alberta Advantage Immigration Program](#) website will be the most accurate and current.

***Important Information**

Due to the current COVID 19 Pandemic, the federal government has implemented travel restrictions for air and land travel. Given the travel restrictions, the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program recognizes that entrepreneurs may not be able to travel to Alberta to conduct the in-person exploratory visit. For this reason, web-based video conferencing will be considered at this time. The entrepreneur will be required to submit an Exploratory Visit Report with the Business Application whether the visit was conducted in-person or web-based.

Exploratory Visit and Community Support Letter

Exploratory Visit

Once the entrepreneur arrives for the exploratory visit, the community representative or contact person can proceed with further discussion on the business proposal. Dialogue can center on the business proposal, timelines, investment, as well as identify possible gaps and solutions to ensure the business meets the needs for the community and entrepreneur.

The purpose of the exploratory visit is to assist the entrepreneur in making an informed decision about operating and managing a business in a rural Alberta community. It further allows the entrepreneur to connect with Immigration Serving Organizations near them for settlement supports available to transition into the community. The exploratory visit will allow the entrepreneur the opportunity to clarify requirements for business license, zoning requirements as well as any potential restrictions in operating their business in the community. Entrepreneurs are encouraged to keep records of the exploratory visit, including any contacts and meetings as this information will be needed for the Exploratory Visit Report. Review the [eligibility criteria](#) for more information on what is required for the Exploratory Visit Report.

The exploratory visit allows the community an opportunity to get to know the entrepreneur and to assess the need for the proposed business. The community can also confirm the entrepreneur's experience and knowledge, proposed business timelines, exploratory visit

details, and reasons for choosing the community. The exploratory visit will aid the community to determine the entrepreneur's efforts in establishing a business in their community and the potential for their long-term retention with an emphasis on their business and personal fit with the community.

During the exploratory visit, the entrepreneur may be required to demonstrate they have the proven knowledge, managerial skills, language skills and investment funds needed for the successful ongoing operation of their business. Operating and managing a successful business may include, among other things, technical, interpersonal, conceptual, and communication skills, all of which are expected to be gained through active operation and management of a business. Demonstrating these skills will reaffirm that the entrepreneur is prepared and equipped to build a successful business in the community.

Community Support Letter

After the exploratory visit, the entrepreneur will provide a copy of the Business Proposal Summary to the community contact person for review and consideration. The Business Proposal Summary should reaffirm the discussions on the business venture in the community during the exploratory visit. If the community deems that the entrepreneur and their business proposal is a benefit to the community, the community representative will endorse the Business Proposal Summary and issue the Community Support Letter to the entrepreneur. Endorsement of the Business Proposal Summary and issuing the Community Support Letter ensures the community is aware and supportive of the business and the entrepreneur, and their retention in the community.

The Alberta Advantage Immigration Program will provide a template for the Community Support Letter to participating communities once they are enrolled. The community and entrepreneur may continue to be in contact to provide updates on progress, additional information on labour market trends, and settlement supports.

After the Community Issues the Community Support Letter

Once the entrepreneur receives the endorsed Business Proposal Summary and Community Support Letter, the entrepreneur can submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) to the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program Portal pending they meet all Rural Entrepreneur Stream eligibility criteria. The Alberta Advantage Immigration Program Portal is an online system used for the submission of the EOI and the Business Application.

Established Businesses

Entrepreneurs who currently own and operate a business in a rural Alberta community can apply to the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program and must demonstrate they meet the criteria highlighted in the Rural Entrepreneur Stream Points grid at the time of EOI submission. The established business must have operated in Alberta for at least one year immediately prior to submitting an EOI in the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program portal. Please refer to the [Rural Entrepreneur Stream eligibility page](#) for more information.

Expression of Interest (EOI) and EOI Pool

Once the EOI is submitted, the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program will review and score an EOI within 30 days based on the Rural Entrepreneur Stream Points Grid. More information on the Rural Entrepreneur Stream Points Grid is available on the [Alberta Advantage Immigration Program](#) website. The Rural Entrepreneur Stream Points Grid will be used to score the EOI to determine which entrepreneurs will be invited to submit a Business Application to the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program.

Entrepreneurs who meet the mandatory minimum eligibility criteria will be accepted into the EOI pool. EOIs are placed in the pool for a period of 12 months from the date of the original submission. If the candidate does not receive a Request to submit a Business Application within a 12-month period, the EOI will be cancelled, and the entrepreneur will have to submit a new EOI if they choose.

