

A photograph of two female scientists in a laboratory. They are both wearing white lab coats and blue gloves. The scientist on the left is looking through a microscope, while the scientist on the right is holding a tablet computer. The background is a bright, clean laboratory setting.

Alberta Advantage Immigration Strategy

Alberta

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Message from the Minister

The past few years have been challenging for our province, as we dealt with the devastating impacts of the worldwide pandemic, economic recession and historic crash in oil prices. During this time, the Government of Alberta has remained focused on protecting lives and livelihoods. We've introduced measures to control the spread of COVID-19, while supporting businesses and prioritizing jobs for Albertans, including newcomers already living in our province, as vaccines were developed and distributed.

To support our province's recovery, the Government of Alberta continues to prioritize actions that will grow and diversify the economy and create jobs for Albertans.

Some may question the role of immigration at this time and how it might impact employment prospects for Albertans who are already here. However, with careful calibration, and the right focus, our immigration system can support our recovery, as we welcome and benefit from new entrepreneurs and professionals, new businesses and, in turn, new jobs and opportunities for Albertans across the province. In doing so, all Albertans – those here today and those who come to our province in the future – can share in the benefits that immigration can bring.

In many ways, this is not something new. Alberta has always been the destination of choice for thousands of talented and qualified people from around the world. However, too many newcomers end up unemployed or underemployed, working below their skill level, not able to fully contribute their education, training, and experience. Our current immigration system needs to be renewed to ensure fairness for newcomers, and empower them to maximize the benefits that immigration brings to all Albertans.

For these reasons, the Government of Alberta committed to the development of a new immigration strategy to identify actions to break down unfair barriers to support the full economic inclusion of new Albertans and attract talented newcomers and job-creating entrepreneurs.

The *Alberta Advantage Immigration Strategy* supports our government's key priority of reigniting Alberta's economy and creating jobs for Albertans in all communities, including rural Alberta. One of the goals of this strategy is to help revitalize rural communities to support job and wealth creation across our province.

The strategy aims to maximize the potential and benefits of immigration for everyone. It calls for changes in our immigration system that will enable newcomers to make Alberta home and contribute their talents and expertise to growing our province. From the skilled immigrant who longs to build a better life for their family, to the recent international graduate with the next big business idea, the strategy will help our province welcome new Albertans whose drive and ambition can help create jobs and reignite our local economies.

In addition to welcoming entrepreneurial newcomers who want to build businesses in Alberta and create jobs for Albertans, it will also help Alberta companies access the skilled individuals they need to expand their operations when local workers are not available. In turn, this will create additional business opportunities for Albertans and support economic growth.

As the strategy is implemented, we will continue to engage and collaborate with established and new Albertans, industry experts, businesses, municipalities, post-secondary institutions, and organizations. By working together, we can ensure the immigration system helps Alberta remain a place that offers incredible opportunity and advantages for all.

Sincerely,

Honourable Tyler Shandro
Minister of Labour and Immigration



Message from the Associate Minister

Our world has changed immensely over the past two years, and our economy is relying on global diversity to grow and thrive. Attracting skilled newcomers, addressing racism and promoting diversity is more important now than ever.

As the Associate Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism, I am proud to lead initiatives that will help make Alberta a more diverse, welcoming and inclusive place for people to live, work and raise their families. This includes actions to ensure everyone who lives in our province feels safe and valued. We want to welcome diversity in our province because a diverse Alberta is a stronger Alberta.

While important accomplishments have been made already, including the implementation of the Fairness for Newcomers Action Plan, we know there is more work to be done to attract and retain highly skilled newcomers and remove red tape that has held newcomers back for too long.

The *Alberta Advantage Immigration Strategy* will guide our province's next steps to continue attracting talented newcomers to our communities so we can diversify our economy and create jobs. To achieve this, we will continue to look at ways to end discrimination and prejudice, while promoting equality and diversity in our province.

Thank you to the many Albertans who provided input into the development of this strategy. By continuing this work together, we can make Alberta a place where opportunity exists for everyone and where their contributions are valued.

