

A smiling woman with long dark hair and bangs is in the foreground, looking towards the camera. In the background, three other people (two women and one man) are blurred, appearing to be in a collaborative work environment. The overall image has a teal overlay at the bottom.

BUILDING TOMORROW'S PUBLIC SERVICE TODAY

ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17



Public Service Commission
of Canada

Commission de la fonction publique
du Canada

Canada

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Message

FROM THE COMMISSIONERS



CANADA 150

The 150th anniversary of Canada is a good juncture at which to look at how the Public Service Commission of Canada (the Commission) came into being and why it remains relevant today.


The work of the Commission is based on a century-old tradition of protecting public service appointments from political influence and ensuring a professional, non-partisan public service.

Parliament first passed legislation establishing the Commission in 1908. But who in 1908 could have envisioned the changes that were coming? Today more than 258,000 public servants advise on and implement public policies, deliver programs and services in areas as diverse as foreign policy, environment, health, cybersecurity and digital transformation.

We live in a rapidly changing world, one in which expectations of excellence remain high. As an institution, we know the Commission's ability to keep pace with the changes all around us has not been optimal. This awareness prompted us to take a hard look at the federal staffing system, with an eye to finding areas where we could improve our approaches to adjust to this ever-changing environment.

With this as background, we are very pleased to present the 2016-17 Annual Report of the Public Service Commission of Canada.

Given the need for the public service to adapt to become more agile and responsive to today's environment, the Commission launched the New Direction in Staffing in April 2016. Our goal was to simplify staffing by reducing the administrative burden on departments and agencies and to offer them more flexibility to customize their approach to staffing to better meet their day-to-day realities and evolving needs.



The resulting Appointment Framework, accompanied by a strengthened oversight model, is the foundation from which the Commission now provides guidance and direct support to hiring managers and human resources professionals. Our hope is that they will take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the policy changes and innovate and take intelligent risks to build a highly competent and diverse workforce with the skills required today and in the future.

In addition to tackling our approach to policy and oversight, we also looked at how we influence recruitment. Despite a genuine commitment across the public service to improve recruitment efforts, we have not been as successful as we would like.

Changing demographics are at play. We know that a quarter of all public servants will be eligible to retire in the next 5 years. And yet public servants aged 34 and younger continue to be under-represented in the public service. Improving our recruitment efforts to develop and retain the next generation of public servants is widely recognized as being essential to renewing the public service.

Working closely with departments and agencies, we enhanced this year's Post-Secondary Recruitment Campaign by specifically targeting university and college graduates in fields where demand is highest. The talented graduates hired through the campaign are bringing fresh ideas and perspectives into the public service that are key to renewal.

In 2016-17, our desire for a public service that represents all Canadians and reflects our diverse society compelled us to take a closer look at our practices and experiment with new recruitment and staffing strategies. In addition, we noticed a growing desire among managers to find new and better ways to attract and assess candidates. Similarly, candidates today have reasonable expectations that they will have an intuitive and responsive recruitment experience.

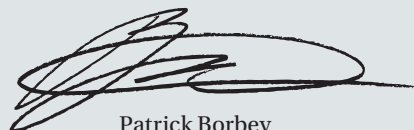
At the Commission, we began focusing on how we could meet the evolving expectations of managers and candidates with respect to the process for public service hiring.

This year, we revamped the application process for students to make applying for federal jobs faster, easier and mobile-friendly. We piloted shorter, plain language job advertisements designed to attract and not deter candidates by focusing on what the job *offers*, rather than what it *requires*. And we improved access to job opportunities for people with a priority entitlement so that they can take a more active role in finding employment.

We also continued to promote our modern staffing and assessment products, that are available to managers and human resources advisors, to reduce barriers and improve the representation of persons with disabilities in the public service.

Canada is recognized as having one of the best public services in the world, as referenced in [The International Civil Service Effectiveness \(InCiSE\) Index 2017](#) report. We cannot, however, afford to be complacent if we are to maintain this position. Doing our part as a dynamic and evolving organization will require that we have the courage to think differently, to take risks and perhaps even fail from time to time.

As Commissioners, we are determined to continue making thoughtful and bold changes to how we discharge our mandate. We are confident that this approach will serve as a catalyst for change across the public service. We will continue to challenge ourselves as we look at where and how the Commission can have a positive and lasting impact on staffing across the federal government.



Patrick Borbey
President



D. G. J. Tucker
Commissioner



Susan M. W. Cartwright
Commissioner

Merit-based STAFFING

A New Direction in Staffing

On April 1, 2016, the Public Service Commission of Canada (the Commission) launched a new policy framework for staffing in the federal public service. Our [New Direction in Staffing](#) is the most significant change to the staffing system in 10 years.

Many factors led to our decision to launch the New Direction in Staffing. After 10 years of operating under the [Public Service Employment Act](#), we were concerned about our collective ability to adapt to changes taking place in our recruiting environment.

We realized that an overly prescriptive and sometimes confusing set of the Commission policies and guidance documents was not helping managers and human resources professionals meet their objectives.

With the New Direction in Staffing, we streamlined our policies, simplifying 12 policies into a single appointment policy and reduced the administrative burden on departments and agencies.

In making these changes, our goal was to offer departments and agencies more flexibility to customize their approach to staffing to better meet their day-to-day realities and evolving needs.