Meeting the minimum criteria does not guarantee a Request to Submit a Business Application will be issued. Entrepreneurs with higher-ranking points may receive a Request to Submit a Business Application.

Request to Submit a Business Application

Selected entrepreneurs will be sent a Request to Submit a Business Application in the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program Portal. Candidates will have 90 calendar days (from the date of request) to submit a complete Business Application, including all required supporting

documents through the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program Portal. The [Rural Entrepreneur Stream Business Application Document Checklist](#) will detail all required documents for the Business Application. Candidates who do not submit the required information within the specified deadline will be declined. Candidates will need to submit a new EOI if they are still interested in applying.

Business Application Assessment

The Alberta Advantage Immigration Program will assess the Business Application and all supporting documents. The candidate's Business Application will be assessed against the [eligibility criteria](#) and EOI Points will be verified. An Alberta Advantage Immigration Program Officer may contact the candidate for more information. If the candidate does not respond to requests for additional information, the Business Application will be declined. There is no guarantee that all complete Business Applications who meets the Rural Entrepreneur Stream criteria will be issued a nomination.

Candidates may be contacted by the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program for an in-person or web-based video conferencing interview. During the interview, the candidate must be able to present a comprehensive Business Plan and demonstrate how the Business Plan meets the Rural Entrepreneur Stream requirements.

If the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program is satisfied the candidate has met all the Rural Entrepreneur Stream criteria, a Business Performance Agreement will be sent to the candidate for review and signature. The Business Performance Agreement is a legal agreement between the candidate and the Province of Alberta. Candidates must sign, scan, and return the Business Performance Agreement to the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program via email within 14 days of receipt of email from the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program.

After the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program receives the signed Business Performance Agreement, the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program will also sign the Business Performance Agreement. The Alberta Advantage Immigration Program will provide the candidate with a copy of the signed Business Performance Agreement, a Business Application Approval Letter along with a 205(a) Letter of support. The 205(a) Letter of Support allows the candidate to apply to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) for a work permit.

Once the candidate receives the work permit, the candidate can then move to Alberta to establish or take over the business.

Candidates who have their Business Applications declined may submit a Request for Reconsideration if they can demonstrate an error was made in the assessment of their Business Application. More information on the process is outlined on the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program website under the [How to Apply](#) page.

Business Establishment

The candidate will submit an Arrival Report to the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program within 30 days of arriving in Alberta. Candidates are expected to establish and actively operate their proposed business within the terms outlined in their signed Business Performance Agreement. Candidates must submit the Business Progress Report every 6 months to the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program to demonstrate they continue to meet the Business Performance Agreement requirements.

The Alberta Advantage Immigration Program may conduct a site visit to the candidate's place of business. The site visit can occur at any time after the candidate begins business operations and will be used as part of the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program's review. The Alberta Advantage Immigration Program will not schedule site visits.

Final Report for Nomination

Candidates must actively own and operate the business in Alberta for at least 12 months. Once candidate satisfies all the conditions of the Business Performance Agreement, they can apply to the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program to be nominated for permanent residency. Candidates must submit a Final Report for Nomination along with supporting business documents. Candidate must continue to meet the conditions of the Business Performance Agreement during the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program nomination assessment.

The Alberta Advantage Immigration Program will assess the candidate's Final Report for Nomination and will inform the candidate of the decision. If the Final Report for Nomination is approved, candidate will receive an email copy of the nomination certificate along with instruction on how to submit a permanent residence application to IRCC. The candidate will need to apply for Permanent Residence to IRCC Centralized Intake Office (CIO).

If candidate no longer meets the conditions of the Business Performance Agreement, the Business Application will be declined. Candidates who are declined may submit a Request for Reconsideration if they can demonstrate an error was made in the assessment of their Final Report for Nomination request.

Application for Permanent Residence

To obtain permanent residence status, nominees must submit an application for Permanent Residence to IRCC with the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program nomination certificate and supporting documents. Nominees must continue to maintain legal status in Canada by having a valid work permit when submitting the application and while waiting for IRCC to process their permanent residence application.

IRCC will complete a review of the nominee's application for permanent residence along with health, security and criminal reviews. IRCC may request additional information that it deems appropriate at any time during the application process, such as a copy of the signed Business Performance Agreement.

IRCC is responsible for assessing each nominee's eligibility for permanent residence. The Alberta Advantage Immigration Program is not responsible for IRCC's decision to approve or refuse an application for permanent residence and/or to issue a Confirmation of Permanent Residence.