Sincerely,

Honourable Muhammad Yaseen
Associate Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism



Executive Summary



The *Alberta Advantage Immigration Strategy* will support Alberta’s economic recovery by supporting the attraction and retention of top global talent to develop our workforce, open new business and create new jobs and opportunities for Albertans. It is based on extensive engagement with diverse group of stakeholders, employers, Albertans and newcomers. The strategy supports growing Alberta’s economy and job creation so all Albertans can benefit from immigration.

The vision of the *Alberta Advantage Immigration Strategy* is to achieve greater economic opportunity for all Albertans by attracting immigrants to Alberta in response to provincial labour market needs, and supporting newcomers in reaching their full potential in our province.

- The *Alberta Advantage Immigration Strategy* will guide the creation of new immigration streams under the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program; support the implementation of a Fairness for Newcomers Action Plan; and outlines actions under main areas of Alberta’s immigration system.

The new immigration streams include:

- **The Foreign Graduate Entrepreneur Stream** will make Alberta more attractive to newcomer entrepreneurs, and in turn, will spark economic growth and job creation.
- **The Rural Renewal Stream** will create opportunities to secure business succession and job creation in rural communities, and maintain or expand services in rural Alberta.
- **The Graduate Entrepreneur Stream** will support the Government of Alberta’s efforts to bring new talent, diversify and grow our economy.
- **The Rural Entrepreneur Stream** will result in the creation and continuation of businesses and services in small communities.

The **Fairness for Newcomers Action Plan** includes:

- Enacting the *Fair Registration Practices Act*;
- Expanding the International Qualifications Assessment Service currently provided by the Government of Alberta;
- Expanding access to low-interest loans to immigrant professionals so they can start businesses;
- Provide immigrants with career mentorship opportunities to support their full economic inclusion;
- Supporting the work of immigrant settlement agencies to offer skills upgrading to under-employed foreign professionals; and
- Building on collaboration with the federal government to offer pre-arrival orientation to foreign nationals selected for permanent residency in Alberta.

Additionally, the Government of Alberta will take a number of actions in the following areas:

- Immigrant attraction and selection;
- Foreign qualification recognition and assessment;
- Settlement and integration supports;
- Outreach, engagement and promotion;
- Collaboration and networking; and
- Federal government advocacy.



Immigration That Works for Albertans

Immigration is part of the great story of Alberta. For decades, our province has welcomed tens of thousands of people from all over the world, attracted by the chance to build better lives and pursue their dreams.

Although the federal government is ultimately responsible for providing newcomers the opportunity to settle in Canada, our province has important role in shaping immigration to support Alberta's needs.

As Canadians and Albertans, we value immigration for the way it enriches our society. In the best of cases, immigration lifts us all up as a people, and helps our entire province succeed. Now more than ever, we must pursue an immigration policy that supports all Albertans, as we emerge from both a global pandemic and worldwide economic recession.

However, under the current immigration system, Albertans do not benefit from immigration to the largest extent possible. According to the Conference Board of Canada, some 524,000 new Canadians would earn as much as \$12.7 billion more, and pay more taxes, if their learning credentials were fully recognized. A plan to break down barriers for the full economic and social inclusion of new Albertans in our communities is urgently needed.

To support Alberta's long-term economic recovery and growth, it is vital for us to continue building a diverse and skilled population with a vibrant and healthy economy. We must maximize the talents of newcomers who can support actions to put unemployed and under-employed Albertans back to work.

For this reason, we are committing to capitalize on the benefits immigration can bring to all communities in our province – including innovation, diversification and job creation. New Albertans should be able to contribute their entrepreneurial drive and unique talents to building businesses and creating new opportunities in urban and rural Alberta.

“We need to make our province the destination of choice for skilled newcomers and entrepreneurs and this new strategy gives Alberta the tools to globally compete for the best and the brightest. We want to ensure economic newcomers have the supports they need to invest and participate in the economy to the benefit of all Albertans.”

Jason Kenney, Premier



The *Alberta Advantage Immigration Strategy* is about making sure our immigration system is positioned to support the drive and talent of new Albertans and support their full participation in Alberta's economy.

Ideally, Alberta can welcome newcomers through a well-functioning system that responds to labour market needs, helps people succeed, and supports our long-term economic growth. The system should strengthen our province as a whole, including rural communities that can be revitalized by the energy, talents and skills of newcomers.

