

BC Provincial Nominee Program (BC PNP) Entrepreneur Immigration – Base Category Changes

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is B.C. introducing a minimum language requirement for BC Provincial Nominee entrepreneur immigrant applicants?

- Evidence shows that proficiency in one of Canada’s official languages has a significant impact on the economic and social integration of immigrants into Canada.
- In 2015, we implemented a minimum language requirement for most of the BC Provincial Nominee Program (BC PNP) skilled and semi-skilled worker streams.
- The same minimum language requirement is now (as of January 29, 2020) part of the BC PNP Entrepreneur Immigration - Base Category and the Entrepreneur Immigration - Regional Pilot (as of March 2019).
- We are introducing minimum language requirements to support the successful business establishment of immigrant entrepreneurs and to help their integration into B.C. communities.
- The introduction of minimum language requirements is also part of our agreement with the federal government

What is the minimum language requirement?

- The level of language we are introducing is CLB level 4 and is quite basic, ensuring the ability to communicate basic needs, follow simple conversations or read simple instructions.

Will an applicant’s dependents, such as spouse or children, also have to meet the minimum language requirement?

- No, the criteria only apply to the principal applicant.

At what stage in the process will BC Provincial Nominee Program entrepreneur immigration applicants be required to demonstrate their language proficiency?

- Applicants in the BC PNP Entrepreneur Immigration (EI) – Regional Pilot are required to submit proof of language proficiency at the time of registration.
- Applicants in the BC PNP EI – Base category are required to submit proof of language proficiency by nomination (typically 3 – 4 years after they have registered with the program).

Why is the timing to demonstrate language proficiency different for the two categories?

- The BC PNP EI - Regional Pilot is a two-year pilot for entrepreneur applicants who are looking to settle in smaller communities.
- Entrepreneurs applying to the EI – Regional Pilot are required to meet with communities to arrange exploratory visits and request referrals from the community. Having a minimum English language level in place at the time of registration is an important factor of success for applicants, employers and communities.
- Entrepreneurs applying to the BC PNP EI – Base category can propose to establish a business anywhere in B.C.
- BC PNP EI-Base category applicants are not required to conduct an exploratory visit nor are they required to have prior engagement with the community.
- For the BC PNP EI-Base category, we require the mandatory language requirement by nomination, instead of at the time of application, to provide applicants with an opportunity to improve their language ability once they have arrived in B.C. to establish their business.

What if an entrepreneur is not able to meet the minimum language requirements?

- The minimum language requirements will be posted on the WelcomeBC.ca website so that all potential applicants to the BC PNP EI – Base category are aware of the language requirements up front.
- We will also include details about the minimum language requirement throughout the application process, from registration to nomination.
- Meeting the minimum language requirement is a condition of nomination. A nomination cannot be approved if the minimum language requirement is not met.

Do other provinces have minimum language requirements for entrepreneur immigrants?

- The following provinces offer an Entrepreneur program under their PNP:
 - Alberta
 - Manitoba
 - New Brunswick
 - Newfoundland and Labrador
 - Northwest Territories
 - Nova Scotia
 - Ontario
 - Prince Edward Island
 - Saskatchewan
 - Yukon
- Alberta (Self-Employed Farmer Stream), Yukon (Business Nominee Program) and Saskatchewan (Entrepreneur Program) are the only jurisdictions without minimum language criteria for entrepreneur applicants.

Why have you eliminated the ability for entrepreneurs to propose key staff?

- Previously, BC PNP EI - Base Category entrepreneur applicants could propose key staff who had expertise essential to the successful implementation of their proposed business. Key staff typically had unique skill sets that complemented the entrepreneur's abilities.
- Between July 2015 and November 2019, key staff applications accounted for only 4% of all entrepreneur immigration applications.
- Given this low usage, we will be eliminating key staff from the BC PNP EI – Base Category. This change will allow the principal applicant to be more involved in the day-to-day operations of the business, increasing the interaction with suppliers and customers, which will help in improving language proficiency.

When will these changes take effect?

- The introduction of minimum language requirements and removal of the key staff option are effective January 29, 2020.

Will entrepreneurs who have already applied be impacted by these changes?

- These changes are not applicable to those who have already registered/applied to the BC PNP EI – Base category.