

From: **IEC NHQ / AC EIC (IRCC)**

Subject: MESSAGE FOR IEC ENGAGEMENT STAKEHOLDERS

The Government of Canada is working closely with partners in Canada and around the world, including the World Health Organization (WHO), to respond to the current outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19). One measure that the Government of Canada has put in place is to limit travel to Canada. This restriction has an impact on youth who come to come through one of Canada's 36 youth mobility arrangements. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is the federal department responsible for International Experience Canada (IEC) the program that manages these youth mobility arrangements on behalf of Canada. At this point in time, only essential travel to Canada is permitted.

Please note that there is an official global travel advisory currently in effect.

1. For Canadian youth who are considering an IEC experience abroad:

Canadians are to avoid non-essential travel outside Canada until further notice. The Government is encouraging Canadians to stay informed about health notices and travel advisories through official government channels available at the following links: [Pandemic COVID-19 travel health notice](#), as well as, [Travel Advice and Advisories](#).

Additionally, the Government of Canada has created the COVID-19 Emergency Loan Program for Canadians Abroad. This loan is available for Canadians, and, in exceptional circumstances, Canadian permanent residents who do not have access to a source of funds to return home to Canada.

Should you require financial assistance to return to Canada, please consult the Government of Canada website at: [COVID-19: Financial help for Canadians outside Canada](#), for more information.

2. For youth in partner countries wishing to enter Canada through IEC:

2.1. Invitations to Apply and Application Processing

In addition to the travel restrictions, the COVID-19 crisis has affected the operational capacity of the IEC program. This means that:

- IEC is not issuing invitations at this time and will continue to monitor the situation and inform you when the situation changes; and
- No IEC application in process will be closed or refused due to a lack of documentation or inability to complete the application process in time, such as giving biometrics or completing a medical exam.

2.2. Travel Restrictions and Exemptions

Effective March 18, 2020, Canada is denying entry to travellers who are not citizens or permanent residents of Canada. There are some [exceptions to these restrictions](#), including for [temporary foreign workers](#) who have a work permit or who are approved for one. The exemption to these restrictions allows IEC participants who have been issued with a Port of Entry Letter of Introduction, or have previously been issued a work permit to come to Canada but departed Canada. Note that these exemptions are intended to facilitate entry into Canada for an essential purpose, which amid the COVID-19 pandemic does not include leisure or holiday travel. Youth inquiring about travel opportunities should be strongly discouraged from travelling to Canada at this time.

2.3. Port of Entry Letter of Introduction

IEC participants are normally issued with a Port of Entry Letter of Introduction that is valid for 12 months from the date of issue. Once a letter is issued under the program, it is considered a participation. An issued letter cannot be cancelled. Letters of Introduction which are approaching expiration can be extended for an additional 90 days. Given the current situation, participants who want to extend the validity of the Port of Entry Letter of Introduction must send a request to IRCC's [web form](#).

2.4. Mandatory Isolation Upon Entry to Canada

IEC participants and other work permit holders must [isolate](#) for 14 days, even if they have no symptoms. Information on the Government of Canada's mandatory self-isolation orders is available [here](#). This information is also being sent to these individuals via email.

2.5. Preparations to Self-Isolate in Canada

IRCC's messaging to participants also advises them that they need to have a plan for how they will self-isolate for 14 days when they get to Canada and how they will obtain medical care if they become sick. While they are in self-isolation, they will be unable to leave where they are staying for any purpose. IRCC is also advising temporary foreign workers that if they do not have a plan for self-isolation, including how they will buy groceries and access other essential services, to delay travel until they can make such arrangements.

The latest travel advice from the Government of Canada as a result of COVID-19 can be found [here](#).

2.6. Employment Challenges for those youth travelling to Canada under the Working Holiday, COOP or Young Professional streams

In Canada, similar to other countries, most nonessential businesses are closed or are operating with limited staff, particularly in the service industry. IEC participants who have a job with a specific employer should confirm with their employer that they are continuing to operate and that the job they have hired them for is still needed.

In addition, for IEC participants who have been approved for an open work permit under IEC's Working Holiday stream, it may be very difficult to secure a job at this time because most businesses that hire youth are closed. Additionally entering Canada for the purposes of travel for leisure is not deemed essential.

2.7. Canada Emergency Response Benefit

As part of the Government of Canada's response to support individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic, an [Emergency Response Benefit](#) has been established. Temporary residents, including International Experience Canada participants, are eligible if they meet basic requirements. Additional information regarding the extent of support and eligibility is available [here](#).

2.8. Additional information

IEC participants can extend their work permits under a limited number of circumstances. No additional conditions for extension are permitted apart from those cited in the following [link](#). Note that an IEC work permit cannot be extended beyond the maximum duration specified in each applicable youth mobility arrangement which varies by country and territory.

As you can appreciate, the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve and that includes our response to the crisis. Further measures may be taken in response to public health needs, and non-essential travel to Canada is strongly discouraged at this point in time.

If you have questions please send them to ircc.iecnhq-aceic.ircc@cic.gc.ca. IEC participants should use [the IRCC web form](#) for case-specific questions.

Thank you for your understanding and I hope you and your loved ones are safe.

Liz Hong-Farrell

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Pronouns: she/her hers | Pronoms: elle