Guiding the Government of Alberta's approach in future years, the strategy recognizes the roles played by other governments and many other stakeholders in attracting and supporting the settlement of new Albertans. The Government of Alberta will actively engage with the federal government, which is responsible for immigration to Canada, to ensure that the national immigration system is responsive to Alberta's needs. This will enhance the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program to allow the province to nominate future newcomers for permanent residency based on our labour market needs.

Informed by Albertans – What We Heard

To inform the development of the strategy, the Government of Alberta undertook engagement with numerous individuals and organizations in September and October 2019. We consulted Albertans from many backgrounds across six centres in Alberta, including Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary and Lethbridge. In addition, stakeholders and individual immigrants provided input through an online survey.

Policy experts, employers from various sectors, representatives from regional and municipal governments, post-secondary educational institutions, established Albertans, newcomers, settlement and other organizations that support the immigration process in Alberta provided valuable input.

While this consultation occurred prior the pandemic, the feedback we received from Alberta's newcomer and stakeholder organizations is more relevant than ever in helping us achieve the right balance to support the needs of job-creators, newcomers, municipalities, and all Albertans moving forward. Individual Albertans, including those who have immigrated to our province with first-hand experiences, offered important insights about existing programs and processes.

These individuals and organizations provided input about challenges in the current immigration system and the kinds of actions that would enhance Alberta's success in growing the economy by attracting people from around the world. The feedback from these engagements falls into the following themes:

“Economic immigration needs to focus on existing and anticipated labour and skills shortages, and recognize or address the problem of foreign credentials. Otherwise, much of the benefit of immigration is lost.”

Session Participant





Jobs and the Economy

Make it easier for newcomers to create new jobs and growth.

Many people naturally think of immigration in terms of newcomers filling existing jobs in cases when a shortage of skilled workers exists. However, the reality is that many newcomers are interested in, and can play a key role in creating new opportunities for themselves and for all Albertans – as entrepreneurs, investors and business owners. They not only have the potential to grow the economy and

create more jobs for Albertans, but also address gaps in business succession. Presently many Alberta business owners are interested in retiring but have difficulties finding potential buyers, particularly in rural communities. Unlike other provinces, Alberta's immigration system did not feature a program dedicated to business or entrepreneur immigration. Alberta is addressing this gap with the new entrepreneur streams. These streams will drive job creation, business continuation and entrepreneurship across our province.

Achieve better alignment between needed skills and newcomers who have them.

Alberta has experienced economic challenges, and many areas of the economy continue to exhibit skills shortages. Efforts by the private sector, educational institutions, and the Government of Alberta to educate and re-train Albertans will help in some areas, but skills shortages are occurring in certain occupations and locations around the province. For example, some rural communities lack a sufficient number of key health and other service professionals. Immigration needs to be part of the solution to address these shortages, so that businesses in Alberta can expand and create further opportunities for Albertans including recent and future newcomers. If the system could do a better job of connecting skilled newcomers with skill shortages, it would help reignite local economies.

Improve levels of awareness and information around immigration.

Alberta can realize better immigration outcomes by increasing awareness about the benefits a coordinated immigration strategy can bring to the province. For example, more could be done on the pre-arrival side to showcase the assets, opportunities and communities that exist in Alberta. This would enable potential newcomers, including entrepreneurs, to better understand how they can build successful businesses and create opportunities for themselves and other Albertans. Similarly, raising awareness amongst international students graduating from Canadian and foreign universities would help them see the opportunities present in Alberta to create futures for themselves and their families. On the arrival and settlement side, more information resources would better position communities to understand how they can maximize the benefits of immigration to spur their local economies.

“Procedures have to be made easier. We need to streamline the process so that qualified newcomers get their credentials and qualifications recognized as quickly as possible.”

Session Participant

“It’s crucial to take into account the needs of immigrants who are already in Alberta. A strategy to bring more newcomers in Alberta is great, as long as they can quickly and fully participate in all the aspects of being an Albertan.”

Session Participant



System Issues

Address inefficiencies that continue to undermine the system.

