

Establishing a Domestic Verified Travellers Program



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Senator Paula Simons tabled a [motion](#) on September 24, 2025 calling for the Government to investigate the creation of a sovereign, domestic Verified Travellers Program for Canadians.¹ The proposed program would allow pre-screened, low-risk Canadian air passengers to use express security lanes at Canadian airports and would be fully administered by Canada. This analysis assumes that the program will begin on April 1, 2026.

The PBO estimates a gross cost of \$47 million over 2026-27 to 2030-31. Assuming a \$50 fee per application, the net cost is estimated to be \$7 million over this period.

5-Year Cost

\$ millions

Fiscal year	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031	Total
Gross cost	8	8	9	10	11	47
Cost recovery	7	7	8	9	9	40
Net cost	1	1	1	2	2	7

Notes

- Estimates are presented on an accrual basis as would appear in the budget and public accounts.
- A positive number implies a deterioration in the budgetary balance (lower revenues or higher spending). A negative number implies an improvement in the budgetary balance (higher revenues or lower spending).
- Totals may not add due to rounding.

Estimation and Projection Method

Historical data on membership, application, and cost for the NEXUS program were obtained from Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) via Information Request IR0865. In addition, Statistics Canada's National Travel Survey (NTS) 2023 Public Use Microdata File (PUMF) was used to compare the travel patterns of domestic, transborder, and

international travellers and estimate the demand for the proposed program relative to NEXUS.

To estimate the cost of the proposed program, CBSA data were used to determine the per-application salary cost for the NEXUS program. NEXUS membership was projected to 2030-31 based on historical trends. Demand for the proposed program was estimated by multiplying NEXUS membership with a proxy ratio calculated from the NTS 2023 PUMF. It was assumed that it would take five years for the new program's membership to catch up to demand. The salary cost of the program was calculated by multiplying the number of program applications with the per-application salary cost, accounting for wage growth over the projection period. Non-salary cost was assumed to be 10 per cent of salary cost in the first year and 3 per cent in subsequent years (to reflect higher initial setup costs). This analysis assumes a cost recovery of \$50 per application to set a reasonable baseline for considering program take-up behaviour.

Sources of Uncertainty

There is significant uncertainty in the take-up rate for the proposed program and membership growth over time. There is also uncertainty in per-application processing costs, such as potential economies of scale as membership expands over time. In addition, the cost recovery fee can have a large impact on the program's final net cost, both through its direct fiscal impact and through its behavioural impact on program take-up.

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Data Sources

NEXUS Program Cost (Salary and Non-Salary Costs) and Membership Statistics (Total Membership, Applications, Expirations, Renewals)

Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) response to PBO IR 0865

Travel Pattern of Canadian Travellers (Domestic, Transborder, and International Travel)

Calculations using Statistics Canada's National Travel Survey (NTS) 2023 PUMF

Wage Growth

PBO September 2025 Economic and Fiscal Outlook

¹ Air passengers (except for military, police, and flight crew members) wanting to use express security lanes must currently obtain a NEXUS card, which is jointly administered by Canada and the United States.