

First Reference Talks

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CIC imposes temporary moratorium on sponsorship of parents and grandparents

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On June 18, 2008, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act was amended to give the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration authority to issue instructions that would allow it to control the processing of applications. Pursuant to this authority, the minister recently issued a fourth set of Ministerial Instructions (MI-4), which came into force on November 5, 2011.

In accordance with MI-4, a moratorium (referred to as a "temporary pause" in MI-4) has now been placed on new Family Class sponsorship applications for parents and grandparents (FC4). New FC4 Sponsorship applications for parents [R117(1)(c)] or grandparents [R117(1)(d)] received by the Centralized Processing Centre-Mississauga on or after November 5, 2011, will be returned to the sponsor with a letter advising them of the temporary pause. Applications that are postmarked before November 5, 2011, but are received at CPC-M on or after November 5, 2011, will also be returned to the sponsor. In both cases, processing fees will be returned.

According to MI-4, this temporary pause is being implemented as part of a broader strategy to address the large backlog and wait times in the Parents and Grandparents category, supporting the attainment of immigration goals set by the Government of Canada. It will remain in place for up to 24 months while a more responsive, sustainable, and long-term approach for the program is considered.

According to the press release issued by Citizenship and Immigration Canada on November 4, 2011, the following additional changes are also being implemented:

The Government of Canada will increase by over 60 percent the number of sponsored parents and grandparents Canada will admit next year, from nearly 15,500 in 2010, to 25,000 in 2012. These numbers will apply to parent and grandparent applications filed prior to November 5, 2011.

The government is introducing the new "Parent and Grandparent Super Visa", which will be valid for up to 10 years. The multiple-entry visa will allow an applicant to remain in Canada for up to 24 months at a time without the need for renewal of their status. The Parent and Grandparent Super Visa will come into effect on December 1, 2011, and CIC will be able to issue the visas, on average, within eight weeks of the application. This means that instead of waiting for eight years, a parent or

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a grandparent can come to Canada within eight weeks. Parent and Grandparent Super Visa applicants will be required to obtain private Canadian healthcare insurance for their stay in Canada.

The temporary pause on sponsorships of parents and grandparents is certainly controversial. However, the minister has tempered the bad news to some extent with increased approval numbers for next year and the possibility of extended temporary resident status for parents and grandparents, under its Parent and Grandparent Super Visa category.

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