

Minister
of Immigration,
Refugees and Citizenship



Ministre
de l'Immigration,
des Réfugiés et de la Citoyenneté

Ottawa, Canada K1A 1L1

MAR 03 2017

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

MAR 08 2017

BUREAU DE DIRECTION

Ms. Robyn Benson
National President
Public Service Alliance of Canada
233 Gilmour Street
Ottawa ON K2P 0P1

Dear Ms. Benson:

Thank you for your correspondence of December 23, 2016, addressed to my predecessor, the Honourable John McCallum, concerning the relocation of the workload from the Case Processing Centre (CPC) in Vegreville to Edmonton. I apologize for the delay in responding.

I would like to begin by reiterating that the decision to relocate the CPC in Vegreville to downtown Edmonton was a difficult one for the management of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

This relocation is not about job reduction, it is about sustaining and enabling the growth of our operations. Over the past years, the CPC in Vegreville has had a number of challenges in attracting and retaining staff. Numerous recruitment strategies and external staffing processes for all tenures have netted very few new employees for the office. Additionally, between October 2015 and September 2016, 17% of staff at the processing centre left the workforce.

I must equally reiterate that the new location on Jasper Avenue in Edmonton meets the business requirements that IRCC established in order to effectively sustain the growing operations of this CPC in Alberta. These business requirements included: the feasibility of recruiting and retaining staff to enable future growth of the processing centre; increasing the bilingual capacity of the processing centre workforce to meet the global workload of IRCC; access to public transportation and rental accommodation for staff; and, access to post-secondary institutions for staff recruitment.

Public Services and Procurement Canada identified that the office space at 9700 Jasper Avenue best meets the business requirements of IRCC. Officials have confirmed that the new CPC in Edmonton will contain workstations to accommodate 312 employees. If required, the introduction of shiftwork at this location will allow IRCC to double this capacity.

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All current IRCC indeterminate employees of CPC Vegreville will have the opportunity to continue employment in their current positions once the office is relocated to Edmonton. Term employees at the time of the move will be offered employment at the new office. IRCC management continues to recognize that this relocation will have significant impacts on staff, and they are making every effort at minimizing those impacts. To date, some of these efforts to engage with and support staff include:

- Relocation assistance will be offered to all indeterminate employees;
- Counselling from the government's Employee Assistance Program has been made available to staff, on-site, since the announcement;
- On-site information sessions on relocation have been held with staff, additional sessions will be held in the coming months;
- On-site, pre-retirement courses have been procured, and staff are being given the opportunity to participate; and
- A dedicated email for CPC Vegreville staff has been set up for questions.

I would also like to point out that recently, IRCC offered indeterminate employment to 39 of CPC Vegreville's current term employees in order to respond to its growing business needs. With these appointments, employees gain both employment stability and access to reimbursements for their relocation expenses. Contracts for term employees of CPC Vegreville have also been extended for the full fiscal year 2017-18.

Going forward, management will endeavor to continue providing affected CPC staff with support to assist them through this transition period.

I hope that the information provided is helpful in addressing your concerns.

Yours sincerely,

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

Ahmed Hussen, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship