

Mobility: immigration alert

January 2022

Canada

ATIP release about Express Entry updates

Executive summary

Express entry draws for permanent residence under the Federal High Skilled streams (Federal Skilled Worker, Canadian Experience Class and Federal Skilled Trades) have been unprecedented since the start of the pandemic. No invitations have been issued pursuant to the Federal Skilled Worker (FSW) stream since December 2020 and the last round of invitations issued under the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) stream dates back to September 2021. Furthermore, in the spring of 2021, IRCC invited more applicants under CEC than ever before (27,332 applicants) and further created the Temporary Resident to Permanent Resident Pathway (TR2PR), to facilitate eligibility for Canadian residents applying for permanent residence (PR). This has resulted in a significant backlog of applications causing processing times to exceed the six-month service standard, which was met for the most part pre-pandemic.

Exceptions

A recent ATIP (Access to Information and Privacy) request brought about the release of an internal IRCC memo. This memo provided insight and indicated the following changes to Express Entry:

- ▶ Admission targets under the Federal High Skilled streams in the upcoming years could be reduced by more than 50% due to the TR2PR backlogs as well as the redirected efforts to Afghan refugee resettlement in Canada
- ▶ FSW processing times are currently at 20.4 months (three times higher than service standard) and delays

are expected to continue to grow as older inventory is processed. The FSW processing times are expected to rise to 36 months and CEC processing times to 7.6 months, in 2022

- ▶ The number of applications in process are so high that processing only the existing inventory of applications is expected to fill intake targets for 2022. No new draws are anticipated for at least the first half of 2022.
- ▶ The number of applicants in the Express Entry pool were approximately 207,000 at the end of 2021 and are expected to grow. With the current composition of the pool, applicants are likely to require over 500 CRS points to be competitive and be issued an invitation to apply.

What does this mean

This IRCC memo suggests that applicants aiming to apply for PR in Canada pursuant to the Federal High Skilled Streams may need to re-assess their strategy. They may seek to pursue a different avenue such as the provincial nomination.

The current volume of applications will also create challenges for applicants who were hoping to use the Bridging Open Work Permit (BOWP) to maintain temporary residence in Canada, while their PR applications are in process.

We will continue to monitor and review future developments. For additional information, or if you wish to discuss this further, please contact your EY Law LLP professional.



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