

MAY 2026

CUMMING & PARTNERS

U.S. & CANADIAN IMMIGRATION INSIGHTS

U.S. IMMIGRATION

NEW VETTING PROCESS INCREASES THE CHANCES OF A HOLD ON ADJUDICATIONS

A new USCIS vetting process requires fingerprints to be resubmitted for almost all pending cases. As of April 27, 2026, members of the American Immigration Lawyers Association started reporting that USCIS field and asylum offices were notifying applicants and attorneys that adjudications were subject to a hold.

Early reports indicate that the hold is affecting adjustment of status cases and asylum cases. However, the pattern suggests that the pause may extend more broadly across USCIS adjudications as the new requirement is implemented.

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USCIS SHIFTS TO SCOPS FOR PROCESSING TIME LISTINGS

USCIS is shifting away from referencing processing times at specific service locations. Now, processing times are being adjusted for all forms to show Service Center Operations (SCOPS). What this means is that:

- Cases can be transferred to different offices without notice, and a specific office location is no longer accurate with respect to processing.
- If no specific service center is listed on a receipt, use SCOPS to check on processing times.

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NOTE: U.S. consular operations in Tel Aviv resumed non-immigrant visa services the week of April 27, 2026, following a suspension due to regional security conditions.

CANADIAN IMMIGRATION

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.

On April 30, 2026, new fees took effect. Here 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)

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RULES CLARIFIED FOR CONTINUED AUTHORIZATION TO WORK PENDING PERMIT RENEWAL DECISIONS

IRCC has updated its guidance on continued work authorization while a work permit renewal is in process. The interim proof of work letter is valid for 365 days, and there is no need to request a second letter. Workers can keep working until a decision is made, as long as they continue to meet R186(u) requirements, namely that they have applied to renew before the initial work permit expired, they remained in Canada and they continue to comply with the conditions set out on the expired work permit.

The new guidance also clarifies how to handle subsequent work permit applications, i.e. ones that are filed while an earlier one is still pending. IRCC officers must process them all, regardless of the outcome of the first application, and ideally at the same time.

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BCPNP SHIFTS TO PRIORITY SECTORS, CLOSES STREAMS

To better attract top talent and address key labour market needs, the BC Provincial Nominee Program (BCPNP) has announced several updates and changes.

The program has now shifted nominations toward:

- workers that support public services and community well-being across 36 in-demand occupations in health care, education/child care, veterinary care; and
- construction workers in nine in-demand skilled trades.

At least 35% of nominations are expected to support communities outside Metro Vancouver.

As part of this update, BCPNP has closed the Entry Level and Semi-Skilled stream, announced that it won't launch new student streams, and ended technology-only draws. Instead, BCPNP will issue targeted invitations to individuals creating broader high economic impacts (including but not limited to technology).

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CHANGES TO NOVA SCOTIA NOMINEE PROGRAM AND EOI PROCESS

As part of updating its immigration streams, the Nova Scotia Nominee Program has introduced a 12-month validity period for all new Expressions of Interest (EOIs). This doesn't apply to EOIs designated for the federal Atlantic Immigration Program.

The 12-month period took effect on May 1, 2026, and is applicable to EOIs submitted on or after that date. For EOIs submitted previously:

- All EOIs submitted before May 1, 2024 are now closed. Closure isn't considered a refusal, and candidates may submit a new EOI at any time, provided they meet eligibility requirements.
- EOIs submitted between May 1, 2024 and April 30, 2026 will remain active and no action is required (unless the candidate's circumstances have changed). If not selected, these EOIs will expire on April 30, 2027.

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