# National Settlement and Integration Council (NSIC) Teleconference

**Thursday, March 26, 2020**

13:00m – 14:30pm EST

## Agenda

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<th>AGENDA ITEM</th>
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<td>1. IRCC’s response to Coronavirus (COVID-19)</td>
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**Objective:** *To inform members on the current status of COVID-19.*

- Government / Departmental Updates
  - Gvmt passed legislation which will provide financial support; Canada Emergency Response benefit will provide up to 16 weeks, eligibility quite broad (see website), including those that don’t qualify for EI, will open up in April. Support for farmers, etc. and anticipate more in coming weeks. As of midnight yesterday, gvmt imposed quarantine act imposing self-isolation, in the city in which they land.
  - Border measures not yet fully enforced. None should be travelling, reinforce that this is a very fluid space, active discussions happening with provinces and territories and professionals.
  - Within IRCC, recognize that we are in this situation in the medium term, but that all are very busy, esp. RAP providers in on the ground. Thinking of moving to 1 call/week, as well as other forms of on-going engagement.
- Border Measures / Refugee Arrivals

  Paul - PR visa holders of particular concern. Not in place yet, but implications in the shorter term. At time of announcement 7500 persons holding PR visas, of this approx. 3900 GARs, with a small sub-set bound for QC. How to orchestrate this 3900 is being looked at.

  Daily calls with IOM. On March 17th, IOM suspended operations, so limited capacity on the ground. Larger problem related to movement is the shutdown of airlines. Very few points of departure have capacity to move people through. In the interim the resettlement centre in Ottawa trying to build an interface to connect with SPOs on the ground first, before booking arrivals, considering 2-week self-isolation period. Trying to tie the 2 operations together (IOM and Ottawa).
Mario – question: re: IOM & local SPO capacity issue. Ottawa will connect with SPO, then co-ordinate with IOM. Will this be immediate?

Corrinne – this call partly to consult SPOs. Canada working with the IOM on a case-by-case basis for those clients in transit.

Jean-Marc Gionet – mandatory self-isolation has implications, trying to gather info to assist SPOs in the implementation of this.

- Resettlement Measures

Laura – have sent out some initial guidance following Public Health advisories re: self-isolation measures; be aware of monitoring staff and clients for development of symptoms and taking appropriate measures. Any requirements to add additional cleaning, etc. and other will be considered as allowable costs under the CAs. Have conversations with Officers to ensure items qualify. IRCC is also looking at availability of year end slippage for the continuation of critical services (refer to list sent last week), including purchase of laptops, cellphones, etc. Contact RD in region to know what is available. Continue to look at other measures to support.

- Immigration Update

Border measures announced a week ago Monday have been put in place and exemptions waiting to come into force. Questions coming from the sector have been signaled.

A lot of work from health authorities, CBSA, etc. to ensure that airlines still operating have the right info to make the right decisions to allow those exempted individuals to board flights. Need to be asymptomatic – all health measures still in place. All travelers subject to current orders re: self-isolation.

Exemptions include Canadians, PRs and immediate family members. Last Friday – additional exemptions announced – 3 most pertinent for sector:

1) International students: A number of students may have been abroad; those who hold a valid study permit will be allowed to return. Also, any who had been approved, up to March 18th.

2) TFWs: All who hold a valid Canadian work permit, or those who have been approved, will be able to travel to Canada. Applications continue to be processed, but there is an impact both overseas and in Canada. Those who continue to arrive will need to comply with public health directives. Work between Agri & Agri Food Can, ESDC, etc. to ensure employers are aware of and comply with their obligations, and efforts to support workers.
3) Holders of temporary resident visas. Any whose application for PR was approved before March 18\textsuperscript{th} will be allowed to travel to Canada once the ban is lifted.

Efforts being put in place to increase program flexibility and reduce administrative burden. Will continue to apprise.

Questions:
Fariborz – TFWs: getting a lot of calls re: managing EI, will clients be eligible for the financial aid forthcoming from the government, etc. PSRs? We have a lot of ppl coming – are they included in the group that have received their landing papers? Also, getting calls from undocumented individuals.

R: Benefits – colleagues at ESDC are the experts on eligibility. Check website (best source) on EI – e.g. international students or TFWs who report insurable earnings and meet minimum thresholds. Details on yesterday’s announcements – will be some specific requirements (e.g. need SIN #, declare they are residing in Canada, and previous income threshold).

