

Immigrating to Canada: Client Service

Fundamental Brief



- Each year, millions of people from around the world apply to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) for admission to our temporary or permanent immigration programs, or to become citizens of Canada.
- Applications to IRCC can have life-changing impacts for clients who need IRCC's authorization to visit friends or family, be reunited with loved ones or start a new life in Canada.
- Clients expect to be supported:

Before they apply – to understand Canada's rules

During the application process – to ensure they are doing it right

While they wait for a decision – to understand what is happening

After they have received a decision – to understand what happens next



- To ensure clients have the right information **before they apply**, IRCC provides general information on its website, including the online Help Centre, as well as through Twitter, Facebook, and IRCC’s chatbot “Quaid.”
- Once clients have applied for a service, IRCC offers support through four key channels:



By phone (for clients in Canada)



By email (accessed through IRCC’s website)



In person (for clients outside of Canada, delivered by visa application centres)



Online account (for clients who have submitted an application)

IRCC Website – A First Stop for Clients

- IRCC's website is the primary source of self-serve, general information for clients.
- Most clients access only 2% of our content (eligibility, how to submit and pay for an application, processing times and application status).
- Client satisfaction survey indicates that:
 - 84% of users find what they're looking for
 - 86% of users understand the information on the website

IRCC website

- 200 million visits in 2018
- 15% increase in visits in year

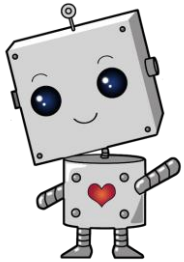
These were the top possible areas of improvement related to the website that were identified in the client satisfaction survey:

**Make it easier to get information on the status of my applications
(17%)**

**Make it easier to find information on the website
(13%)**

**Simplify forms and instructions for applying
(11%)**

Chat Bot



- “Quaid” is an artificial intelligence-driven Chatbot. It improves client experience and responds to online enquiries through IRCC’s official Facebook Messenger account.
- Quaid was trained using actual client questions and is continually improved based on client needs which are determined through question data.
- Quaid has answered over 60,000 questions and can answer approximately 80% of questions independently, without intervention by a human agent.

Social Media

- IRCC also responds to general information inquiries through its social media channels on Twitter and Facebook, which is proving to be a popular way to interact with clients.
- In 2018-2019, IRCC responded to over 100,000 questions on social media, a 519% increase from the previous year.

Artificial intelligence can be an effective “force multiplier” but it takes time and resources to train artificial intelligence agents to answer questions correctly.

Correspondence

- All written correspondence addressed to the Minister is tracked and monitored. Over the last four years, ministerial replies to such correspondence have increased by **159%**, from 10,400 to 26,900 replies. This increase has been **absorbed with limited impact** due to the adoption of new lean principles.

Phone enquiries

- IRCC has a dedicated **Client Support Centre** in Montréal that provides telephone support to in-Canada applicants as well as a 24/7 self-serve interactive voice response telephone system. However, it receives more calls than it can answer.



5.5 millions calls in 2018-2019, with **3.7 million (67%)** of those callers asking to speak to an agent

25.4% of those calls were answered by the Centre, increasing to a **call answer rate** of **36.8%** so far this year

90% of callers looked for information on IRCC's website before calling

Email enquiries

- IRCC receives emails from clients around the world, both through an online web form that triages enquiries, as well as directly to offices that process applications.
- Last year, approximately **747,000 client enquiries** were received through the online webform. Roughly 80% of clients received a response within **five business days**.

The Client Support Centre receives more requests for support than it can respond to. Many clients who find answers on our website still want reassurance from an agent either in person or over the phone.

- **Visa application centres** are third-party service providers located overseas. They are managed by private companies under a formal contract with the Government of Canada and have a wide international reach.



160 locations *



in 108 countries *



Deliver support and services in the local language to applicants before, during, and after their application is assessed by IRCC.

✓ **Administrative support**

✓ **Biometric collection services** (e.g., taking fingerprints)

- Most applicants outside Canada interact directly with a visa application centre, not an IRCC office. However, the centres do not play a role in the decision-making process and are not permitted to provide visa or permit related advice to applicants.

Access to Information or Privacy Requests

- Clients, or their representatives, may also seek information about the status of their application through an **Access to Information or Privacy request**.
- In 2017-2018, IRCC received more Access to Information requests than **all** other Government of Canada departments combined:
 - over 60% of all Government of Canada Access to Information requests
 - over 19% of all Government of Canada Privacy requests

98% of Access to Information requests seek:



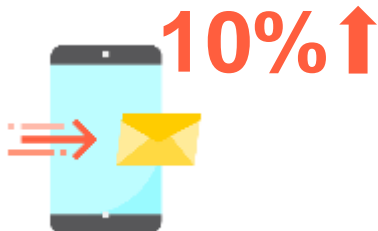
**Information about an
application**

- Access to Information request volumes are growing substantially, and this growth is projected to continue. A task force has been established to develop an action plan to identify what is driving these increased requests and to improve performance.

Ministerial Centre for Members of Parliament and Senators

More constituents are asking Members of Parliament and Senators for help to understand the status of their case, or expedite them.

- IRCC has a dedicated **Ministerial Centre for Members of Parliament and Senators** co-located with the Client Support Centre in Montréal for clients who reach out to their local Member of Parliament or Senator's office.
- The Ministerial Centre's goal is to answer telephone calls within 20 minutes and to respond to emails within two business days.
 - ✓ In Q1 2019-2020, on average, the Ministerial Centre met its targets.
 - ✓ Calls were answered in under 14 minutes and emails were responded to in just under two business days.



In 2018-2019, the Ministerial Centre responded to **203,000** constituent case enquiries.

- IRCC is committed to making our client support services more accessible, clear and consistent and is working to reduce the time it takes clients to receive answers.
- Through Budget 2019, IRCC received over \$42M over two years to improve access to client support services. This investment is being used to:



Double the percentage of clients who are able to speak to an agent from 25% to 50% (by March 2021)



Decrease the average time to respond to emails from five days to three days (by March 2020)



Expand the Client Support Centre's hours of operations (beginning in April 2020)



Expand the hours of operation at 10 high-volume local offices in Canada (as of July 2019)

- Clients expect support from IRCC, including: guidance to help choose the right path; guidance to help complete, submit, and pay for an application; understanding of how long it takes before they receive a decision; and, clear expectations of what happens after they receive a decision.
- **Online support is important** – when done right, the website and our online tools are the most efficient and effective way to deliver support.
- **In-person support is also important** – immigration and citizenship applications can be life-changing and complicated. Some clients need personal support and reassurance.



IRCC's two greatest client support challenges are:

- ↑ **Volumes** – We are receiving more applications every year, straining our operational teams and leading more clients to ask for support than we have capacity to give.
- ? **Complexity** – Our programs are complicated and so are our operations and procedures. Seemingly simple questions often have complicated answers.