

CILA Conference 2025: From Policy to Port of Entry – Navigating Canada’s Immigration System*

October 28 | Toronto | [Purchase Tickets](#)

** Agenda: Topics and speakers are subject to change as the program is developed.*

Agenda Co-Chairs: Stephen Green, Chantal Desloges, and Nimanthika Kaneira

8:45 – 9:00am: Opening remarks/reminders/acknowledgement

9:00 – 10:00am: Opening Plenary – Making Sense of the Numbers (Gala Room)

Record Number of Applications – Lower Immigration Targets – IRCC and CBSA Decision Making with Analytic Tools – For better or worse technology is the new reality and norm.

Numbers are driving every business line of immigration. What processes and technologies are used by IRCC to address increased volumes of applications. This panel will explore how technology is impacting decision making. What checks and balances exist to ensure no bias and fair decision making. Update on the use of Chinook and Federal Court decisions and legal principles related to data analytics and AI tools.

Speakers: Zeynab Ziaie Moayyed, CILA Member (Moderator)
Will Tao, CILA Member
Andrew Kinoshita, Legal Services DOJ
Veron von Finkenstein, IRCC
Juan Daniel Villamil, Guest speaker

10:00 – 10:10am: Health break

10:10 – 11:00am: Stream A - Economic Immigration (Gala Room)

Express Entry: CRS Points Realigned to meet new Levels Plan and LMIA Fraud – Crunching the Numbers for Success.



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This panel will review whether IRCC has succeeded with their realignment and targeted draws or missed the mark. Find out who the winners are, and who are drowning in the pool. Consideration of suggestions for future changes will be discussed. Shared tips for selecting an appropriate NOC and identifying possible consequences of selections. Learn best practices for monitoring profiles, advising whether clients should accept promotions, what documents to file to confirm CRS points and work experience, and much more.

Speakers: Mark Holthe, CILA Member
Jonathan Joshi-Koop, IRCC

10:10 – 11:00am: Stream B - Advocacy (Kitchener/Oakville Room)

Strategies for Combatting Growing Processing Times (ATIPs, Mandamus and more)

Utilizing access to information and privacy (ATIP) requests to understand why applications are held up. Learn best practices for making these requests. Practical suggestions for creating a record of communication with IRCC to support a mandamus application. This panel will consider when it is appropriate to bring an application for mandamus and when it is not. Our panelists will discuss how much time must lapse before commencing an application, and how clean an applicant's hands must be? Learn what to expect in terms of early resolution. Understand best practices for communicating with DOJ lawyers, and how to effect early settlement. Consider whether to consent to withdraw the application if the file starts moving again, and strategies for requesting specific terms to the agreement to withdraw the application. What terms can the Federal Court impose to ensure processing of the application resumes in a timely way. Recent jurisprudence will also be discussed.

Speakers: Stephen Green, Co-Chair - Moderator
Christopher Crighton, Department of Justice - Moderator
Lev Abramovich, CILA Member
Andrew Koltun, CILA Member ATIP Specialist
Justice Grant, Federal Court

11:00 – 12:00pm: Stream A - Economic Immigration (Gala Room)



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What's new at Canadian Borders? Are number of travelers up or down?

This panel will discuss the expansion of flagpoling restrictions at Pearson Airport and Niagara Region and implications on volume of work for CBSA. Find out more about the Data Integrity Unit at Pearson Airport and when and how to reach out to this unit, and what responses to expect. Learn when it is appropriate to call or email the land border? The leading trends at air and land ports will be highlighted and best practices recommended. Are Nexus card holders on the rise? What tips do CBSA have for applying for Nexus, maintaining and renewing Nexus cardholder status.

Speakers: Stephen Green -Moderator
Elena Kozlovsky, CBSA Pearson
Sonya Anklesaria, CBSA Southern Ontario
Jordan Rupay, CBSA Southern Ontario
Lisa Russell, CBSA Southern Ontario

11:00 – 12:00pm: Stream B – Advocacy (Kitchener/Oakville Room)

Expanding Your Litigation Repertoire

Whether you have a barristers' or solicitors' practice emerging immigration issues are presenting more opportunities for litigation. This panel will provide details and insight into new streams of litigation. For example, have you ever considered challenging a negative PNP decision in the Ontario Court? Negative decisions caused by mistakes or negligence of pervious representatives may necessitate seeking judicial review of the decision, and potentially present a civil claim for damages. Hear from the panel how to raise claims of ineffective counsel in judicial proceedings and what other avenues applicants have for seeking recourse against their previous representative. Consider how to address enforcement related to revocation of your client's Nexus Card and possible appeal of that decision. Discover when a class action be an appropriate forum for litigating issues and discover practical suggestions for commencing and strategically preparing to launch a class action.

Speakers: Chantal Desloges, Co-Chair Moderator
Cesar Agudelo, CILA Member
Sujit Choudhry, Principal Circle Barristers



Peter Salerno, CILA Member
David West, Millar Kreklewetz LLP

Noon – 1:00pm: Lunch Break – Networking - “Shared Table – Shared Wisdom” (Gala Room)

The first in-person conference hosted by CILA aims to foster community and professional connections among its members. During the lunch session, we propose implementing a networking activity called “Shared Table, Shared Wisdom” to encourage meaningful engagement. Attendees will be assigned to tables with a designated senior member or expert to lead discussions, ensuring a diverse mix of participants that breaks up previously arranged groups and promotes new connections. The activity focuses on broad, human-centred topics related to the challenges and rewards of practicing immigration law in Canada, allowing participants to share personal and professional insights in a relaxed and relatable context. This approach aims to create authentic networking opportunities, moving away from overly technical discussions that will truly build stronger interpersonal bonds within our community.

