

A simple guide to Alberta's referendum

On October 19, 2026, Albertans will vote on 10 separate questions. They concern immigration, access to public services, voting requirements and how Alberta is governed. This is not an election to choose a government. It is a chance to respond to specific proposals.

This guide uses summaries, not the exact ballot wording. For Questions 1–9, 'Yes' supports the proposed change and 'No' opposes it. You may choose differently on each question. The six questions covered in this guide are non-binding: their results give the government direction but do not themselves change the law. This guide addresses the immigration and voting-related questions, and Question 10 on Alberta's place in Canada; the resources at the end provide more information on these questions and the remaining constitutional questions to help you make an informed choice when voting.

Immigration, services and voting: Questions 1–5

Question and current situation	If you vote Yes	If you vote No
1. Control over immigration The federal government sets national immigration targets and processes permanent residence applications. Alberta currently nominates some economic immigrants for permanent residence through its provincial nominee program.	Seeking more Alberta control to reduce immigration, favour economic migration and give Albertans first priority for new jobs. The question does not specify immigration targets or hiring rules. Federal cooperation would still be needed.	Opposes this package of changes. Existing federal–provincial arrangements would continue unless changed separately.
2. Eligibility for provincial services Some people with temporary status qualify for public health care or schooling under existing rules. Not all temporary residents are currently eligible for every social service.	Limit provincial health care, education and social services to citizens, permanent residents and people with "Alberta-approved immigration status." Residents outside the approved groups could lose access to covered services. The question does not define who would receive 'Alberta-approved immigration status.'	Opposes this added provincial-status requirement. People would continue to qualify under existing rules unless those rules change separately.
3. Waiting for social supports This concerns social supports such as childcare subsidies, not standard health care or schooling. Support programs have different eligibility rules. Some work-permit holders and refugee claimants can qualify for childcare subsidies if they meet the other program rules. Not all temporary residents qualify for income and disability supports or child benefits.	Adding a 12-month Alberta residence requirement for people with non-permanent legal status. If adopted, people who otherwise qualify could go without covered assistance during their first year. Citizens and permanent residents would continue to qualify as they do now.	Opposes this new waiting period. Existing eligibility rules would continue unless changed separately.

Question and current situation	If you vote Yes	If you vote No
4. Charges for health care and education Some temporary residents qualify for public health coverage and schooling. Existing charges depend on the service and status. Citizens and permanent residents would continue to qualify as they do now	Charging people with non-permanent status additional fees or premiums for their family's use of health care and education. This could increase costs for affected and vulnerable families.	Opposes these additional status-based charges. Existing coverage and fee rules would continue unless changed separately.
5. Citizenship proof when voting Only Canadian citizens can vote. Current voter ID rules establish identity and address.	Adding documentary proof of citizenship. Citizens without accepted proof could need to obtain or replace documents before voting.	Opposes the added proof requirement. Citizenship would still be necessary to vote.

Alberta's future in Canada: Question 10

This question asks whether Alberta should stay in Canada, or whether the government should begin the legal process toward a future binding referendum on separation. It does not ask voters to approve separation now.

Option 1 — Remain in Canada: Support Alberta continuing as a Canadian province rather than starting a legal process toward a separation referendum.

Option 2 — Begin the process: Support starting the legal process toward a future binding vote on separation. This would not separate Alberta or settle questions about citizenship, treaties, pensions, borders or services.

Prepare to cast your vote

Check eligibility. You must be a Canadian citizen, at least 18 on voting day and ordinarily resident in Alberta.

Choose when and where. Advance voting: October 13–17, at a location in your electoral division. October 19: 9 a.m.–8 p.m., at your assigned voting place.

Check your ID. Bring government photo ID with your name and current address, or two accepted documents with your name, one showing your current address. A passport alone is not sufficient. Other approved options are available in some circumstances. Check Elections Alberta if you cannot provide these documents. Question 5 does not change the ID requirements for this referendum.

If voting by mail. Applications have closed. If you already requested a ballot, Elections Alberta must receive your completed package by 5 p.m. on October 16. Canada Post strongly recommends electors mail their completed special ballot packages back to Elections Alberta by October 9, 2026, to ensure they are received by the October 16 deadline.

You can register at your voting location if needed. You receive one ballot per question; mark Yes or No for Questions 1–9 and one option for Question 10.

Check the details before voting

Ask: What exactly would change? Who would be affected? What details are still missing? Does the proposal require a new law or agreement with other governments?

1. Elections Alberta: official wording — elections.ab.ca/elections/referendum
2. Government's reasons for its proposals — albertareferendum2026.ca
3. The Nonprofit Chamber: question-by-question analysis — thenonprofitchamber.org
4. AAISA: newcomer resources and client handouts — aaisa.ca
5. Dignity Forum: community explainer and source links — abreferendum.dignityforum.org
6. Elections Alberta: eligibility, ID and voting locations — elections.ab.ca/current-election-information
7. CBC's multilingual "how to" for voting: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/alberta-referendum-need-to-know-9.7345261>