Overall, processes in the immigration system are perceived to be too complex, especially those aspects of the system directly controlled by the federal government. Employers in Alberta report challenges and delays in welcoming skilled newcomers. Meanwhile, too many skilled newcomers arrive in Canada only to face labour market barriers due to delays in recognizing their foreign qualifications and credentials. As a result, immigrants to Alberta are not able to fully leverage their skills to fully contribute to the economy. This is holding back the growth of Alberta industries and our ability to address service gaps that Albertans are experiencing, especially in rural communities.

More coordination is needed amongst immigration supporting partners.

Immigrating to another country is no small undertaking. Many things need to go right – from pre-arrival through arrival to settlement and integration – in order for newcomers to successfully start their lives in Alberta and begin contributing to the Alberta advantage. Inefficiencies and coordination issues throughout that spectrum can inadvertently put up barriers that make the process challenging. These delay the ability of newcomers to help contribute to the province’s economic growth. Collaboration amongst all partners in the system is critical if the *Alberta Advantage Immigration Strategy* is to be successful. Through better coordination amongst existing services, a more streamlined, effective and efficient approach can be realized. This will translate into better value for taxpayers and better outcomes for both new and established Albertans.

These perspectives have helped the Government of Alberta develop a way forward to improve Alberta’s immigration system so that it works for all Albertans.

“I wish I knew about Alberta prior to coming to Canada. (...) After moving to Alberta, I got a permanent full-time job in my profession within two months. After 11 years, I am still working full time.”

Session Participant

“We need to remove the red tape – newcomers and employers are faced with too many barriers and long wait times. This makes it hard to build a workforce and support business growth.”

Session Participant

“The partners, resources, ideas and connections already exist. Our success will result from not re-inventing the wheel, but gathering input, resources and capacity to create a collaborative solution.”

Session Participant





The Immigration Advantage

Vision

The *Alberta Advantage Immigration Strategy* is aimed at achieving the following vision for Alberta's immigration system:

Achieving greater economic opportunity for all Albertans by attracting newcomers to Alberta in response to provincial labour market needs, and supporting newcomers in reaching their full potential in our province.

Representing a call for action, this vision requires coordination and close collaboration amongst diverse stakeholders to ensure its success.

Guiding Principles



Informed by the input of individuals and organizations the following set of principles has been established to guide efforts under the vision of the *Alberta Advantage Immigration Strategy*:

- **Supporting the Alberta Advantage.** Alberta's immigration system should support the province's economic recovery by creating a new "Alberta advantage" that attracts investment to support new jobs and income growth.
- **Reliance on and collaboration with communities.** Both rural and urban communities across Alberta play a key role in attracting and welcoming newcomers. The active support of members of these communities such as businesses, ethno-cultural groups, settlement organizations, and other stakeholders is vital to the success of the *Alberta Advantage Immigration Strategy*. The effectiveness of Alberta's immigration system depends upon the Government of Alberta empowering and collaborating with these community members.
- **Cross-government accountability.** The shared accountability for Alberta's immigration system amongst Alberta Labour and Immigration, other Alberta government departments, the federal government, and municipal governments will be leveraged to provide the support required by local communities to make the strategy a success.
- **Evidence-based decision-making.** The Government of Alberta uses evidence-based decision making to examine, understand, and adjust the inter-related elements of Alberta's immigration system – from pre-arrival to integration of newcomers. Data and other evidence are used to inform choices that are made to address gaps and identify improvements to the system.
- **Continuous improvement and efficiency.** Alberta's immigration system must limit costs to taxpayers where possible through collaboration, cost recovery and the use of technology. To this end, immigration processes should be as simple as possible, without unnecessary complexity or red tape. The system should test and embrace new ideas and lessons from the experiences of other jurisdictions and our own.

"Make a plan that works as best it can today and is set up to be changed as needed tomorrow. Regional, national, and global changes will rip apart any rigid system. Embrace change."

Session Participant

The Way Forward

“We do have a need for a program designed for entrepreneurs to start businesses in our communities. With our current economic situation, we need to encourage investment to get Albertans back to work.”

Session Participant

“As an entrepreneur, I appreciate the initiatives to welcome immigrant entrepreneurs and investors.”

