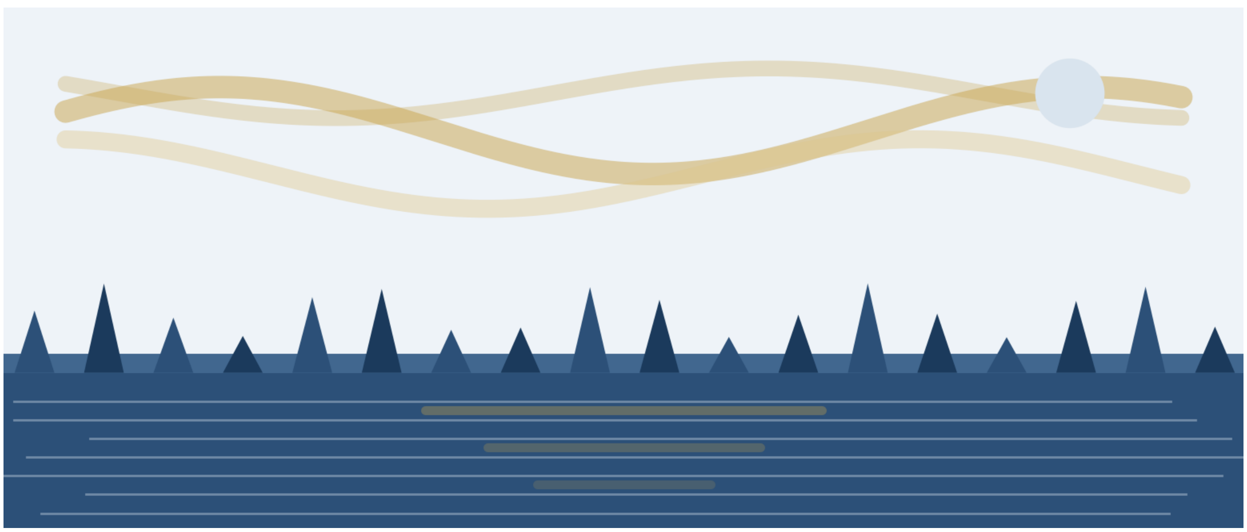
KABIR & ALAM LAWYERS
Canadian Immigration & Refugee Law

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES NOMINEE PROGRAM

Business Stream

Requirements and Process



Client Information Guide

Prepared August 2026

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This guide is for general information only and does not constitute legal advice.

Northwest Territories Nominee Program

Business Stream

Client Information Guide – Requirements and Process

Prepared by Kabir & Alam Lawyers | August 2026

1. Overview

The Business Stream of the Northwest Territories Nominee Program offers Canadian permanent residence to entrepreneurs who start or buy a business in the NWT and operate it themselves. Administered by the territory's Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, it is among the most accessible business immigration pathways in the country on two fronts: the financial thresholds are the lowest in Canada for businesses outside Yellowknife – a $250,000 net worth and a $100,000 equity investment – and applications are reviewed directly, without an EOI pool or points competition, producing some of the fastest business-stream processing in Canada.

The stream uses a two-tier structure. Businesses within Yellowknife's corporate boundaries require a $500,000 net worth and a $200,000 minimum equity investment; businesses anywhere else in the territory qualify at half those levels. Candidates must own at least one-third of the business – waived where the personal equity investment reaches $1,000,000 or more – and, as in all business streams, operate it hands-on under a Business Performance Agreement on a work permit before nomination.

