

MINISTRY OF JOBS, TOURISM AND SKILLS TRAINING
AND MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR LABOUR
INFORMATION NOTE

Cliff #: 112048

Date: February 11, 2016

PREPARED FOR: Minister Shirley Bond, Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Minister Responsible for Labour (JTSTL)

ISSUE: Federal Status Update on Refugee Settlement in BC

BACKGROUND:

- On February 11th, 2016, Assistant Deputy Minister Rob Mingay and Executive Director Cloe Nicholls met with senior Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) staff to get an update on refugee settlement in BC.
- IRCC was represented by Assistant Deputy Ministers responsible for refugee policy and operations. The following update was provided:
 - Initial IRCC estimates of the breakdown of Syrian refugees were 60% Government Assisted (GAR) and 40% Privately Sponsored (PSR). To date, the breakdown is 59% GAR; 33% PSR and an additional 8% Blended Visa Office Referral (BVOR).
 - 18,821 Syrian refugees have landed in Canada to date. IRCC is on track to meet the national target of 25,000 by the end of February 2016 and s.16
 - s.16 In order to accommodate these requests, IRCC is leaving refugees in hotels in Toronto and Montreal for longer periods of time. There are 300 current refugees who have been in hotels longer than 8 days.
 - IRCC is pursuing alternate approaches to move refugees out of hotels in Montreal and Toronto and into housing in their province of destination. This includes an approach in Rexdale, ON, where IRCC has rented an entire hotel and is partnering with a settlement service agency to provide on-site language training, career programming and child care assistance.
- IRCC officials asked whether BC would consider taking additional GARs to help meet the federal end of February target. This would increase BC's allocation from 2,000 to 2,100 – 2,200. BC already has 1,367 landed GARs; so this would mean an additional 800 – 900 GARs over the next three weeks.
- Accepting the higher number of GARs would work out to an additional 436 families, 24% of which are quite large (7+ members); but 25% of which are smaller (>4).
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DISCUSSION:

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- In terms of ISS of BC capacity, IRCC indicated they are planning to engage in discussions with other service providers to assist with a potential increase in GARs over the next three weeks. s.13

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- In terms of regional settlement patterns, IRCC staff confirmed ISS of BC is having some success in moving refugees out of Metro Vancouver – 25 families are scheduled to move to Abbotsford on February 22nd; 5 families to Nanaimo on February 28th; and then another 5 families to Nanaimo on March 6th.
- IRCC staff suggested that other communities in BC who are interested in accepting more refugees and have the capacity to do so signal their interest either through the current open call for proposals for RAP centres or under the “Welcoming Communities” initiative.
- BC staff offered to engage directly with immigrant serving organizations in the Thompson Okanagan and Prince George areas to assess capacity.s.13,s.16
s.13,s.16 Although it is not public yet, both the Kelowna Community Resources Society and the Immigrant and Multicultural Society of Prince George will be getting funding through BC’s Refugee Response Teams. The provincial funding plus any additional federal supports would create additional communities outside Metro Vancouver with the ability to both receive refugees and also to provide them services.

NEXT STEPS:

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MINISTRY OF JOBS, TOURISM AND SKILLS TRAINING
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INFORMATION NOTE

Cliff #:112089

Date: February 15, 2016

PREPARED FOR: Honourable Shirley Bond, Minister

ISSUE: Update on BC Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) demand: application inventory and new registrations

BACKGROUND:

As of February 10, 2015, the BC PNP has an inventory of 3,463 unassigned paper applications: 1,436 Entrepreneur Immigration (EI) applications and 2,027 Skills Immigration (SI) applications. This represents a 50% reduction in application inventory from February 2015.

Based on status quo nomination levels and current staff resources dedicated to inventory reduction, this represents roughly 4 months of processing for the skills stream and 2.5 years of processing for the entrepreneur stream. ^{s.13}

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PNP has recently implemented online intake management systems to manage new applications to the SI and EI streams. The Skills Immigration Registration System (SIRS) and the Entrepreneur Immigration Registration System (EIRS) function as an expression of interest, similar to the federal Express Entry system. Prospective applicants submit an online registration and receive a score based on human capital and economic factors specific to each program stream. Periodically, based on program capacity and demand, the BC PNP issues Invitations to Apply to the highest scoring registrants.

These new systems enable the program to prioritize high-impact applications to align with B.C.'s labour market and economic priorities. With improvements to intake management, PNP also avoids intermittent program closures and improves processing times for applicants. For new entrepreneur applications, processing times are expected to be 3 – 4 months from date of submission (down from 39 months) and for new skills applications, processing times are expected to be 2 – 3 months (down from 16 months).

Registration for the SI stream is self-scored automatically and free of charge. For the EI stream, prospective applicants pay a \$300 fee to register and the information submitted is scored by BC PNP staff.

BC PNP Registrations as of February 10, 2016

Entrepreneur Immigration Registration System (EIRS)

Implemented July 2, 2015:

- 447 registrations submitted
- 190 scored and entered into the qualified selection pool. Remaining 257 registrations are with Program Advisors for scoring.
- 51 registrants have been invited to apply (goal = 85 invitations for 2015/16)

Skills Immigration Registration System (SIRS)

Implemented January 27, 2016:

- 1,785 valid registrations in the pool (all categories)
- 200+ registrations submitted each day on average, with high withdrawal rates as users are testing the system with multiple registrations and cancellations.

CONCLUSION:

Program staff will continue to focus on the existing inventory of PNP Entrepreneur and Skills applications. While 2016 levels are not yet confirmed by the federal government, operational planning is based on the expectation of status quo, 5,500 nominations, this calendar year. Based on continued strong program demand and inventory reduction, the first round of skills invitations will likely take place in late March 2016.

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MINISTRY OF JOBS, TOURISM AND SKILLS TRAINING
AND MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR LABOUR
DECISION NOTE

Cliff #:112133

Date: February 17, 2016

PREPARED FOR: Honourable Shirley Bond, Minister

ISSUE: B.C. Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) Minimum Language Requirements for Entrepreneurs.

BACKGROUND:

- PNP operates under the 2015 *Canada-BC Immigration Agreement* (CBCIA) in which the federal government, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), controls nomination levels and requires mutual agreement on PNP criteria.
- B.C. has been a strong federal partner on immigration. As the first province to sign a new immigration agreement, B.C. committed to "...work towards establishing minimum language standards and mandatory testing for all provincial nominees."
- B.C. has also championed the new federal Express Entry system and in 2015 the B.C. PNP led all provinces for Express Entry nominations with 1,650, for a total of 5,800 nominations, 40% more than in 2014.
- In 2015 B.C. implemented significant PNP changes, including an online application system, intake management to improve processing times, new legislation to enhance program integrity, and minimum language requirements of Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) 4, or basic proficiency, for National Occupation Classification (NOC) levels B (adding to existing requirement for NOC levels C / D).
- PNP is a critical tool to support B.C.'s growing labour market needs and the Ministry has requested an increase to 9,000 nominations in 2016.

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Approved / Not Approved	Date:
Comments:	

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Appendix A: Language Proficiency Requirements

Table 1 Canadian Language Benchmarks – Level Definitions¹

CLB 4	“Fluent Basic Ability” means that an individual being tested can communicate basic needs and personal experience; follow, with considerable effort, simple formal and informal conversations; read a simple set of instructions, plain language; and write short messages, postcards, notes or directions.
CLB 5*	“Initial Intermediate Ability” reflects basic language abilities needed to participate in social, educational, and work-related settings.
CLB 6	“Developing Intermediate Ability” means that an individual can communicate with some confidence in routine social situations and present concrete information about familiar topics.
CLB 7	“Adequate Intermediate Ability” reflects the language abilities needed to participate more fully in social, educational, and work-related settings.

¹ <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/language-benchmarks.pdf>

*With respect to movement between levels, it is estimated to take, on average, about 250 hours to move up a level, though the length of study depends on the learner.

Table 2 Basic competencies of individuals with English competency at the CLB level 4 and 5.

	CLB 4 Basic Proficiency	CLB 5 Initial Intermediate proficiency
Speaking	Can communicate basic needs. Pronunciation difficulties may impede communication. Can use phone only for very short, simple, predictable exchanges.	Can participate with some effort in routine social conversations and can talk about personal needs and familiar topics of personal relevance
Listening	Can follow, with considerable effort, simple formal and informal conversations. Often requests repetition. Needs assistance (such as speech modification or explanation).	Can understand simple exchanges; conceptualized short sets of common daily instructions and directions
Reading	Can read a simple set of instructions,	Can find specific, detailed

	plain language. Uses a bilingual dictionary almost constantly.	information in prose texts and in charts and schedules
Writing	Can write short messages, postcards, notes, directions. Can take slow simple dictation with frequent repetitions.	Can complete a short routine report (usually on a form) on a familiar topic, write down phone messages

Table 3 Language proficiency requirements of B.C. provincial nominees

Entrepreneurs NOC 0	Higher-Skilled NOC 0/A	Skilled NOC B	Lower-Skilled NOC C/ D
None at this time.	None at this time. Required only if there are concerns about applicant skills / ability to economic establish.	CLB 4	CLB 4

Table 4 Jurisdictional scan of other provincial nominee program language standards

	B.C.	Alberta	SK	MB	Ontario
Current Language Proficiency Requirements: Skills Streams	NOC 0/A/B: s.16 none NOC C/D: CLB 4				
Entrepreneur Streams	s.13	s.16			

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