Session Participant

Achieving the vision of the *Alberta Advantage Immigration Strategy* will translate into several important and positive outcomes for Albertans, employers, our communities and newcomers. Newcomer entrepreneurs will be attracted to Alberta and supported to grow the economy and create new jobs. This, in turn, will foster innovation and optimize new Albertans’ talents and expertise.

Over many years, the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program has created opportunities for thousands of newcomers, communities and employers. The vast majority of new Albertans who arrived in our province through the pathways provided by the AINP, made Alberta their permanent home, place to do business, create jobs, work and raise family.

As we further strengthen and enhance our programs to address the needs of newcomers, our communities, and to grow Alberta’s economy, the following guideposts will chart the course of actions taken by the Government of Alberta to implement the vision of the strategy and establish a better and more efficient immigration system:

- Creating more jobs and opportunities
- Fairness for newcomers
- Fostering newcomer success in Alberta communities
- Supporting immigration to rural communities
- Engaging partners
- Securing fairness for our province





Creating more jobs and opportunities

To maximize the benefits that immigration can bring for everyone, our province's system needs to ensure we enable people to realize economic success. A greater proportion of newcomers to Alberta should be able to use their valuable assets and skills towards creating new opportunities as business owners and innovators.

Many individuals choose to immigrate to another country because they have personal and entrepreneurial ambitions and wish to carve out futures for themselves and their families as business owners and operators. Graduates of foreign post-secondary institutions often wish to pursue their research and discovery activities in a different country that offers a better political, economic and social climate for leveraging their ideas into new start-ups. Similarly, international students who have graduated from Canadian institutions often wish to remain in Canada to start, assume, and build their own enterprises.

As a place that values hard work, creativity, risk-taking and private sector job creation, it's a natural fit for our province to attract and welcome these individuals. The recovery and evolution of Alberta's economy is too important for us to leave ourselves dependent on federal choices in the immigration area. We can and must pursue our own solutions to take charge of our own economic future.

The new provincial immigration system will be more responsive to the labour force needs of employers and industry, and will help to address skills shortages in Alberta. It will also foster welcoming communities that will be able to receive and retain more immigrants to help with recovery, revitalization, and growth. This will support creation of new businesses and support succession.



Fairness for newcomers

Immigrants helped build this province and newcomers continue to contribute to our economy and society. Unfortunately, too many skilled immigrants are still trapped in survival jobs because their qualifications are not recognized or because it takes too long to have their qualifications recognized. Navigating these challenges is difficult, brings frustration, and for many newcomers becomes a barrier too difficult to overcome. By reducing these barriers, the Government of Alberta will enable Albertans to benefit from the entrepreneurial drive and skills of newcomers who will help grow our economy and get Albertans back to work.

The *Alberta Advantage Immigration Strategy* sets out an action plan that will knock down these unfair barriers to the full inclusion of new Albertans. This plan will reduce the barriers newcomers face in respect of foreign qualification recognition and employment and training processes. This will support newcomers and benefit our communities.



Fostering newcomer success in Alberta communities

The benefits of immigration are maximized for everyone when newcomers to Alberta are successful in their arrival and settlement. Milestones and activities such as finding a place to live, acclimatizing to new surroundings, getting to know neighbours, and participating in the community, are all important for success. When the journey is rocky and families face challenges, the potential benefits can be quickly lost – leaving behind confusion and frustration for both newcomers and their new communities.

While community support is critical to ensuring successful arrival and settlement, another crucial component of successful immigration is connecting newcomers with employment. Supporting and creating a successful business, or securing a paying job is an essential cornerstone that makes other positive outcomes possible. Ideally, new Albertans have found employment before they arrive in the province and can immediately enter the labour market upon their arrival. Alternatively, they are able to secure employment within a short time after arriving. For that to happen, our province needs to effectively match the skills of newcomers we welcome with the skills that are needed in our economy. This maximizes benefits all around:

- For new Albertans, it means access to meaningful business opportunities or work and the pursuit of hopes and dreams.
- For many Alberta communities, it means better access to services – in both the private sector (e.g., either new employers, or employees to fill vacant jobs in demand when local workers are not available) and the public sector (e.g., the availability of health professionals).
- For many businesses, it means having the specific skilled workers they need to expand their operations and create lots of jobs for Albertans at large.

