

APRIL 2026

CUMMING & PARTNERS

U.S. & CANADIAN IMMIGRATION INSIGHTS

U.S. IMMIGRATION

ICE EXPANDS FORM I-9 SUBSTANTIVE VIOLATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has issued updated guidance that materially changes how Form I-9 violations are classified.

Historically, employers have been required to verify the identity and employment eligibility of all individuals hired in the U.S. To document that, they use the Employment Eligibility Verification form, known as Form I-9. In the past, numerous compliance errors had been treated as just technical violations that could be corrected.

Now, ICE has revised its Form I-9 fact sheet to reclassify errors as substantive violations that are subject to monetary penalties. This significantly increases exposure to fines and enforcement risk for routine Form I-9 compliance errors.

[LEARN MORE](#)

VISA VETTING RULES EXPANDED FOR SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES

The U.S. Department of State views every visa adjudication as a national security decision. To facilitate this vetting during screening, numerous categories of applicants for non-immigrant visas are now instructed to adjust the privacy settings on their social media profiles to “public” or “open”.

As of March 30, 2026, that includes: A-3; C-3 (if a domestic worker); G-5; H-3; H-4 dependents of H-3; K-1; K-2; K-3; Q; R-1; R-2; S; T; and U. That’s in addition to those categories already subject to this review: H-1B applicants and their dependents; and the F, M and J student and exchange visitor visa applicants.

[LEARN MORE](#)

CANADIAN IMMIGRATION

CRITERIA STILL TO COME ON A TR TO PR PATHWAY

The federal government hasn’t yet released formal criteria for a new and faster temporary resident to permanent resident (TR to PR) pathway, despite expectations for an April announcement.

In an April 18 interview, the Minister of Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Lena Metlege Diab, confirmed only a few details. The program will offer 33,000 PR spots over 2026-2027 and exclude major cities (and others defined as Census Metropolitan Areas). She didn’t say if the pathway will be sector specific, but noted that the broader focus is on Canadian work experience of close to two years.

[LEARN MORE](#)

UKRAINIAN NATIONALS GET MORE TIME TO EXTEND WORK PERMITS

After Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) helped thousands of Ukrainian nationals. These individuals sought temporary safe haven in Canada, where they need to support themselves and their families while the war in Ukraine continues.

Now, the Canadian government has given Ukrainians who came here under CUAET an additional year to apply to extend their work permit. They now have until March 31, 2027 to request an extension for up to three years. This measure is available to:

- Ukrainians who arrived in Canada before March 31, 2024; and
- those who didn’t receive a decision in time to arrive by that date, but who were allowed to come by December 31, 2024.

[LEARN MORE](#)

WORK PERMIT REQUIREMENT ELIMINATED FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

For international post-secondary students, their program sometimes requires work experiences such as co-ops, internships, practicums and mentorships. As of April 1, 2026, eligible students no longer need a separate work permit to participate in those placements.

Students may now work for employers that their designated learning institution approves of as part of a program’s requirements. This change simplifies administration, with only one permit needed to complete a single study program. The number of students authorized to work and the temporary resident volumes remain the same.

[LEARN MORE](#)

PASSPORT APPLICANTS GET “30 DAYS OR FREE” GUARANTEE

To strengthen accountability for processing passports, the Canadian government has introduced a new deal for applicants: 30 days or free.

If it takes more than 30 business days to process your application, you’ll automatically receive a full refund of your passport or travel document fee. The policy came into effect on April 1, 2026.

The 30-day period starts from the time the government receives a completed application, and ends when the document is printed and verified. This doesn’t include mailing time. While most passport applications are processed within this time frame, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada said applicants should be compensated when the government doesn’t meet service standards.

[LEARN MORE](#)

NEW FEES FOR PERMANENT RESIDENCE APPLICATIONS

Under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, permanent residence fees are adjusted every two years. This offsets program operating costs and responds to growing demand.

As of April 30, 2026, these are the updated fees for principal applicants by category:

- Right of permanent residence fee: \$600 (up \$25 from \$575)
- Provincial Nominee Program: \$990 (up \$40 from \$950)
- Business: \$1,895 (up \$85 from \$1,810)
- Family class: \$570 (up \$25 from \$545)
- Protected persons: \$660 (up \$25 from \$635)
- Humanitarian and compassionate grounds or public policy measures: \$660 (up \$25 from \$635)
- Permit holders: \$390 (up \$15 from \$375)

[LEARN MORE](#)