



February 28, 2014 — Ottawa — More than 19,200 people from 193 countries have become Canadian citizens at citizenship ceremonies held across Canada over the month of February. This is almost 100 percent higher compared to the same period last year (February 2013) when approximately 9,980 people were granted citizenship across Canada. At 220 citizenship ceremonies held across the country this past month, from school gymnasiums, to Citizenship and Immigration offices, to city halls and hotel conference rooms, Canada has welcomed our newest citizens. These high numbers demonstrate that the system is becoming more efficient and the backlog of citizenship applications is decreasing, helping more people realize their dream of becoming Canadian sooner. The government's proposed changes in Bill C-24, the Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act, will also reduce wait times by streamlining the decision-making process for citizenship. It is expected that these changes will bring the average processing time for citizenship applications down to under one year and that the current backlog will be reduced by more than 80 percent by 2015-2016.

Quick facts

In 2013, 128,936 people were granted citizenship ³/₄an average of 10,745 each month.

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So far in 2014, Canada has welcomed more than 41,000 new citizens at 462 ceremonies across Canada.

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Since 2006, Canada has enjoyed the highest sustained levels of immigration in Canadian history ³/₄an average of 257,000 newcomers each year. Accordingly, the demand for citizenship has increased by 30 percent.

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Canada has the highest rate of naturalization in the world ³/₄85 percent of eligible permanent residents become citizens. Citizenship and Immigration Canada received 333,860 citizenship applications in 2013, the highest volume ever.

For a new Canadian, the citizenship ceremony marks their formal entry into the Canadian family. It is one of the few occasions when we formally reflect on the rights, responsibilities, privileges and benefits of being a Canadian citizen.

Quote

“Canadian citizenship comes with rights, responsibilities and a commitment to Canadian values and traditions. To the number of new Canadians who have taken the Oath of Citizenship this month, I welcome you to the Canadian family. Our government will continue to take action to improve the citizenship process for future new Canadians. We will build on our successes in reforming the immigration system and, with the launch of the Blueprint for Citizenship Improvements, we will improve the citizenship process so newcomers become Canadian citizens more quickly.” - Chris Alexander, Canada’s Citizenship and Immigration Minister -

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Building a stronger Canada: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) strengthens Canada’s economic, social and cultural prosperity, helping ensure Canadian safety and security while managing one of the largest and most generous immigration programs in the world.

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