Realizing these benefits requires tackling inefficiencies that can get in the way of connecting newcomers to the labour force. Actions under the strategy will result in pre- and post-arrival services for new Albertans that are more efficient and easier to navigate.



Support immigration to rural communities

Under the approach taken to date, immigration to Alberta has largely centered around urban areas. For example, of the 22,955 immigrants that Alberta welcomed in 2020, less than one quarter settled in rural Alberta.

Alberta's renewed immigration system will enable newcomers to take greater advantage of the many and varied opportunities available in rural Alberta. In economic terms, rural Alberta punches above its weight. Though representing 18 per cent of the province's population, Alberta's rural communities contribute 26 per cent of the province's GDP.

Given these dynamics, many rural areas experience skills shortages, making it difficult for many rural-based industries to expand their operations and create more jobs for Albertans overall. Small- and medium-sized business owners in rural communities also face challenges with business succession. Welcoming more skilled newcomers to rural Alberta will help address these issues.

Enabling greater settlement in rural communities will also bring new jobs to these communities. Entrepreneurial newcomers, for instance, can leverage the opportunities that are available in rural Alberta and build businesses that raise employment in rural communities.

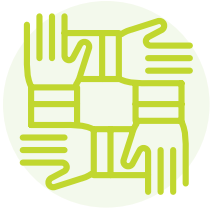
To do this, Alberta's immigration system will use data and evidence to become more responsive to the needs of the economy, by occupation and by region. This way, the system can better target and attract the skilled individuals needed to fill positions that cannot be filled by the existing labour market.

By taking this "whole Alberta" approach, the immigration system will enable us to maximize the benefits of immigration on a widespread basis across the province. Rural communities will have greater opportunities to share in successes such as revitalization and job creation, becoming home to new Albertans whose aspirations more closely align with the priorities and needs of their new communities.



"Love the rural renewal immigration program! (The Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program) should be a robust, comprehensive system that allows our province to keep individuals that make meaningful contributions to society."

Session Participant



Engaging partners

Many diverse partners play roles in relation to immigration – including employers, post-secondary institutions, municipal governments and immigrant-serving agencies. Their efforts are essential in the successful attraction, arrival and integration of newcomers to our province.

The Government of Alberta is committed to engaging its partners in the immigration system to address barriers and enhance the effectiveness of the system. An important strength of this collaboration is the ability of system partners to tap into and leverage their diverse networks. By doing this, our province can reach greater heights in promoting Alberta and its incredible assets to potential newcomers.

With its partners working together more closely, the system will be more effective in achieving objectives and maximizing the benefits that immigration brings to Alberta.

Communities and stakeholders (e.g. employers, post-secondary institutions, immigrant serving agencies, etc.) will be actively involved in immigration. Strong collaboration among stakeholders and all orders of government will help inform Albertans about the benefits of immigration and how the talents of newcomers can strengthen and lift our communities.



Securing fairness for our province

Currently, the federal government is responsible for certain key aspects of immigration, including decisions about who is allowed to immigrate, the classes of immigrants admissible to Canada, and controls around economic immigration. This reality makes it essential for the Government of Alberta to engage with the federal government in efforts to improve the operation and effectiveness of the entire system. The Government of Alberta is committed to pursuing this engagement.

A key objective of this engagement will be to make the system more responsive to the unique needs of Alberta. As Albertans have experienced, conditions in the province can change quickly, causing rapid shifts in the labour market.

Ideally, our province can obtain greater policy flexibility in immigration, so that we have the capacity to be agile and creative. This will enable us to have an immigration system that works better for everyone concerned and supports Alberta in having an economy that can continue to be an engine of growth for the entire country.

The Government of Alberta will also engage the federal government on issues around processing times. Canada has often championed itself as an open and tolerant place that is welcoming to people from around the world. The time has come to back-up that claim with real action that addresses backlogs and bottlenecks, and enables skilled and entrepreneurial immigrants to contribute their assets, talents and hopes to helping build our country.

Bringing Life to the Strategy – Our Actions

The *Alberta Advantage Immigration Strategy* is about more than enabling people from around the world to move to our province.

