



Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada

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PROTECTED B

MEMORANDUM TO THE ASSISTANT DEPUTY MINISTER, OPERATIONS

EXPANSION OF INTAKE, IMPLEMENTATION OF MODIFIED FIRST IN, FIRST OUT PROCESSING MODEL AND NOTIONAL DECISION TARGETS FOR CITIZENSHIP E-APPLICATIONS

FOR APPROVAL

SUMMARY

- The purpose of this memorandum is to seek your approval on the proposed intake, processing strategy and notional processing targets of grant e-applications within the existing citizenship grant inventory.
- If approved, intake of grant e-apps will be expanded for applicants 18 years of age and older, applying individually and without a representative, from the current 10% to 100% of webpage visitors on August 6th, 2021. Once this cohort is expanded to 100% of eligible applicants it will result in all subsequent cohorts being introduced at 100% of qualified website visitors who meet eligibility criteria as the technical solution cannot manage different rates for different cohorts.
- Existing older paper file backlog will continue to be the priority, and a small portion of e-applications will be processed in parallel to test our processes, train officers, and identify issues with this new intake process early on. This approach will focus on the elimination of paper application backlog to transition to a primarily electronic inventory.
- We recommend you approve the approach proposed for grant e-app intake, the processing strategy and the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 e-app notional decision targets of 5,000 by checking the 'I concur' box and signing this memorandum.

BACKGROUND:

- Due to a reduced processing capacity following the introduction of strict public health measures in response to the pandemic, the Department saw application intake continue while decision output was

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reduced and limited. This has resulted in a backlog of citizenship grant applications which has reached around 438,000 as of July 1, 2021, and continues to grow. This includes over 56,000 applications in the mailroom that are pending file creation, and approximately 12,000 e-applications. An average monthly intake of 22,000 new paper applications is anticipated. Processing times have reached 21 months and are expected to continue to increase.

- With the target of 245,000 grant decisions in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-2022, the projected inventory at FY end will be approximately 468,000, the majority of which will be paper applications.
- In November 2020, IRCC launched a digital intake solution to allow applicants to apply for a grant of Canadian citizenship electronically. Upon initial launch, citizenship grant e-apps were only available to a random 10% of website visitors who were between the ages of 18-54, applying alone, and not using a representative. This was expanded to also include eligible applicants aged 55 and older on July 12, 2021. Limiting the percentage of website visitors was primarily to identify and address any bugs in the minimum viable product (MVP) and stabilize the technological infrastructure before scaling up to higher volumes of website visitors.
- Over FY 2021-2022, IRCC plans a phased expansion of the e-application to all eligible groups ([Annex A](#)).

CURRENT STATUS:

- A strategy to process a balance of e-apps and paper applications has been developed by Citizenship and Passport Programs Branch (CPPB) in consultation with the Transformation Branch, Centralized Network (CN), Domestic Network (DN) and Operations Planning and Performance Branch (OPPB). The objectives of the strategy are the focused elimination of the paper backlog and a long-term goal to transition to a primarily electronic inventory. The strategy reflects operational complexity, client expectations, and legal considerations.

INTAKE STRATEGY:

- During the next phase of the e-app rollout, anticipated for August 2021, program stakeholders have agreed to expand intake for applicants 18 years of age and older, applying individually and without a representative, from 10% to 100% of webpage visitors. Intake will continue to be expanded based on a Go/No-Go process to assess IT and business readiness.
- For each subsequent eligible cohort of clients, the intake will be available to 100% of website visitors who meet eligibility criteria, once the functionality and business readiness is confirmed ahead of the launch, as outlined in [Annex A](#).
- This approach will allow for a faster transition to an e-application inventory as each client who applies electronically results in one less new paper application. [Annex B](#) demonstrates the speed of transition to a primarily electronic inventory in limited and unlimited e-application intake strategies.

PROCESSING STRATEGY:

- The Department will process the old paper file backlog while processing a small portion of the e-applications received to refine processes, train officers, and identify issues early in the process.
- CN and DN will issue final decisions on the oldest of paper applications while also incorporating 5,000 e-application final decisions based on the order in which the e-applications were received, as part of its 245,000 FY 2021-2022 decision target, as outlined in Annex C. Increasing of the decision target above 5000 was considered but determined to not be beneficial.
- The 5,000 e-application final decisions target represents 2% of the 245,000 decision target and around 5% of the projected 110,000 e-applications that might be received in FY 2021-2022, assuming unlimited e-application intake.
- This approach will help augment capacity gradually, and will allow the Networks to build processing expertise in this new digital environment and avoid a sudden change from paper to e-app processing. This approach will also provide flexibility in the event of continuing public health restrictions, allowing for work-sharing, processing applications remotely, especially while IRCC's employees are working from home, and an increased percentage of e-apps to be processed to meet monthly targets if access to paper files is restricted.
- Most importantly, this will also allow the Citizenship Program to concentrate on processing the aging paper inventory while building digital processing capacity and gradually transitioning to an electronic inventory. Not focusing on eliminating the paper inventory first and prioritizing processing of new e-apps would result in a large stagnant paper inventory with processing times reaching at least four years, if not longer.
- Prioritization of electronic applications would also drive paper applicants in the inventory to submit duplicate e-applications trying to achieve a faster decision, and put the department at high risk for mandamuses, as well as the possibility of increased processing times due to the work required to assess multiple applications for the same client.

CONSULTATIONS:

- OPPB, Transformation Branch, CN, DN, Client Experience Branch, Citizenship Legislation and Program Policy.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- The recommended strategy assumes a gradual transition of responsibilities from the Digital Journey Lab (DJL) to the Networks to take place in July/August 2021. CN will need to continue to increase e-application training and expand electronic file creation, expediting them through triage and transfer them to DN. Additionally, by mid-September 2021, CN will align Acknowledgement of Receipt (AoR) issuance for both paper and e-applications.
- DN will have to continue to increase training on e-application processing to meet decision targets, shifting more resources away from the paper backlog, potentially negating any processing gains from

on-going initiatives as some resources would no longer be focused on paper processing but on training, and prioritizing e-applications through testing and towards decision.

- CPPB is leading the development of the Change Impact Assessment, Communications Plan and Training Plan, including a transition plan from the DJL to the Networks.

COMMUNICATIONS IMPLICATIONS:

- Media attention to e-apps has been minimal, however, on social media there have been about five questions per month in the last few months, mostly clients asking if they can apply online. Following the pilot launch of 180 e-applications, there was some chatter on social media criticizing IRCC for the discrepancy between processing times of these e-applications (2-3 months) as compared to paper applications (over a year). There is also intermittent negative media attention to the backlog of citizenship grant applications.
- Strategic communications has prepared an e-applications expansion communications plan. We've also drafted a web notice, key messages and Qs&As to respond to media and social media calls. We now recommend a proactive approach with the publication of the web notice in late July.

RECOMMENDATION:

- We recommend you approve the approach to expand grant e-application intake, the processing strategy and the FY 2021-2022 e-application notional decision targets by checking the 'I concur' box and signing this memorandum.

NEXT STEPS:

- CPPB will develop and launch change management products, including developing and launching training curriculum (using lessons learned from end-to-end testing) in collaboration with the CN, DN and the DJL.
- CPPB and DJL has establish a Go/No-Go process to assess IT and business readiness ahead of each phase of the e-application rollout, including confirmation of readiness to increase visibility of the e-application to 100% for existing cohorts.
- Implicated program partners will continue to be consulted to ensure that any issues that arise are addressed appropriately where possible. All outstanding technical issues and concerns will be included in the Go/No-Go decision to ensure informed decision making.
- CPPB will continue to monitor the current responsive communications strategy and develop a proactive strategic communications strategy to announce the launch of e-apps for all citizenship grant applicants.

e-approved

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Maxine Ifill

I concur

I do not concur

Daniel Mills
Assistant Deputy Minister
Operations

Annexes (4):

A: E-app phased rollout strategy

B: E-app unlimited versus limited intake strategies to FY 2025-2026

C: Preliminary Projections – Regional and monthly breakdown for the FY 2021-2022 e-app notional decision targets

ANNEX A: E-APP PHASED ROLLOUT STRATEGY

Over FY 2021/22, IRCC plans a phased expansion of e-apps to all eligible groups:

Cohort	Adults (18-54) applying alone, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> w/o rep 	Adults 55+ applying alone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> w/o rep 	Adult applicants applying as a group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> w/o minors w/o rep 	Minors under Section 5(2) applying alone or with a family group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> w/o rep Adult applicants applying as a group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> with minors w/o rep 	Others including w/rep, minors under Section 5(1), military, etc.
Launch Date <i>(tentative and may be adjusted during DJL planning activities)</i>	Nov. 2020-May 2021	June 2021	Oct. 2021	June-Dec. 2021	2022
Accessible to 10% of web traffic	Nov. 2020	July 2021	n/a	n/a	n/a
Accessible to 100% of web traffic	Aug. 2021*	Aug. 2021*	Oct. 2021*	June-Dec 2021*	2022*