R: PSRs – coverage – yes, anyone with Temporary Resident visa before March 18\textsuperscript{th} is able to travel once the exemptions are in place. Fraser – yes, it does apply (just under 800 persons – PSRs, GARs, and some CS and G5s)

Objective: To inform members on the current status of COVID-19.

2. Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)

Interested in knowing if RAP SPOs have capacity to accept GAR clients.

- Opening Remarks
6 members from the sector, representing large and small orgs, participating in task group. Work helps us not just understand the immediate situation, but also use this work to allow IRCC to better understand the medium term as well. We know the work will evolve with COVID-10. Will be helpful going forward.

Additional stats – when in force, 7500 persons could potentially travel - 3993 GARS, balance are JASs, CGs, G5 and PSRs.

- IRCC-RAP SPO COVID-19 Task Team
Chris – call with all RAP SPOSs, survey distributed on Tuesday; just over half have responded to date, tomorrow end of day deadline; hope to have analysis by Wednesday. Ad hoc cttee members have been identified; proposed ToR drafted.

| Assistant Deputy Minister Fraser Valentine (IRCC-SIS) |
| NSIC Co-Chair Chris Friesen / Special Advisor Angie Barrados (IRCC-ADMO) |
| NSIC Co-Chair Corinne Prince (IRCC-SIP) |
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Questions – can IRCC confirm that we should not be preparing for any GAR arrival before May. Will RAP SPOs have the opportunity to consult re: arrivals to their site so that capacity can be assessed? If mandatory quarantine will continue, will impact temp accommodation capacity, will need more discussion with IRCC and work internally, esp. re: shared suites. Will need to re-assess total bed capacity for future arrivals.

Angie – 2 main focuses: 1) advise IRCC on RAP SPO needs, including funding (e.g. costing and need for guidance and 2) sharing info, best practices and experiences amongst IRCC and the sector. Setting up on-line group on SettleNet.org. Envision working closely with GAR RAP WG, ensure we are complementary to all existing channels of communication, especially existing relationships with all the regional officers.

R: re: arrivals. Will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Paul – with the restrictions, have instructed IOM to cancel all arrivals for March and April. Only thing left is in May (was around 200 persons). As situation develops, may also cancel. Only one routing possible, working with IOM for approx. 6 persons next week, speaking with Fariborz, as they are destined for Calgary. Will have a convo with the RAP SPO prior to ensure capacity. Anticipate very few in coming weeks. As we see routings open up, capacity increasing, etc. expect some bumps, but want to ensure that SPOs are not overwhelmed.

Chris – mandatory quarantine. What will be role of the point of entry SPO if a PSR or PR is destined to a community outside of the entry point? Will it be the responsibility of SPO in landing destination? R: Situation extremely fluid, colleagues trying to finalize an approach. Fraser: There is a case now in ON, don’t yet have a protocol, will need to think through. Case by case, but perhaps most appropriately dealt with at the region level. A conversation following this may be helpful. Need to ensure support and flexibility. Whenever the program opens up, need to have an aggregate view of the sector’s capacity to receive, considering what will be in place. Costs – important for RAP Task Group to assist in understanding.

- Cross-Canada RAP SPO Updates on Capacity (by province)

BC – Have developed a new modified assessment tool for all GARS that have arrived in past 12 months. Telephone outreach team will complete to get a baseline of current concerns, needs, etc. so that most vulnerable can be prioritised, and to address issues raised in prior calls. Re: how to transition from fed to prov assistance during this time; how families can file income tax. How they can access child
tax benefits, GST rebates, etc. Chris will circulate to colleagues.

AB – focusing on new arrivals, but need to also need to look at recent arrivals. Higher need clients. Local system not able to cover. Need to have a strategy to support. Also need to look after recent arrivals. Being ready to receive new arrivals – prepared to do so, but need to ensure readiness of the receiving centres. Need to know what readiness means, protocol outlining this. Can then identify centres who are ready to meet the criteria.

SK –

MB – Accueil Francophone. Continue to work, moved all clients in temporary accommodations, accepted by landlords. Disinfecting temp accommodations. Quarantine caused panic, working on change to working form home, adapting ways of working. Need to continue to support recent arrivals who are feeling lost, with reduction of direct services. Affecting the settlement of arrivals in the last 3 months. Phone service, social distancing, not obvious when clients are used to direct service. Continue to adapt, but questions around teleworking protocols when staff can’t use personal phones or computers to access client portals.

ON – heard from 5-6 SPOs – mixed on capacity, depends on city, will know more with survey. Some hotels cutting back staff. Other smaller centres have some capacity. Legal liability – what if staff get infected. Assume liability can be managed if we are following health authorities’ directions, but flagging this question. Admin issues – IT much in demand, things are slow, some concern around April deadline of submitting expenses – asking for flexibility.

Corrinne – yes, IRCC will be allowing flexibility; but those orgs who can submit will get payment. Will add legal liability to the list, but interpretation good.

NB – some clients have been in temp accommodations; in Fredericton space in 4 different reception houses. Working closely with Public Health, but would welcome any addition info re: protections for staff, etc. not seeing clients directly, but some issues have come up re: transportation, etc. grocery shopping (reduced payment options, do not have credit cards).

NS - serving online, longer-term clients, are ensuring needs are being responded to, esp. vulnerable clients; concur with concerns re: liability issues. Right now, systems in place, connecting, etc. but realization that this may change with wide-spread community transmission. If we begin to see a major impact, we need to be prepared for this. Moving to this next potential phase, preparing as an organization. Status of
community may change, need to be prepared to respond to this.

PEI – unable to use *6 to provide update

NL – Concurred with what others had noted, we are in a good place now and open to conversation re: arrivals (open reception house now), however, there are concerns- risk, liability, etc.

- Discussion Session
  (did not take place)

3. **Update on CFP 2019**

   *Objective*: To inform NSIC members on the current status of CFP 2019 negotiations.

   Continue to make steady progress on finalizing agreements, despite current circumstances. Have launched e-signature tool, positive feedback, fast. Will help meet the goal of finalizing agreements before the end of March. Any questions, contact Officer immediately.

   Nearly at 60% settlement, 60% RAP; Francophone CAs 40%. A large number of agreements pending signature, please look at emails if you are a designated signatory.

   Last CFP, signed many agreements in final few days, expect most will be signed in coming days.

4. **Closing Remarks**

   Task group will continue to work on issues, IRCC will continue to engage with sector, perhaps now on a weekly basis; Engage at the Regional level with officers re: specific needs. Some thinking inside IRCC to create a centralized mailbox re: guidance issues. A communication will go out for types of questions that might be directed to this, responded to on a daily basis. Will provide update.

   Corinne – will be in touch with an approach for future calls in coming weeks. Want to ensure RAP SPOs can get back to their regular business. Calls moving forward for NSIC, which include some RAP SPOs that can ensure that all the information is flowing.

5. **Next steps**

**Teleconference Information:**

Local Dial in Number: 613-960-7512
Toll-free Number: 1 877-413-4785
Conference ID: 4554111

**Conseil national de l’établissement et de l’intégration (CNEI)**

**Téléconférence**
jeudi, le 26 mars, 2020
13h00 – 14h30 HNE

**Ordre du jour**

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<td>Sous-ministre adjoint Fraser Valentine (IRCC-SEI)</td>
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<td>• Mesures à la frontière / l’arrivées de réfugiés</td>
<td>Directeur principal Jean-Marc Gionet (IRCC-RI-DOR)</td>
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<td>• Mesures de réinstallation</td>
<td>Directrice générale Laura Di Paolo (IRCC-SN)</td>
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<td>Directeur David Cashaback (IRCC-DI)</td>
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<td><strong>Objectif:</strong> informer les membres du CNEI sur l’état actuel du COVID-19.</td>
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<td><strong>2. Programme d’aide à la réinstallation (PAR)</strong></td>
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<td>• Mot d’ouverture</td>
<td>Sous-ministre adjoint Fraser Valentine (IRCC-SEI)</td>
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<td>• L’équipe de travail d’IRCC-PAR FS COVID-19</td>
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<td>• Mises à jour pancanadiennes par les FS du PAR sur la capacité (par province)</td>
<td>Coprésidente du CNEI Corinne Prince (IRCC-PEI)</td>
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<td>• Séance de discussion</td>
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<td><strong>3. Mise à jour sur l’ADP 2019</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Objectif:</strong> informer les membres du CNEI sur l’état actuel des négociations dans le cadre de l’ADP 2019.</td>
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<td><strong>4. Mot de clôture</strong></td>
<td>Sous-ministre adjoint Fraser Valentine (IRCC-SEI)</td>
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<td><strong>5. Prochaines étapes</strong></td>
<td>Coprésidente du CNEI Corinne Prince (IRCC-PEI)</td>
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*Pour joindre la téléconference:*
*Numéro local: 613-960-7512*
*Numéro sans frais: 1 877-413-4785*
*No. d’identification de la téléconference: 4554111*