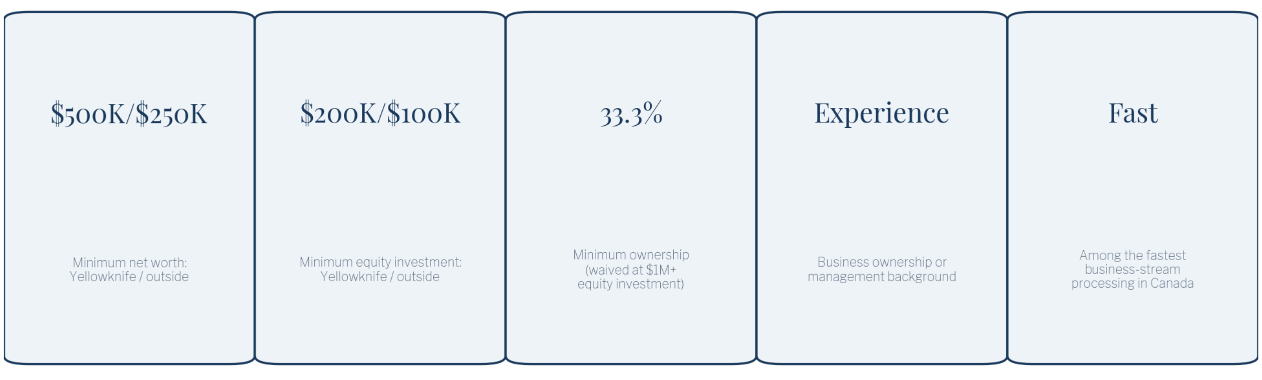

Figure 1: Core requirements at a glance.

2. Eligibility and Requirements

To qualify under the Business Stream, you must meet all of the following criteria:

Requirement	Details
Investment	A minimum equity investment of CAD $200,000 to start or buy a business within the corporate boundaries of Yellowknife, or CAD $100,000 for a business outside Yellowknife.

Requirement	Details
Net worth	A verified personal net worth of at least CAD $500,000 for a Yellowknife business, or CAD $250,000 for a business elsewhere in the territory, legally accumulated and documented.
Ownership	At least one-third (33.3%) ownership of the business – unless your personal equity investment is at least CAD $1,000,000, in which case a smaller stake is permitted.
Business experience	Sufficient business ownership or management experience, and the knowledge and capacity to establish and operate the proposed business in the NWT's market conditions.
Business plan	A researched business plan demonstrating the operation's viability in the territory and its economic benefit – the plan anchors both the assessment and the subsequent Business Performance Agreement.
Language	Sufficient ability in English or French to operate the business and complete the process; there is no fixed CLB floor, but practical fluency is assessed.
Residency and management	A genuine intention to reside in the Northwest Territories and provide active, ongoing day-to-day management of the business.

The authoritative source is the Business Stream material at immigratenwt.ca, administered by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, which reserves the right to refuse an application at any stage where it determines an applicant is ineligible. Verify current criteria and procedures before applying.

2.1 The Yellowknife / regional split

The two-tier thresholds are a deliberate regional incentive: outside Yellowknife's corporate boundaries – communities such as Hay River, Inuvik, Fort Smith, and Behchokǫ – the program's $250,000 net worth and $100,000 investment floors are the lowest of any Canadian business immigration pathway. The trade-off is market size: regional NWT communities are small, remote, and logistics-intensive, and the business plan must be built on those realities – costs of freight, seasonal access, workforce availability, and the specific gaps the community actually has.

2.2 Direct review, not a pool

There is no Expression of Interest stage, no scoring grid, and no periodic draw: complete applications are assessed directly by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, commonly with an interview. This makes the NWT one of the fastest business streams in Canada when the file is well-prepared – and equally unforgiving of weak files, since there is no pool ranking to hide behind: the plan, the finances, and the applicant's operating capacity are assessed on their own merits.

3. Ineligible Businesses

Businesses and situations outside the stream include:

- Passive investment without active day-to-day management from within the territory
- Businesses inconsistent with program integrity or that would not deliver genuine economic benefit to the NWT
- Applicants unable to document the legal accumulation of the required net worth
- Applications the Department determines ineligible at any stage of the process

