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CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM TO THE MINISTER

APPROACHES TO ENHANCE THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE CITIZENSHIP TEST

FOR APPROVAL

SUMMARY

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BACKGROUND:

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CONSIDERATIONS:

New Processing Initiatives

- A number of initiatives aimed at addressing processing inefficiencies and reducing backlogs in the citizenship program are being developed. The objective of implementing these initiatives is to reduce the hearings inventory (and to limit its growth), increase the number of decisions and improve processing times. Specifically, three initiatives currently under development are: re-testing; advising applicants of the results of the written test; and, splitting files. These initiatives are summarized in Annex A.
- Key to these will be the introduction of a re-testing policy. As part of the policy, applicants will be informed of the results of their test, including their score, after the testing event. This will ensure applicants understand the next steps in the process and the importance of passing the written test to avoid lengthy processing delays. Applicants who fail the written knowledge test will be scheduled to write the test again – if they pass the re-test, they will proceed to ceremony; if fail the re-test, they will proceed to hearing with a citizenship judge. Applicants currently in the hearing inventory for having failed the written test will also be invited to take the test again. The Department will implement the re-testing policy on June 3, 2013, and an Operational Bulletin (OB) will be released in the near future.
- Initiatives such re-testing and splitting files of family members who need to see a judge, will help reduce the number of files being referred to a citizenship judge. This will allow many applicants to proceed to a ceremony rather than wait for the final outcome of a family member who is in the hearing inventory. These procedures will also come into effect on June 3.
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RESOURCE IMPLICATION:

- Any additional funding that may be required in implementing the recommended approach would be funded from within existing reference levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

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Neil Yeates

I concur

I do not concur

The Hon. Jason Kenney, PC, MP

Attachments:

Annex A: New Processing Initiatives in the Citizenship Program

New Processing Initiatives in the Citizenship Program

Re-testing:

- Clients who fail the written knowledge test, as well as clients who are in the inventory for a knowledge hearing will be scheduled to take the written test again:
 - Only applies to clients who failed knowledge and are not flagged for a hearing for other reasons (i.e. language, residence).
 - Will prevent the current inventory from growing as quickly and will help to reduce the current hearing inventory.
 - Will allow judges to focus on more complex hearings.
 - Clients pulled from the inventory who fail the re-test will return to their spot in the queue.

Advising Clients of the Outcome of the Written Test:

- Clients will be informed of the outcome of their test (actual test score) immediately following the testing session and have the next steps in the process explained:
 - Will improve client service and manage client expectations by informing of the next steps in the process.
 - Will reduce calls to the call centre and referrals to local offices.

Splitting Files:

- Clients will be informed of the option to have their family members' applications (if applicable) split from their file, to limit further delay in the processing of family members who meet the requirements for the grant of citizenship:
 - Will allow for more straightforward (routine) applications to proceed to ceremony, which will help reduce overall processing times.
 - Will apply to files currently in the hearing inventory for knowledge and/or language as well as clients taking the test for the first time.