

Global Immigration alert

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Canada

Ontario publishes detailed eligibility criteria for new Workforce Priority stream

Executive summary

Ontario has published detailed eligibility requirements for the new Ontario Workforce Priority stream following the June 2026 redesign of the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP). The guidance provides additional detail regarding eligibility requirements, employer obligations, candidate ranking criteria and supporting documentation requirements under the new stream.

Key developments

Ontario's guidance confirms that:

- Employers must register with the OINP and obtain approval of the offered employment position before a nomination can be approved.
- Candidates must register an Expression of Interest (EOI), receive an invitation to apply and substantiate the qualifications and claims made in their EOI.
- Different eligibility requirements apply depending on the TEER classification of the position, including varying work experience, language and education requirements.
- Eligible self-employed physicians may continue to apply without a job offer.

The guidance also confirms language requirements ranging from CLB 4 to CLB 6 depending on the occupation, with certain recent graduates of eligible Ontario institutions benefiting from reduced requirements.

Ontario has also published the EOI scoring framework that will be used to rank candidates for invitations. Factors include occupation and TEER category, wage level, Ontario and Canadian work experience, earnings history, education, language proficiency, immigration status and work location.

The EOI system remains closed. A launch date for the new stream has yet to be communicated. Ontario has confirmed that no further invitations will be issued under the former

streams and that existing EOIs that did not result in invitations will be withdrawn as part of the transition to the new framework.

Impact on employers

While the new guidance provides greater clarity regarding eligibility requirements, employers should recognize that meeting minimum eligibility criteria may not be sufficient to receive an invitation. Factors such as wage level, work location, education, language ability and Ontario work experience may affect a candidate's competitiveness under the EOI ranking system.

Employers and employees may anticipate a significant documentary burden. Candidates invited to apply must provide evidence supporting both eligibility requirements and the scoring factors claimed in their EOI.

Organizations that previously relied on OINP employer, graduate or Express Entry-linked pathways should reassess affected employees under the new criteria.

Key steps

- Review employees who may require provincial nomination support and assess eligibility under the Workforce Priority stream.
- Evaluate how factors such as wage, location, education, language ability and work experience may affect competitiveness under the new EOI scoring framework.
- Begin gathering supporting documentation in anticipation of the reopening of the EOI system.

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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