

Canada Expands Citizenship-by-Descent Rights with Bill C-3 — 'Lost Canadians' Reinstated and New Framework for Future

Canada has expanded citizenship-by-descent, restoring status to thousands and modernizing how citizenship passes to future generations.

CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA, February 3, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As of December 15, 2025, significant amendments to Canada's Citizenship Act came into force under Bill C-3 (An Act to Amend the Citizenship Act), eliminating the restrictive first-generation limit and expanding the ability to transfer [Canadian citizenship](#) to children born or adopted abroad. This legislative reform restores citizenship rights to thousands of individuals previously excluded and establishes a new framework for future generations.

Key Changes Effective December 15, 2025:

End of First-Generation Limit (FGL):

The amendment abolished the first-generation limit on citizenship by descent that had prevented Canadian citizens born abroad from passing citizenship to their own children also born abroad. Under the new rules, individuals born outside Canada before December 15, 2025 to a Canadian parent—regardless of the parent's birthplace—are now recognized as Canadian citizens by descent and can apply for a citizenship certificate (proof of citizenship).

"Lost Canadians" Reinstated:

People who were previously excluded from citizenship solely due to the first-generation limit—sometimes referred to as Lost Canadians—now qualify as Canadian citizens and can apply for a citizenship certificate through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

Substantial Connection Test (Future Generations):

For children born or adopted abroad on or after December 15, 2025, Canadian citizenship by



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descent is available only if the Canadian parent born or adopted abroad demonstrates a substantial connection to Canada. This typically means a cumulative physical presence of at least 1,095 days (three years) in Canada before the child's birth or adoption.

Grandparent Rule Expanded:

Under the new law, individuals with at least one Canadian grandparent may now be eligible for citizenship by descent in cases where the Canadian parent was born abroad before December 15, 2025.

Application Process and Important Notes

- Apply for Proof of Citizenship: Eligible individuals can apply for a certificate of Canadian citizenship through IRCC under the new permanent framework.
- Interim Measures: Applications submitted under interim measures introduced in response to a 2023 Ontario Superior Court ruling will be processed using the new Bill C-3 rules; applicants do not need to refile.
- Existing Citizens: These changes do not affect individuals who were already Canadian citizens before December 15, 2025; their citizenship remains unchanged.
- Renunciation Option: A simplified process is now available for those who become citizens under these new rules but choose not to retain Canadian citizenship.

About the Legislative Change

Bill C-3 received Royal Assent on November 20, 2025, and came into effect on December 15, 2025, fulfilling requirements set by a 2023 Ontario Superior Court decision that found the first-generation limit unconstitutional. The reform reflects Canada's effort to modernize citizenship law in a way that acknowledges the realities of global families and mobility.

About Ackah Business Immigration Law

Ackah Business Immigration Law is a boutique Canadian immigration law firm based in Calgary, Alberta, with satellite offices in Vancouver and Toronto, serving businesses, families, and individuals to navigate the complexities of Canadian and cross-border U.S. immigration. The Ackah Business Immigration Law team assists businesses and individuals in crossing borders seamlessly into Canada and the United States. Led by CEO and Managing Lawyer Evelyn Ackah, the firm specializes in all areas of immigration law, with a focus on business immigration. With a mission to provide compassionate, client-focused legal services, Ackah Business Immigration Law is dedicated to opening doors and creating opportunities for people to thrive across borders.

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