



06 DEC 2019

Tammy

By email: fyi-request-11592-195bb48e@requests.fyi.org.nz

File No: DOIA 1920-0732

Dear Tammy

Thank you for your email of 04 November 2019, requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA):

May I please request information on following for the month of April 2019

- 1. How many SMC applications were lodged in April 2019?*
- 2. Out of the total number of April 2019 Lodgements how many have been allocated case officers?*
- 3. How many applications were allocated case officers using Internal criteria (occupation registration, high remuneration, Government being employer)?*
- 4. How many normal applications (having no eligibility for INZ's internal criteria) were allocated case officers?*

Our response

Question One: How many SMC applications were lodged in April 2019?

Immigration New Zealand (INZ) uses specific terminology when referring to the lodgement and acceptance of visa applications. Before an application is accepted it is referred to as a tendered application. A tendered application may be returned to the applicant and not accepted by INZ if it fails to meet the lodgement requirements. We have interpreted point one of your request to mean how many applications were *accepted* in April 2019, that is, how many applications were successfully lodged. Our records show that there were 968 Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) residence applications accepted in our application management system in April 2019.

Question Two: Out of the total number of April 2019 Lodgements how many have been allocated case officers?

We do not hold information about when an application is allocated to an Immigration Officer in a reportable format. To obtain this information would require staff to manually access the file of each of the 968 applications referred to in the above point.

We are therefore refusing this part of your request under Section 18(f) of the OIA because the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

In accordance with s18A of the OIA, I have considered whether fixing a charge under s15 or extending the time limit under s15(a) would enable the request to be granted but it is my view it would not. In accordance with s18B of the OIA, I have considered whether consulting with you would remove the reason for refusal, however, in my view it would not as to obtain the specific information would involve the manual search of 968 electronic applications.

Questions Three and Four: How many applications were allocated case officers using Internal criteria (occupation registration, high remuneration, Government being employer? and How many normal applications (having no eligibility for INZ's internal criteria) were allocated case officers?

The internal criteria that you have referred to are part of a larger prioritisation processing order. The prioritisation process is for all categories of skilled residence applications processed at Manukau office. This includes Skilled Migrant Category and the Residence from Work Categories. Manukau office is allocating applications in the following order:

1. Employment Visa Escalations (EVE) approved applications.
2. Applications that meet any of the following criteria:
 - a. Returned from the IPT for reassessment; or
 - b. Removal of s49(1)(a) conditions; or
 - c. Deferred under immigration instruction SM21.10 where an offer of employment has been submitted (for applications pre-27/8/2017).
3. Applications that meet any of the following criteria:
 - a. Residence from Work – Talent and Accredited Employer; or
 - b. Remuneration is above the high remuneration threshold listed in immigration instructions – minimum hourly rate of \$50.00 or \$104.00 per annum; or
 - c. Job offer or employment with an Accredited Employer; or
 - d. Applicants with current occupational registration and that registration is required by immigration instructions.
4. Allocation from the queue in date order of when the application was accepted for processing by INZ.

This prioritisation process has been in place since July 2018. Immigration New Zealand (INZ) reserves the right to update or make changes to the order in which visa applications will be prioritised. You will note that employment with Government is no longer a priority criterion. It was removed as a priority criterion in August 2019.

As mentioned in response to question two, in order to obtain the information as to when an application is allocated, staff would need to manually access each of the 968 application files. We are therefore refusing this part of your request under Section 18(f) of the OIA because the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

In accordance with s18A of the OIA, I have considered whether fixing a charge under s15 or extending the time limit under s15(a) would enable the request to be granted but it is my view it would not. In accordance with s18B of the OIA, I have considered whether consulting with you would remove the reason for refusal, however, in my view it would not as to obtain the specific information would involve the manual search of 968 electronic applications.

New Zealand Residence Programme

INZ is resourced to meet the current New Zealand Residence Programme (NZRP) Planning Range set by the Government. The current NZRP Planning Range is for 50,000 to 60,000 residence approvals from 1 July 2018 to 31 December 2019. Further information in regards to the NZRP can be found on INZ's website at: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/news-notifications/government-updates-new-zealand-residence-programme>

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, please contact Anna McLachlan, Business Advisor, Operations Support, Immigration New Zealand at Anna.McLachlan@mbie.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nicola Hogg', written in a cursive style.

Nicola Hogg
General Manager
Border and Visa Operations
Immigration New Zealand
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment