



Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada

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F-01221194

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MEMORANDUM TO THE DEPUTY MINISTER AND THE ASSOCIATE DEPUTY MINISTER

MANAGING FEDERAL HIGH SKILLED INVENTORY

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

- The purpose of this memorandum is to seek a decision of an extension of a pause for Federal High Skilled (FHS) Express Entry invitations from April 1, 2022 to June 30, 2022 based on existing large inventories, which are sufficient to meet the Multi-Year Levels Plan target for the FHS streams in 2022.
- Maintaining the pause until at least the summer will allow the department to focus on reducing the current inventory and other department priorities, and will ensure that when invitations start again, new clients can be processed within the service standard.
- We recommend you approve Option 1, to continue the pause, and sign this memorandum by March 31, 2022, which is the end date for the current FHS pause.

BACKGROUND:

- FHS has a six-month service standard and includes three programs: Federal Skilled Worker (FSW), Federal Skilled Trades (FST), and Canadian Experience Class (CEC).
- The Department has maintained a pause on Federal Skilled Worker (FSW) invitations since December of 2020. FSW clients, the vast majority of whom are overseas, were generally not able to enter Canada while travel restrictions were in place and as a result their processing and contributions to 2020 and 2021 admissions were limited. While this has changed with the eased of travel restrictions, but a large legacy inventory of FSW remains.
- To support 2021 FHS admissions goals while travel restrictions were in place, a large number of invitations to the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) continued to be issued throughout most of 2021. While the majority of CEC applicants invited in 2021 have been processed, there is still a large inventory of FSW applicants.

Canada

- FHS rounds, which previously targeted CEC clients, were paused on September 20, 2021, ensuring that applications were not being added to inventory, since they could not be processed within the 6 month service standard. This pause combined with high levels of output have resulted in a FHS inventory reduction of almost 50,000 persons between the end of September 2021 and the end of February 2022.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Despite the significant progress in inventory reduction the Department is not yet at a point where existing inventory is fully aligned with levels space under FHS and new clients can be invited and processed within the 6 month service standard. Avoiding new FHS rounds until the end of June 2022 will be needed to achieve this objective. Additional time before the Department starts inviting new clients will also allow to assess the impact of other competing priorities, such as supporting the processing of Ukraine's new streams of temporary and permanent residents.
- The current inventory of FHS clients remains sufficient to meet the category's admissions goals for 2022. There are approximately 58,000 persons in the FHS inventory with a planned admission target of 55,900. Additionally, there are over 21,000 persons in the landing inventory with over 16,000 admissions to date in 2022.
- In order to ensure there is enough inventory to meet 2023 levels, it is projected that the Department would need to begin issuing FHS invitations sometime between July and September 2022. The recommended option is to pause invitations until June 30, 2022, and reassess the timing for the start of FHS invitations based on developing situations (option 1).
- A pause on FHS invitations until June 2022 will allow the Department to continue reducing the backlog of FHS applications and assess the operational trade-offs of new temporary and permanent immigration streams for Ukrainians, Afghanistan and backlog reduction targets on final decision targets and admission levels.
- FHS candidates already residing in Canada may have Post Graduate Work Permits (PGWP) that expire prior to resumption of FHS rounds. Without the opportunity to be invited, some are left out of options for work permit extensions and may soon need to leave Canada. Under options 2 and 3, a small portion of these clients would have an opportunity to apply for Permanent Residence earlier and would be eligible for a bridging open work permit. However, measures are in place to extend or renew work permits and a recommendation to further extend open work permits to PGWP holders whose PGWP will expire between January 31 and December 31, 2022 is currently routing for approval.
- Option 1: We recommend that the pause continues until June 2022, at which time the pause will be re-evaluated based on FHS inventory size, departmental priorities, and processing time objectives. If the Department is able to maintain its current final decision plan, candidates could begin to be invited in July 2022 with an expected 6 month processing time (see annex).

s.21(1)(a)

s.21(1)(b)

s.21(1)(d)

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The Department will be conducting generic rounds of candidates every two weeks, which will be consistent with the average number of invitations issued pre-pandemic.

- The ability to control intake is a pillar of the Express Entry system. A continued pause on FHS intake is aligned with inventory management principles, specifically that candidates should only be invited when they can be processed within the service standard. This option will return the Department to the service standard faster than Option 2 and 3.

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s.21(1)(a)

s.21(1)(b)

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s.21(1)(d)

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RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- Under all three options, there is no plan to adjust final decision targets.
- If Option 1 is approved, resources normally dedicated to the intake of FHS applications can continue to focus on the intake stages of other lines of business.

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COMMUNICATIONS IMPLICATIONS:

- Media coverage on the pause has been moderate and focused on why the pause is taking place and when invitations to apply are expected to
- If option 1 is selected, a robust responsive communications strategy is recommended using existing key messages to address questions/concerns about the pause. Targeted communication with clients (via push notification and SMART) will address clients with expiring work permits who are not able to apply to PR and are awaiting an EE draw.

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RECOMMENDATION:

- We recommend that you approve Option 1 by March 31, 2022, which will continue the pause on FHS intake until at least June 30, 2022.

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NEXT STEPS:

- We will return to you in June 2022 with a forward plan for FHS intake that aligns with the Multi-Year Levels Plan and processing time objectives.
- The Department will continue inviting all Provincial Nominee Program candidates in the Express Entry pool on a bi-weekly basis.
- The International and Intergovernmental Relations branch will inform provinces and territories of the Department's invitation to apply this strategy until the end of June.

Daniel Mills
Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Operations

Marian Campbell Jarvis
Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, SPP

I concur

- Option 1
- Option 2
- Option 3
- I do not concur

I concur

- Option 1
- Option 2
- Option 3
- I do not concur

Caroline Xavier
Associate Deputy Minister

Catrina Tapley
Deputy Minister

Scott Jones
Federal Lead, Proof of Vaccine Credentials
Associate Deputy Minister

Annex: Inventory and Processing Time Projections

- s.21(1)(a)
- s.21(1)(b)
- s.21(1)(d)

Annex: Federal High Skilled Inventory and Processing Time Projections for 3 Options

	FHS Processing Inventory (start of March)	Total Invitations Issued*	Remaining 2022 Final Decisions (Mar to Dec)	Estimated Inventory at end of year (ideal to have 5-6 month of inventory)	Wait time for Clients Invited in 2022 (when rounds resume)
Option 1**:	58K	FHS and PNP)	55K		6 months

** Invitations issued include PNP invitations, though processing inventory, final decisions and estimated wait times include only Federal High Skilled clients.*

***In this scenario rounds would commence in July, however, to clarify the recommended option is to reassess when to start inviting clients again in May to June.*