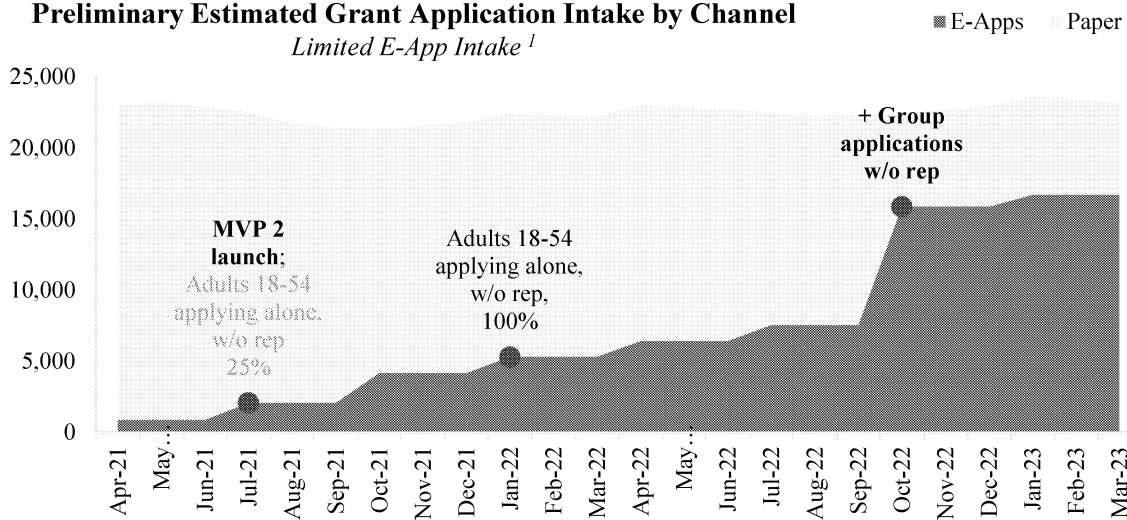
* Contingent on the approval of this memo.

ANNEX B: PRELIMINARY E-APP UNLIMITED VERSUS LIMITED INTAKE STRATEGIES TO FY2022/23

- Under limited e-app intake, the program will continue to limit e-app intake via web traffic control or delays in launch of new e-app functionalities (current limit is 10% of web page visitors).
- With unlimited e-app intake, the Program would move from current 10% of webpage visitors offered the e-app option to unlimited e-app intake for each phase of e-app rollout. Unlimited intake approach will permit for a faster transition to an e-app inventory as each client who applies on e-app results in one less new paper application.

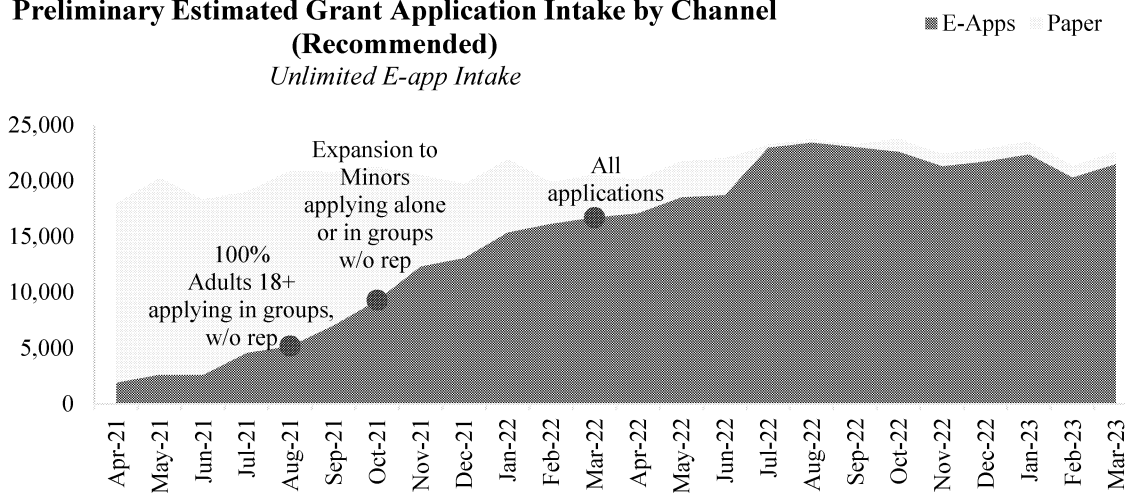
Preliminary Estimated Grant Application Intake by Channel

Limited E-App Intake¹



Preliminary Estimated Grant Application Intake by Channel (Recommended)

Unlimited E-app Intake



1. The preliminary estimates for limited e-app intake were developed early in Q1 FY 2021/22 and since then there have been some amendments to the roll-out strategy of the e-app channel that are not fully reflected in the preliminary limited e-app projections.