4. The Application Process, Step by Step

NWT Nominee Program – Business Stream: Process Overview

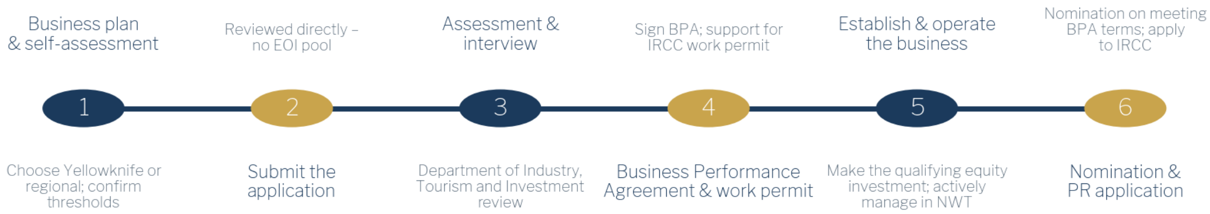

Figure 2: Process overview.

1. **Choose the location and build the plan:** Decide between Yellowknife and a regional community – the thresholds differ by half – and build the business plan on verified local conditions: market gaps, costs, logistics, and workforce.
2. **Submit the application:** File the complete application with the business plan, financial documentation, and supporting evidence. There is no EOI pool; the Department reviews files directly.
3. **Assessment and interview:** The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment assesses the application and may interview you on the plan, your experience, and your capacity to execute in the territory.
4. **Business Performance Agreement and work permit:** On approval, sign the Business Performance Agreement recording the investment, operational, and residency commitments, and receive support for a temporary work permit application to IRCC.
5. **Establish and operate the business:** Move to the NWT, complete the qualifying equity investment, and operate the business hands-on in accordance with the Agreement.
6. **Nomination and permanent residence:** Once the Agreement's terms are met, you are nominated, supporting a permanent residence application to IRCC under the Provincial Nominee Class for you and your dependent family members.

5. Fees and Costs

Item	Cost
Program application fee	Confirm the current amount at immigratenwt.ca
Net worth documentation and verification	Applicant's cost

Item	Cost
Business plan preparation, translations	Applicant's cost
IRCC fees (work permit; permanent residence)	Federal fees apply

Verify the current fee schedule and any deposit or agreement terms directly with the program before applying.

6. How This Compares to the Northern and Western Streams

For reference against the neighbouring territorial stream and BC's entry-level option:

Criteria	NWT Business Stream	Yukon Business Nominee	BC PNP Regional
Net worth	$500K Yellowknife / $250K outside	$500K (incl. $300K liquid)	$300K
Investment	$200K Yellowknife / $100K outside	$300K within 2 years	$100K
Selection	Direct review; no pool	Pool up to 6 months; 65-pt grid	Referral + registration draw
Ownership	33.3% (waived at $1M+)	33.33% minimum	New business; applicant-led
Processing character	Among Canada's fastest	Ranked and selective	Draw-dependent
Community gatekeeper	None	None	Mandatory community referral

7. Practical Considerations

- The regional tier is the headline: $250,000 net worth and $100,000 invested is the lowest financial entry point to Canadian business immigration – but it buys into genuinely remote markets. The plan must price northern realities: freight, heating, seasonal roads, and a thin labour pool.
- Yellowknife offers the territory's only sizeable market and most of its services; the doubled thresholds there still undercut most provincial programs.
- With no pool to compete in, preparation is the whole game – a complete, well-evidenced file moves quickly, while gaps trigger requests, delays, or refusal, and the Department can refuse at any stage.
- The $1M+ ownership waiver accommodates larger passive-capital-plus-operator structures – but the applicant personally must still manage the business day-to-day from within the territory.
- Businesses serving territorial staples – trades and construction, logistics, tourism, food service, and retail filling genuine community gaps – have the most natural fit; concepts imported from southern markets without northern adaptation are the common failure mode.

Important Notice

This guide is provided for general information only and does not constitute legal advice for any specific case. It summarizes the requirements of the Northwest Territories Nominee Program Business Stream as published at immigratenwt.ca as of August 2026. Program criteria, fees, and procedures change from time to time and should be verified against the current program materials before any step is taken. Please contact our office to discuss how these requirements apply to your circumstances.

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