

# Global Immigration alert

April 2026

## Canada

Alberta government provides additional information on referendum scheduled for 19 October 2026

### Executive summary

Alberta has scheduled a provincewide, standalone referendum for 19 October 2026 and has made all nine ballot questions publicly available. Five of the nine questions relate to immigration and access to provincially funded services and seek voter direction on whether the province should pursue policy changes affecting temporary residents and other non-permanent status holders.

The referendum is expressly advisory and non-binding. No changes to immigration programs, eligibility criteria, or access to provincially funded services will occur unless and until the Government of Alberta introduces and implements supporting legislation and operational guidance.

### Key developments

#### Referendum framework:

- Standalone provincial referendum to be held on 19 October 2026.
- Results are non-binding and do not, on their own, amend existing legislation or program eligibility.
- Any policy changes would require future legislation, regulations, and operational implementation.

Voters are being asked whether Alberta should pursue policy changes that would:

- Increase provincial control or influence over immigration policy, including prioritizing economic migration and Albertans for new employment opportunities

- Limit access to certain provincially funded programs (including health care, education, and other social services) to Canadian citizens, permanent residents, and individuals with an “Alberta-approved immigration status”
- Require individuals with a non-permanent legal immigration status to reside in Alberta for at least 12 months before qualifying for provincially funded social support programs
- Charge a reasonable fee or premium to certain non-permanent residents for their and their family’s use of public health care and education
- Require proof of Canadian citizenship to vote in Alberta provincial elections

#### Key uncertainties:

- Core terms remain undefined, including “Alberta approved immigration status”, “social support programs”, and what constitutes a “reasonable” fee or premium.
- No proposed legislation, effective dates, exemptions, grandfathering provisions, or transition rules have been released.

#### Impact on employers

There is no immediate impact on employers or employees. All current immigration programs, provincial health coverage, education access, and social services eligibility remain unchanged.

For employers, the near-term implication is monitoring rather than compliance action. If Alberta proceeds with legislation following the referendum, organizations that rely on temporary foreign workers, intra company transferees, international graduates, or other non-permanent residents may ultimately need to reassess workforce planning, assignment costs, benefits coverage, and recruitment strategies for Alberta based roles.

At this stage, some public commentary implies immediate or automatic change, which is not supported by the official referendum instruments.

#### Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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