ANNEX C: PRELIMINARY PROJECTIONS – REGIONAL AND MONTHLY BREAKDOWN FOR

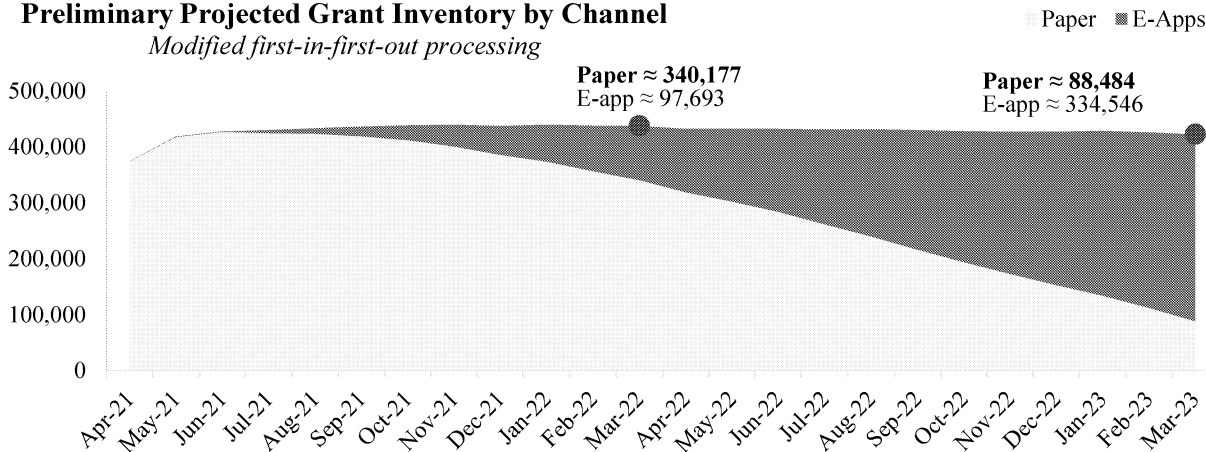
THE FY 2021-2022 E-APP NOTIONAL DECISION TARGETS

Month	Region					Program
	CPC-Sydney	Eastern	GOA	GTA	Western	
Oct-21	0	125	125	125	125	500
Nov-21	0	150	150	150	150	600
Dec-21	0	175	175	175	175	700
Jan-22	125	200	200	200	200	925
Feb-22	150	225	225	225	225	1,050
Mar-22	175	260	260	260	270	1,225
FY 2021/22	450	1,135	1,135	1,135	1,145	5,000

1. These numbers have been rounded and will be part of the overall 245,000 FY 2021-2022 decision target.
 2. These monthly targets will be monitored on a continuing basis and could be adjusted according to variations in intake and/or operational capacities.
 3. Please note that in order to set targets for FY 2022-2023, decisions on the intake and processing strategies will have to be communicated in order to properly account for e-applications in next FY's processing.
- These projections represent 2% of the 245,000 decision target and around 5% of the projected 110,000 e-applications that might be received in FY 2021-2022.
 - An e-application decision target of 5000 this FY will not ensure that the Program maintains the 12 month processing service standard for e-applications; the Program is unlikely to be in a position to conduct the ceremonies of applicants who submitted their applications electronically until the middle of the fourth quarter of 2021-2022, therefore missing 12 month processing standard.
 - Based on these projections, assuming unlimited intake and processing plan outlined in the memo, by March 2022, the estimated inventory will be largely paper with around 340,000 paper applications and around 97,000 e-applications. By March 2023, the inventory is projected to shift to be around 88,000 paper applications and over 334,000 e-apps:

Preliminary Projected Grant Inventory by Channel

Modified first-in-first-out processing





Grant Inventory as of March 31, 2022

Application Type	Total
Paper	331,848
eApp	61,898
Grand Total	393,746

Grant Applications Decision Rendered, January - March, 2022

Application Type	Total
Paper	78,715
e-App	3,399
Grand Total	82,114

Note: data is operational and subject to change

Requestor: ATIP - [REDACTED]

Tracking Number: [REDACTED]

Data source & Date: IRCC-EDW (MBR) - Refreshed April 1, 2022

GCDocs# 454172389

Please note that data more recent than February 28, 2022 have not been publicly released.