



Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada

Senior Assistant Deputy Minister Operations

Sous-ministres adjoints principaux Opérations

Ottawa K1A 1L1

s.21(1)(a)

s.21(1)(b)

F-1213147

PROTECTED B

**MEMORANDUM TO THE DEPUTY MINISTER AND THE ASSOCIATE DEPUTY MINISTER**

**MANAGING FEDERAL HIGH SKILLED INVENTORY**

**FOR INFORMATION**

**SUMMARY**

- 
- Travel restrictions that were in-place throughout most of 2020 and 2021 have led to the accumulation of a large volume of FHS applications in the processing inventory. This combined with limited levels space under FHS in 2022 (55,900) will continue to drive processing times up in excess of the six month service standard.
- Recent increases in Omicron cases, and regional restrictions could further impact client behaviour and the Department's ability to process cases both in Canada and overseas. Operations is monitoring closely the impact of Omicron on the Department's ability to deliver the 2022 Levels plan.

**BACKGROUND:**

- The Department has maintained a pause on Federal Skilled Worker (FSW) invitations since December of 2020, due to travel restrictions inhibiting the processing and landing of new overseas economic applications. In the spring of 2021, the Department created the Temporary Resident to Permanent Resident Pathway (TR2PR) and invited large numbers of Canadian Experience Class (CEC) candidates, in an effort to support 2021 admissions by increasing the number of Canadian residents who could apply for permanent residence.
- This led to significant inventory growth, which will need to be addressed in upcoming years. The inventory buildup has led clients, who previously applied through Express Entry streams, to face processing times in excess of the six month service standard.

- CEC invitations issued from January 1, 2021 to September 20, 2021, resulted in admissions within 2021. Of the approximately 120,000 CEC applications received in 2021, 85% have been processed. Notably out of over 405,000 total admissions in 2022, 32% corresponded to CEC clients.
- However, with the border effectively closed to most economic class clients residing overseas since March 2020 until June 2021, the FSW inventory aged significantly and remains relatively high (almost 54,000) and this is in addition to the younger CEC inventory (almost 21,000). Considering the limited levels space under FHS in 2022 (55,900) and in order to achieve the 6 month service standard for new applicants, the existing FHS inventory (FSW and CEC combined equates to 75,000) would need to be reduced by more than half before inviting any new clients to apply.

### **CURRENT STATUS:**

- Under the 2022-2024 Multi-year Levels Plan (MYLP), FHS will face a significant reduction to accommodate other ministerial and departmental priorities. Under the current preferred option, the FHS admission target would be significantly reduced from 108,500 to 55,900. This reduction in admissions space was required to accommodate other departmental priorities (i.e. accommodating TR2PR legacy inventory from 2021).
- FHS rounds which previously targeted CEC clients have been paused since September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021. As of December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021 there are approximately 75,000 FHS persons on inventory, which is around 20,000 higher than the 55,900 admissions level. No new FHS intake is required for at least the first half of 2022. Small rounds in late 2022 would be required to meet 2023 levels.
- FSW and FST processing times are at 22.4 months (about four times the service standard), and are expected grow as older inventory is processed. The FSW processing time is expected to rise to 36 months throughout 2022. For CEC, the processing time is 7.2 months.
- Given that existing inventory is sufficient to meet FHS levels space under all scenarios being considered for 2022, any FHS invitations issued between now and at least June 2022 will be processed outside of the six month service standard.
- Inquiries from pool candidates in Canada and overseas are increasing. As such, the Department needs to work on a Communications strategy to manage expectations from clients in the Express Entry (EE) pool not yet invited to apply. Several EE pool candidates already residing in Canada are flagging that their work permit is expiring soon. Without these clients being invited to apply under EE, they are running out of options for a work permit extension and will soon need to leave Canada as a result.
- However, many of the clients with expiring work permits would not be invited if rounds were to return in February. Given the current composition of the pool, the minimum Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) score necessary to receive an invitation to apply would likely rise above 500 and remain high, regardless of whether invitations are further paused, or resume at a modest pace in the very near term. Candidates with these scores have very high human capital, but also tend to be very homogenous (high language proficiency, education levels, significant work experience, and potential arranged employment).

s.21(1)(a)

s.21(1)(b)

- 3 -

PROTECTED B

### COMMUNICATIONS IMPLICATIONS:

- During the pandemic, the Department temporarily paused the FSW and FST intake, instead focusing on CEC and PNP invitations of the in-Canada population as a way of trying to meet the 2021 admissions targets. In this case, all FHS intake (FSW, CEC and FST) paused would be maintained while continuing with PNP invitations.
- 
- 
- A strong communication strategy will also be required to address clients with expiring work permits who are not able to apply to PR and are awaiting an EE draw.

### NEXT STEPS:

- We will return to you in March 2022 with a plan for future FHS intake to determine what timeline and volume will align with 2022 MYLP and processing time objectives.
- The Department will continue inviting all PNP candidates in the Express Entry pool on a bi-weekly basis.
- International and Intergovernmental Relations will inform PTs of the Department's invitation to apply strategy going forward.

Marian Campbell Jarvis  
Senior Assistant Deputy Minister,  
Strategic & Program Policy

Daniel Mills  
Senior Assistant Deputy Minister  
Operations

### Annex: Considerations

## Annex: Considerations

- As per Deputy Minister's direction, IRCC will extend the pause on FHS intake until March 31, 2022, while continuing Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) rounds and reassess invitation strategy once the 2022-2024 MYLP is tabled in Parliament.
- A continued pause on FHS will allow the Department to address inventory backlogs; however, the full length of the pause will need to be determined in alignment with evolving departmental objectives and priorities. The option will allow the Department to re-evaluate invitation round strategies once the official 2022-2024 MYLP is presented to Parliament.
- 
- 
- PNP rounds (inviting approximately 600-900 candidates per round) would continue in keeping with our provincial/territorial (PT) agreements. A pause could be seen favourably by PTs as an opportunity to nominate candidates with higher human capital, who are normally selected through FHS. Pausing invitations to apply to FHS programs will make the PNP the most viable option for Express Entry candidates, and as a result, may incentivize PTs to nominate more candidates. This could help offset previous PT criticism on intake initiatives (i.e. TR2PR Pathway, large CEC rounds).
- 
- Candidates in the pool, including those holding work permits due to expire, will continue to face uncertainty with respect to their likelihood of receiving an invitation to apply in the short term. Once invitation to apply rounds resume later in 2022, candidates could check their CRS score against the minimum CRS score that was necessary to receive an invitation to apply in those rounds.