1:05 – 1:15pm: - Keynote Sponsor - Prometric LLC – Michael Holaday – CELPIP (Gala Room)

1:15 – 2:15pm: Ethics (Gala Room)

Dealing with Mistakes and Mitigating the Risks

Immigration law has become extremely complex and technical. Use of technology with respect to filing applications and notices can make it challenging to catch mistakes, and or to have clients review applications in advance of filing and approve information. No longer being able to apply at will, and instead having to rely on expressions of interests and invitations to apply typically means that the mistake cannot easily be fixed. Further complicating matters is the pace at which policies are changed making it not only hard to keep abreast of all announcements, let alone remember them, but it can also mean that a mistake can have significant consequences if the client no longer qualifies for a program. Communications with IRCC and other government offices is often difficult to manage to ensure all notices are received and read and actioned. Failure to see or act on a notification leading to missing a critical deadline, and how to respond when this happens. Ensuring



that documents are submitted properly and via the correct forum and keeping records of what was submitted is tedious work that can be prone to human error.

During this session you will hear from CILA members that have made mistakes and how they dealt with the mistake and what they learned along the way to mitigate future similar errors. Practical tips for managing the high volume of communications with IRRC and rapidly changing policies will be shared. The importance of reporting the mistake to LawPro will be discussed, along with what to expect from LawPro in terms of a response.

Speakers: Felix Hau, CILA Member
Andrea Baldwin, CILA Member
Stephane Duval, CILA Member
Katie James, LawPRO

2:15 – 2:45pm: Practice Management (Gala Room)

Web Marketing & Online Visibility for Immigration Lawyers

In today's digital-first legal landscape, online visibility is essential. This session explores two key pillars of digital presence: search and social media. Learn how evolving search habits, shaped by Generative AI, are transforming SEO and SEM, and discover how a simple LinkedIn strategy can activate your personal brand and drive client engagement. Panelists Rich Cosh and Jenny Rokhline bring hands-on experience and proven success to help you grow your practice with confidence.

Speakers: Nicolas Simard-Lafontaine, Moderator, CILA Member
Rich Cosh, Grapevine Media
Jenny Rokhline, CILA Member

2:45 – 3:00pm: Health Break

3:00 – 4:00pm: Stream A – Economic Immigration (Gala Room)

Maintaining and Restoring Status in Canada – Piggybacking with multiple applications?



With limited pathways to permanent residence and “no flagpoling” rules in place, time is running out for many temporary residents in Canada, particularly international graduates. This panel will discuss: Whether it is possible to submit multiple applications to extend and vary temporary resident status in Canada in light of the new policy directives concerning maintained status. Whether a C-10 application that tests the boundaries of the criteria is viable or could be viewed as a misrepresentation or unethical to file. What to do when a client is about to lose status, has lost status, and when to recommend that they apply to restore status or apply outside of Canada. The distinction between an application that is refused for incompleteness under sections 10 and 12 of the Regulations versus an application that is refused for not meeting the temporary resident criteria. Temporary resident permits will be discussed, along with how maintained status rules apply for TRPs.

Speakers: Stephen Green - Moderator
Rafael Alfonso Fabregas, CILA Member
Ronalee Carey, CILA Member

3:00 – 4:00pm: Stream B – Advocacy (Kitchener/Oakville Room)

Spike in the Number of Temporary Resident Refusals – How to Avoid, and When to JR Refusals

Applications for temporary resident visas, study permits, and work permits are on the rise, and so are refusals of these cases. Are the new levels for temporary residents driving the increased number of refusals? Find out what the panelists are reporting as recent trends with respect to reasons for the refusals. This panel will review best practices for preparing applications, to avoid refusals, and strategies when a case is refused, including applying for an ATIP, asking for administrative review, seeking judicial review or filing again. Expect to learn procedural and practical tips to navigate a judicial review application within the Federal Court system, including, the Court Registrar, dealing with early resolution requests to Department of Justice lawyers and how to prepare for reconsideration of the application by a different officer. Recent jurisprudence will be considered.

Speakers: Justice Norris, Federal Court (moderator)
Jacqueline Bonisteel, CILA Member
Joseph Granton, Department of Justice



Christopher Garito, Senior Registry Officer

4:00 – 4:55 pm: Stream A – Economic Immigration (Gala Room)

Provincial Programs - Making do with Less - What's left for the provinces?

Provinces were given 50% less allocation in 2025. Learn how some of the provinces responded to this significant drop and what trends have emerged. Consideration of strategies to have clients in multiple streams will be discussed. How important is selecting the right NOC and tier? Hear predictions for 2026.

Speakers: Janet- Thompson-Price, CILA Member (Moderator)
The Honorable David Piccini, Ontario Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development,
Matthew Rushton, Director of Operations, Compliance, and Integrity with Post Secondary Education and Training, New Brunswick

4:00 – 4:55pm: Stream B – Advocacy (Kitchener/Oakville Room)

Record Number of Federal Court Cases - Interactive Round Table with all Stakeholders

This session will include an update from the Federal Court on their Strategic Plan in the face of the record number of cases filed with the Federal Court, followed by a unique open forum for stakeholders to explore and discuss current and future processes for managing the record number of Federal Court Filings. Consideration of early settlement processes, the increased number of decisions from the Bench, take aways from the Study Permit Pilot, as well as other solutions to deal with court volumes will all be open for discussion.

Speakers: Chief Justice Crampton, Federal Court
Chantal Desloges, CILA
Deborah Drukarsh, DOJ
Alice Prodan-Gil, Senior Registry Officer



5:00 – 5:20pm: Recognizing Past Presidents and Presentation of President's Award (Gala Room)

5:20 – 7:00pm: Reception



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