



9 September 2022

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John via FYI

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Tēnā koe John

OIA request 22/23 0121 Request for Citizenship Timeframes

Thank you for your Official Information Act (Act) request received by the Department of Internal Affairs (Department) on 11 August 2022.

You requested –

- 1) *Number of new citizenship by grant applications from May 2022 to present date (month-by-month).*
- 2) *Number of citizenship by grant applications that had the NZ Citizenship granted in 2022 and have applied in 2022. (From 1 Jan to 1 Sep).*
- 3) *Number of citizenship case officers trained to assess Citizenship by grant Applications as of August 15.*
- 4) *Number of different queues of citizenship by grant applications awaiting being assigned to a case officer*
- 5) *Number of citizenship by grants applications per queue.*
- 6) *Number of trained case officers per queue.*
- 7) *Detailed criteria used by the Citizenship Office officials to decide which applications are pass or fail the automatic checks. The back office decides who has a shorter timeframe than others. Please describe based on what.*
- 8) *Top 3 reasons citizenship by grant application failed the automated checks and the number of applications per reason (Jan 2022 - August 2022).*

9) All e-mails, correspondence and/or MS Team chat discussing the Citizenship Office end-of the year target (December 2022) relating to the number of unassigned Citizenship by grant applications.

In response to your request I can provide you with the following information.

Question one

Please refer to Appendix A attached alongside this letter, specifically *Table One - Citizenship by Grant applications (CBG) received from 1 May to 6 September 2022*.

Question two

Please refer to Appendix A, *Table Two – Citizenship by Grant Applications received and granted from 1 January to 1 September 2022*.

Question three

The Department uses two systems for the processing of citizenship applications; Citizenship Operating System (COS) and Customer Centred Management Solution (CCMS).

The number of trained case officers to assess Citizenship by Grant applications as of 15 August 2022:

- a. 44 Life and Identity Service Officers (LISO's)/ citizenship case officers working in CCMS
- b. 20 LISO's/ citizenship case officers working in COS

Question four

We have five assessment queues and four validation queues within CCMS

We have one assessment queue and one validation queue in COS

Question five

Please refer to Appendix A, *Table Three - Number of Citizenship by Grant applications per queue*.

Question six

Please refer to Appendix A, *Table Four - Number of trained case officers per queue*.

Question seven

It may be helpful to explain when applications are received, our systems run a series of preliminary automated checks which are used to triage them into different queues

In response to this portion of your request I can advise that the information requested will be made available soon via a proactively released Official Information Act (OIA) response, available here: <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Official-Information-Act-Requests-2> under OIA 2223-0111.

Therefore, I must refuse this part of your request pursuant to section 18(d) of the Act; that the information requested is or will soon be publicly available.

Question eight

The top three reasons for an application failing the automated checks are:

- Applicant is not from an English-speaking country or does not hold a visa-type that automatically demonstrates they meet the English language requirements, so further investigation needed to establish English knowledge/ability (5,572 applicants).
- System does not automatically show that the applicant meets the presence requirement for New Zealand citizenship, so further investigation is needed to establish they have been here for the requisite timeframe (2,890 applicants).
- System does not automatically provide a photo match with Immigration New Zealand records, so manual photo matching is required (2,314 applicants).

It may be helpful for me to explain that numbers are based on applications in the system unassigned to a case officer on 4 August 2022. We are not able to provide the data over the period requested due to the complexity. These figures do not necessarily reflect exact numbers due to some applications being grouped with family members and applications potentially requiring multiple manual checks.

Question nine

The Department has not set an end of year target for citizenship by grant processing. Therefore, I must refuse this part of your request pursuant to section 18(g) of the Act; that the information requested is not held by the department and we have no grounds for believing that the information is either held by another department or connected more closely with the functions of another department.

I can assure you that the Department is working hard to reduce the timeframes to process all citizenship by grant applications.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, the Department has decided to proactively release a copy of this response on the DIA website. All requestor data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release. The released response will be made available here: <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Official-Information-Act-Requests-2>.

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.

Ngā mihi



Julia Taylor
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Service Delivery and Operations