

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS RELATING TO THE MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY OF RAP SERVICES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

### Q.1 Does IRCC have an inventory of the number of GARs currently in temporary accommodation?

- In addition to a survey all RAP SPOs will be receiving today, March 25, from the co-chair of the COVID-19 Task Team, Chris Friesen, SPOs are asked to share their inventory with their IRCC officer, including how they are separating those who are still under self-isolation.

### Q.2 What is the expected protocol for clients currently in temporary accommodations who have recently arrived and are not showing symptoms?

- First and foremost, the latest guidance from the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) and local public health authorities must be followed. PHAC guidance for individuals having recently traveled abroad is to self-isolate for a period of 14 days and monitor for symptoms. Clients are to:
  - [Self-isolate](#) for 14 days after arrival in Canada.
  - Monitor their health for **fever, cough or difficulty breathing**.
  - Wash their hands often for 20 seconds and cover their mouth and nose with their arm when coughing or sneezing.
- Clients who are in self-isolation should not be sharing bathrooms, kitchen areas, or any common area with other guests in temporary accommodation.
- Meals and supplies will need to be delivered directly to the clients in self-isolation. SPOs should not expect clients to shop for their own food or eat in common areas like cafeterias. During the 14-day isolation period, SPOs may need to manage alternate arrangements such as delivering catered meals or supplying ready-to eat foods to clients in isolation. Additional expenses, as needed, are expected, and details should be discussed with your IRCC officer if you have any questions regarding items in your budget.

### Q.3 What if a client in our care starts to show symptoms?

According to guidelines from the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) :

If you develop a **fever, cough or difficulty breathing** within 14 days:

- Continue to isolate yourself from others
- Immediately call a health care professional or public health authority and:
  - describe your symptoms and travel history
  - follow their instructions carefully

The SPO should assist clients in communicating with local public health authorities, including providing translation services, or calling on behalf of the client. If the SPO is not able to escort the client to a mobile testing clinic, or if the conditions worsen, they may need to call an ambulance or paramedic for

assistance. However, SPOs should be prepared for the possibility that the hospitals are full and an immediate discharge would take place, therefore a discharge plan for their care and quarantine measures should be taken. Decisions about reception center shut downs or protocols for dispersing GARs should be guided local health authority guidelines, and will need to be made on a case by case basis. IRCC will support any decision, additional activity or expenditure necessary to meet the recommendations from PHAC or your local health authorities.

The SPOs should find out the latest guidelines regarding quarantine measures by calling a health care clinic or public health authority in their jurisdiction. Where possible, clients exhibiting symptoms should be isolated from others and moved to a private suite if possible, or should be placed off premises (e.g. hotel). If a family member is showing symptoms, the whole family would need to restart their isolation period for 14 days as they have been in contact with a person showing symptoms.

Onsite health-care services that may be needed for those who fall ill may need to be arranged through the IFHP. If this is the case, please contact your IRCC officer as soon as possible to help connect with IRCC's IFHP team.

#### **Q.4 What if a client does not comply with quarantine or self-isolation directions?**

The SPO has the authority to take actions according with their own policies including deny access to any client who puts at risk the health and safety of other guests and staff. If the SPO deems it necessary to hire security staff to ensure that self-isolation directions are followed, these costs will be deemed eligible and will be approved when you will submit your claims.

It may be suitable for such clients to be housed off-site for the safety of staff and clients at the reception house. If the client is already at a hotel, the SPO can consult with information available through the PHAC and Government of Canada websites to understand what information may need to be further emphasized with to the client, for their own safety and the safety of others.

#### **Q.5 What if critical staff members start exhibiting symptoms?**

According to the PHAC guidelines, certain essential workers who have been given exemptions to the travel ban who must travel the border for essential work have been given specific guidelines, which may be appropriate for frontline staff in your agency as well:

- practice social distancing (maintain a distance of 2 metres from others)
- closely **self-monitor**
- self-isolate should they exhibit any symptoms

It is recommended that employers in these sectors conduct active daily monitoring of their staff for COVID-19 symptoms (checking for cough, fever or shortness of breath).

If a staff member from your agency feels sick or exhibits any symptom, they should immediately self-isolate at home and follow the guidelines above. They should not interact further in-person with any client. As this may impact staffing capacity at your agency, IRCC will approve any additional costs

relating to hiring new contractual staffing or overtime expenses. You may also wish to partially rely on volunteers to help ensure that critical services continue to be delivered.

#### **Q.6 What additional allowances can be added to my CA?**

All additional costs associated with delivering essential services in line with guidelines issued by the PHAC are eligible and will be approved by IRCC when you will submit your claims. We ask that you track and provide rationale for spending when submitting claims. If you do not currently have sufficient funding in your budget to cover these expenses, please contact your IRCC officer as soon as possible.

Examples of additional expenses that will be covered include: additional cleaning products/services and janitorial services, overtime and contractual labour to cover for staff shortages, personal protective equipment for clients and staff (masks, gloves, etc.), security detail, cell phone purchases for staff and some clients in isolation, additional catered meals, offsite housing (e.g. overflow hotels), laptops, software or products to manage virtual meetings or delivery of service, etc.

#### **Q.7 Will we have funding for overstays and overflow hotel spaces?**

As per the guidance that was issued on Wednesday March 19<sup>th</sup> (“RAP services to be delivered during self-isolation period for recently arrived RAP clients”), there are current no limitations on the number of days clients can stay in temporary accommodations. It will not be necessary to contact their IRCC officer to obtain approval for overstays. However, we ask that all RAP SPOs keep their IRCC officer updated on whatever they may currently need.

If it is manageable, SPOs using a reception house model may want to consider sending healthy clients to hotels after their 14-day isolation period is over, while waiting for permanent accommodation to be found for them. This may better help prevent the spread of viruses through social distancing from those still under isolation, where possible. It is recognized that this will impact CA budgets, therefore please inform your IRCC officer regarding any need that may impact your current budget.

#### **Q.8 Will we have funding and flexibility with regards to food and incidental allowances?**

The functional guidance went out on Wednesday March 19 stated that it will not be necessary to contact IRCC officers to obtain approval for increased food and incidental allowances. Food and incidentals allowances must be provided for the full duration of clients’ stay in temporary accommodation. For clients in self-isolation who must have food delivered to them directly, it is understood that food and incidental allowance provided to clients may have to be increased to cover actual costs. Flexibility may also be exercised when using this part of your CA budget to cover any costs relating to RAP staff having to shop for and deliver food directly to GARs. However, we ask that all RAP SPOs keep their IRCC officer updated on whatever they may currently need.

**Q.9 Is IRCC considering a COVID-19 surveillance allowance?**

At this time IRCC does not see a need for a separate budget line. SPOs have approval to spend additional funds on necessary costs, however, IRCC is asking SPOs to keep IRCC Officers informed.