It's about supporting our recovery and charting a stronger and more prosperous future for Alberta, anchored in the ways that Albertans have done so for generations: offering opportunity, embracing initiative and entrepreneurship, and placing a premium on jobs and growth.

Immigration has the potential to help reignite our economy, invigorate our communities and enhance our standard of living. Communities can strengthen their capacities to provide services. Businesses can secure the skills they need to expand and create new jobs and opportunities. Our province as a whole can have greater control in shaping its destiny, even in the midst of changing headwinds and global forces.

To bring this strategy to life over the future years, the Government of Alberta will develop and implement more detailed plans of action. This will involve significant collaboration with all partners in the immigration system.



The most immediate actions will be to enhance Alberta's immigration system with new immigration streams so that the system contributes to economic opportunity in more comprehensive ways. These new streams include:

- **The Foreign Graduate Entrepreneur Stream** targets brilliant foreign graduates of top universities from around the world who want to launch a start-up enterprise in Alberta. This enables Alberta to attract innovative foreign graduates such as those in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) to develop businesses and generate investment. This will make Alberta more attractive to newcomer entrepreneurs, and in turn, will spark economic growth and job creation.
- **The Rural Renewal Stream** supports the attraction and retention of immigrants, through a community-driven approach responsive to local economic development needs in rural Alberta communities. This will contribute to the economic growth of rural communities. The stream provides a pathway for foreign nationals who are committed to living and working in smaller communities throughout Alberta. This will create opportunities to secure business succession and job creation in rural communities, and maintain or expand the required services in rural Alberta.
- **The Alberta Graduate Entrepreneur Stream** encourages international graduates of Alberta post-secondary institutions to start or buy businesses and stay in Alberta permanently. It enables Alberta to welcome international graduates and provides a pathway for them to develop and grow a business that will have a positive impact on the economy. It will support Government of Alberta's efforts to bring new talent, diversify and grow our economy.
- **The Rural Entrepreneur Stream** encourages qualified immigrant entrepreneurs to start or buy businesses and create jobs in rural Alberta. We will build on the talents and skills of the many people around the world who would love the opportunity to immigrate to Alberta, and to settle in a smaller community. This stream enables Alberta to attract and recruit entrepreneurs to develop business opportunities in rural communities, helping to invigorate these local economies and provide job opportunities for local workers. It will result in continuation of businesses and services so critical for small communities.



Matilda from INSEAD France graduated a year ago with a MBA and now wants to launch a new educational software company in Calgary. She will apply to the Foreign Graduate Entrepreneur Stream.



Rahul, 25 years old, from India is an IT professional with experience of managing ag-tech projects with \$500,000 to start and operate an Ag-Tech plant in Olds. He will apply to the Rural Entrepreneur Stream.



Mary, who is graduating from the University of Calgary with a four-year Science degree, has an innovative business idea involving artificial intelligence to start in Red Deer. She will apply to the Alberta Graduate Entrepreneur Stream.



The four new streams are a priority for the Government of Alberta. Applications to these streams will be prioritized accordingly, and the existing immigration streams modified if needed. The principle of continuous improvement and efficiency that guides the actions of the *Alberta Advantage Immigration Strategy* will be applied to ensure the new streams are agile and evolve in response to the needs of Alberta's economy and communities. The existing Alberta Advantage Immigration Program streams will also continue to be reviewed and adjusted as needed. Introduction of pilots that could be phased-in and focused on targeted sectors to address specific labour market needs (e.g., attracting veterinarians to rural communities, or focusing on professionals in the tech sector) will further support the constant improvement of the immigration system.

The Alberta Advantage Immigration Program will ensure it is nimble, adaptable, and responsive to the needs of Alberta's economy. To further support economic growth in the province, the Government of Alberta will explore options for an investor stream.

Some actions that the Government of Alberta committed to implement have already been completed. For example, the *Fair Registration Practices Act*, enacted in June 2019, ensures that regulated professions and individuals applying are governed by registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial, and procedurally fair.

To assist in successful newcomer settlement and integration, Alberta will continue to implement a number of actions under the Fairness for Newcomers Action Plan:

- expand the International Qualifications Assessment Service currently provided by the Government of Alberta;
- expand access to low-interest loans to immigrant professionals so they can start businesses;
- provide immigrants with career mentorship opportunities to support their full economic inclusion;
- support the work of immigrant settlement agencies to offer skills upgrading to under-employed foreign professionals; and
- work with the federal government to offer pre-arrival orientation to foreign nationals selected for permanent residency in Alberta.

In addition to the new immigration streams and actions included in the Fairness to Newcomers Action Plan, the strategy also includes key actions that cover the entire immigration continuum – from pre-arrival to post-arrival.

Each key action will support the Government of Alberta to achieve one or several of the strategy's goals and outcomes. Specific actions will be determined as the Government of Alberta works with immigration stakeholders to implement the new streams and the Fairness to Newcomers Action Plan. These more specific actions will fall under the following streams of activities:



Immigrant Attraction and Selection

Examples of actions in this stream of activities include:

- Creating synergies between the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program and the International Qualification Assessment Service (IQAS).
- Launching an AINP online portal to facilitate an online application process.
- Launching the Accelerated Tech Pathway to fast track permanent residence for tech professionals who want to live and work in Alberta.



Foreign Qualification Recognition and Assessment

This stream of activities will include, among other actions, the following:

- Prioritizing immigrants in Alberta for credential assessment to increase the confidence of job creators.
- Expediting credential assessments for those with job offers to help job creators fill positions quickly and shorten the recognition process for those applying for professional license.
- Promoting the commencement of licensure processes to potential newcomers before arrival.



Settlement and Integration Supports

Examples of actions that the Government of Alberta will focus on under in this theme include:

- Helping to build capacity for small/rural communities to welcome, attract and retain newcomers.
- Supporting innovative ways of delivering settlement services and developing new knowledge or strategies for newcomer integration.
- Establishing new multicultural programming to recognize the contribution and diversity that newcomers bring to Alberta and our communities.



Outreach, Engagement and Promotion

This stream of activities will focus on:

- Providing information about programs and settlement supports that are available to enable smooth transitions and help newcomers and their new communities succeed.
- Providing profiles and data about Alberta's regions, communities and demographics so that potential newcomers have a better understanding of our society.
- Creating opportunities for industrial and business investment, so that potential newcomers can easily identify, plan and pursue entrepreneurial activities that create jobs.
- Providing information about chronic gaps in the labour market that need to be filled in various occupations and various locations across the province.



Collaboration and Networking

These activities will include collaborative work on efforts such as:

- Developing communities of practice to share best practices.
- Creating new tools and resources on immigration to raise information and awareness levels in Alberta communities.
- Creating new concierge services for communities and stakeholders to identify, attract and retain new Albertans.
- Gathering, sharing and using data and information to make evidence-based decisions about the system.



Federal Government Advocacy


The Government of Alberta will focus on:

- Pursuing greater autonomy and flexibility in operating the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program.
- Advocating for federal program alignment with provincial needs.
- Expediting federal processing of provincial nominee applications.
- Working towards a minimum target of 65% of all annual admissions to be in the economic category.

The Government of Alberta will reach out to stakeholders involved in the strategy and the different roles they will play to support its objectives: creating more jobs and opportunities; fairness for newcomers; fostering newcomer success in Alberta communities; supporting immigration to rural communities; engaging partners; and securing fairness for our province. These discussions will leverage existing tools and networks within and outside government to ensure stakeholders are aware of how to participate in the strategy and are supported to do so effectively.

As implementation of the strategy continues, we will continue to communicate with our stakeholders to ensure our actions are meeting their evolving needs. Through these and other actions, Alberta will foster conditions that help all members of communities, including new Albertans, realize success.

Through the *Alberta Advantage Immigration Strategy*, Alberta will remain a place of opportunity where the benefits of immigration are maximized for all Albertans – those of today, and those who have yet to join us in continuing to chart the great story of Alberta.



“And so to all of you who are Canadians by choice and not chance, to all of you who left behind what was familiar, and in many cases left behind lives of privilege and opportunity in your home countries, for those of you who decided to take a chance on this often cold country, with its many challenges...”

Thank you for choosing Canada.
Thank you for choosing Alberta.
Thank you for contributing to our prosperity.”

Jason Kenney, Premier

