



Canada And Alberta Sign New Immigration Agreement

Calgary, May 11, 2007... The Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, the Honourable Ed Stelmach, Premier of Alberta and the Honourable Iris Evans, Alberta Minister of Employment, Immigration and Industry, today signed a new Agreement for Canada-Alberta Cooperation on Immigration.

"Canada's New Government is committed to working with Alberta and committed to helping newcomers," said Minister Finley. "This agreement will help Alberta attract immigrants more quickly and ensure our immigration programs meet Alberta's needs and the needs of newcomers."

"This agreement fulfils my commitment to pursue a made-in-Alberta approach to immigration," said Premier Stelmach. "It sets out a framework for enhanced federal-provincial immigration cooperation and partnerships, and is a prime example of what can be accomplished by working together."

"Since Alberta represents 10 per cent of Canada's population, Alberta's goal is to receive at least 10 per cent of immigrants to Canada," said Minister Evans. "This agreement takes us one step closer to that goal as well as addressing our labour shortage."

The new agreement means:

- Alberta will be able to nominate more immigrants possessing skills needed in the province, for quicker processing by the federal government.
- A new pilot project to speed up the entry of certain foreign health-care professionals who have applied to come to Alberta.
- Enhanced cooperation between Canada and Alberta in overseas immigration marketing initiatives.
- A commitment to establishing mechanisms that would make it easier and quicker for Alberta to get the foreign workers it needs to meet its growing labour force demands.

"Taken together, the agreement and the related initiatives speak to the strength and flexibility of our relationship," said Minister Finley. "I look forward to continued progress as we build and expand our partnerships for the benefit of newcomers and Albertans alike."

The agreement formalizes and builds on the existing collaborative relationship between Canada and Alberta on immigration matters, including the delivery of settlement and integration services. It also recognizes the importance of involving community stakeholders, including service providers, municipalities and the private sector, in welcoming newcomers.

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For an electronic copy of the agreements signed today, please visit www.cic.gc.ca or www.alberta.ca.

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Backgrounder

Canada And Alberta - Improving Cooperation On Immigration

Responding to provincial economic and labour market needs

The Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) allows provinces and territories to nominate immigrants who have specific skills that will contribute to the local economy. Under its current PNP agreement, Alberta nominates candidates who want to work and live in that province. Nominees must meet federal admissibility requirements, such as those related to health, criminality and security.

Under the new agreement, there is no longer a limit on the number of immigrants the province can nominate for permanent residence in Alberta each year. And, there is no expiry date. The PNP under the new agreement will run indefinitely, with the province providing targets for CIC to incorporate in its annual immigration levels planning.

Facilitating the entry of temporary foreign workers

Alberta employers are having trouble recruiting a sufficient number of Canadians to fill positions in many sectors. Hiring temporary foreign workers is one part of the solution to this problem. The Government of Canada has recently taken steps to make it easier and faster for employers to hire the workers they need, including creating the Canada-Alberta Working Group on Temporary Foreign Workers to more quickly identify skill shortages and determine how to address these shortages.

Building on the activities of this working group, the two governments will develop an agreement on temporary foreign workers that will establish mechanisms that would make it easier and quicker for Alberta to get the workers it needs to meet its growing labour force demands. This agreement will become an annex to the broader agreement.

Expediting the entry of foreign health-care professionals

Canada and Alberta have agreed on a pilot project that aims to expedite the entry of health-care professionals with the appropriate skills to meet Alberta's labour market and health-care needs.

Through the agreement, Canada will search the existing inventory of federal skilled worker applicants, and identify specific health-care professionals destined for Alberta. Candidates in the inventory who have already received preliminary approval of their application would be referred to the appropriate licensing bodies in Alberta to begin the process of foreign credential recognition. Candidates who have not yet received preliminary approval of their application would be referred to the province of Alberta for consideration under the Provincial Nominee Program, where they would benefit from faster processing.

Responding to the settlement and integration needs of immigrants and refugees

Alberta and Canada have a long history of cooperatively providing settlement and integration services to immigrants in Alberta. Their commitment to working together to improving these services was outlined in a Statement of Understanding developed in 2001.

The present agreement confirms the Government of Canada's commitment to fair and ongoing funding for settlement services in Alberta. Canada has also committed to working with Alberta to help immigrants find work in their chosen professions.

Expanding partnerships with communities

Successful integration programs involve the communities in which immigrants will work and live. The agreement recognizes the importance of working with community-based organizations, municipal governments, private sector, official language minority communities and others in the development of programs and services for immigrants.

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