

Japan's 2026 Immigration Fee Revisions: Key Concerns & Realities

An analysis of the proposed fee hikes, focusing on international benchmarking discrepancies, stagnant domestic wages, Yen depreciation, and the European Union alternatives.

Source Documents	Target Audience	Proposed Date	Public Comment Deadline
7 official ISA documents, July 3 2026	Residents, employers, legal practitioners	October 1, 2026	August 2, 2026 (必着)

Overview of the Proposed Hikes

On July 3, 2026, the Immigration Services Agency of Japan (ISA) published draft legal amendments that will drastically revise the fee structure for foreign residents, effective **October 1, 2026**. The most significant hikes include a **20-fold increase** for Permanent Residence (from ¥10,000 to ¥200,000) and up to a **12.5-fold increase** for long-term stay extensions (rising from a flat ¥6,000 to up to ¥75,000).

The Stated Rationale vs. Public Response

The government argues that these fees reflect a "beneficiary-contribution" model (応益の要素), shifting the agency's operational costs onto foreign residents based on the length of stay. However, the public backlash is intense, focusing on the lack of correlation between absolute fee heights, stagnant Japanese wages, and the severe depreciation of the Yen.

Concern 1: Unrealistic Benchmarking (US/UK vs. Japan)

To justify charging ¥200,000 for Permanent Residence and ¥75,000 for standard stay extensions, the ISA points to fees in the United States (approx. ¥410,000 for employment-based green cards) and the United Kingdom (approx. ¥629,000 for Indefinite Leave to Remain). This comparison fails to account for three critical economic realities:

- **High US/UK Inflation & Wages:** The United States and United Kingdom have experienced severe inflation, but their wage growth and absolute wage levels are significantly higher than Japan's. Japan has suffered from stagnant wages for three decades, meaning a ¥200,000 fee represents a much larger percentage of an average worker's income.
- **Severe Depreciation of the Yen:** The Yen has depreciated drastically against the Dollar and Pound. Benchmarking fees in Japan against US/UK absolute rates is economically irrational for residents who earn their livelihoods in Yen and pay local living expenses.
- **No Bundled Services:** High US/UK fees typically cover extensive bundled services, including biometric processing, English-language testing administration, and fast-track options. Japan's proposed fees are simple administrative application charges with no added service value.

Concern 2: The EU Alternative — Humane & Proportional Fees

The government's analysis completely ignores European Union models, which are far more proportional and humane. In most EU countries, immigration fees are strictly tied to the basic administrative cost of processing the document, rather than shifting general agency budgets onto foreign residents.

- **Low Administrative Cost focus:** EU permit fees typically range between €16 and €80 (approx. ¥2,800 to ¥14,000). The EU principles maintain that high fees should not act as a barrier to integration or legal stay.
- **Refugee Protection:** Asylum seekers and needy refugees face zero fees for status changes and stay permits in the EU, whereas Japan's proposed reduction only applies after a lengthy, difficult recognition process and still demands a ¥10,000 to ¥20,000 cap.

Concern 3: Double Charging & Regressive Structure

- **No Credit for Prior Fees:** A resident who has lived in Japan for a decade and renewed multiple 1-year or 5-year permits has already paid tens of thousands of yen in fees. The ¥200,000 Permanent Residence fee completely ignores these prior contributions, forcing residents to pay a massive lump sum upfront.
- **No Graduated Relief:** Japan has proposed no payment plans, installment mechanisms, or graduated middle-ground fee reductions. The fee relief is binary, meaning middle-class and lower-income families who fall just above public assistance lines face the full burden with zero support.

International Fee & Economic Comparison

Country/Region	Permit Type	Fee (Yen Equivalent)	Economic & Policy Context
☐☐ Japan (Proposed)	Permanent Residence	¥200,000	Out of touch with stagnant domestic wages and Yen depreciation.
☐☐ Japan (Proposed)	5-Year Extension	¥75,000	12.5x increase from ¥6,000; simple administrative charge.
☐☐ United States	Green Card	≈ ¥410,000	High-wage, high-inflation country; includes biometric processing.

☐ ☐ United Kingdom	Indefinite Leave (ILR)	≈ ¥629,000	High-wage country; includes healthcare surcharge and testing.
☐ ☐ European Union	Long-Term Residence	≈ ¥2,800 - ¥14,000	Humane cost-of-processing recovery; typically €16 to €80.

How to Submit Public Comments

Foreign residents, employers, and legal practitioners are encouraged to submit public comments by **August 2, 2026**. Comments must be written in Japanese and submitted online via the e-Gov portal or by email to nyukan73@moj.go.jp. (Note: When submitting via e-Gov, you must click and open all draft PDF links on the page to make the submission checkbox clickable.) The subject line for emails must read: 「パブリックコメント (手数料に関する政令案等について) 」.

This brief is an independent analytical summary based on the draft orders published by the Immigration Services Agency of Japan on July 3, 2026.