At its core, the New Direction in Staffing represents a shift away from a focus on rules to a system that encourages managers to exercise their discretion when making staffing decisions, while meeting the simplified policy requirements in ways adapted to their organizations. In this way, the New Direction in Staffing advances the objectives of the Public Service Employment Act.



In 1867 the new country of Canada was served by a very small civil service composed exclusively of political appointees. The 1918 Civil Service Act led to the implementation of a merit system that focused on recruiting persons who were fit for the duties they would perform. It also ensured that public servants refrained from any partisan activities.

Engaging with departments and agencies

Rather than standing aside and letting departments and agencies deal with implementation alone, in 2016-17 the Commission directed resources to supporting them in their transition to the New Direction in Staffing.

We did this by providing ongoing advice and guidance and encouraging the development of innovative approaches to staffing and responsible risk-taking.

We actively collaborated with the Canada School of Public Service on the delivery of courses on the New Direction in Staffing for hiring managers and human resources professionals across Canada. We also partnered with departments and agencies to develop and deliver learning sessions on the New Direction in Staffing tailored to their unique business needs and operational contexts.

These learning sessions and courses provided valuable information to those at the 'front line' of implementation by focusing on how the New Direction in Staffing can be applied in their respective departments and agencies to improve and speed up staffing.

Early insights

In a transition year, understanding of the changes and compliance with new requirements are key early measures of success.

As part of a new System-Wide Staffing Audit launched in late 2016, the Commission administered a questionnaire on the New Direction in Staffing to a sample of hiring managers and staffing advisors from 25 departments and agencies.

Early results indicate high levels of awareness and understanding of New Direction in Staffing requirements among hiring managers surveyed, and even more so among staffing advisors.

Encouragingly, most hiring managers said they perceive that there has been some culture shift in the staffing system and that they have more room to apply their judgement when staffing. But the true measure of success is whether the New Direction in Staffing has prompted change in departments and agencies.

In reviewing policies from over half of all departments and agencies and engaging in ongoing dialogue with them about the New Direction in Staffing, the Commission sees positive indications that a gradual transformation is occurring.

Although core requirements remain the same for all departments and agencies, each organization has its own unique operating context and their staffing strategies should reflect these differences.

With the previous Appointment Framework, the Commission saw few differences across organizational staffing policies. We are now starting to see more customized approaches. Where we previously saw a constrained system, we are now seeing departments and agencies gradually becoming more innovative and experimental in their approach to staffing.

It is too early to fully understand and measure the impact of the New Direction in Staffing on the staffing system, but these early indications show a positive momentum upon which we will continue to build.

Human resources transformation at Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada

The department's human resources team set a goal to change how they do their work, delivering strategic, client-focused services that support the department's business. They focused on 4 areas:

- › **Attract** – hire the right people
- › **Grow** – develop the people they have
- › **Move** – facilitate mobility and agility
- › **Retain** – hold on to talent they have developed

To date, their work has included introducing a single point of contact for clients, embedding business partners in client management teams, and completing reviews of several common human resources processes, all with great results. Clients are now receiving more relevant and more strategic service, and completing their human resources processes much more quickly.

The team continues to pilot new approaches and build on results to support continuous improvement.

From policy to practice

Though the policy change provided an essential foundation, the Commission recognized that more work was needed to truly simplify and accelerate staffing.

The time required to hire into the public service continues to deter the talent it seeks to recruit and has a direct impact on the ability of departments and agencies to provide service to Canadians.

We committed to streamlining our programs and services that have a direct impact on the staffing system as a whole, and to collaborating with departments and agencies to foster innovative approaches to recruiting the next generation of talent.

In 2016-17, this work resulted in improvements to the administration of [priority entitlements](#). We made changes to provide more direct access to opportunities for those with an entitlement so that they can play a more active part in determining their future. We also reduced the administration time and effort for departments and agencies.

To improve the experience of candidates, the Commission redesigned its [Federal Student Work Experience Program application](#) to make it simpler, shorter and accessible on mobile devices.

Renewing job ads

When looking at a typical Government of Canada job advertisement, candidates often find a lengthy, complex list of job requirements, rather than a description of what the job has to offer.

In the spirit of experimentation, the Public Service Commission of Canada (the Commission) collaborated with 5 departments and agencies to pilot the redesign and modernization of Government of Canada job ads.

Building on leading practices from both the private and public sectors, new advertisements were posted using plain accessible language. The posters explored new ways of capturing job requirements and featured more information on the hiring organization's culture. To extend the reach of the advertisements, various social media platforms were used to promote the opportunities.

The Commission will continue to promote and support simpler, more enticing job ads and the use of multiple platforms to ensure we are doing everything possible to attract and recruit the next generation of our workforce.



Oversight of the staffing system

With the implementation of the new Appointment Framework, the Commission also introduced a strengthened oversight model.

In a delegated staffing system, oversight is an accountability shared with deputy heads. This means that the Commission and deputy heads are collectively responsible for achieving the desired outcomes. For this reason, the Commission engaged regularly with departments and agencies to examine how they were implementing the new requirements.

As of March 31, 2017, most departments and agencies had put the necessary requirements in place and updated their staffing frameworks.

We also noted that departments and agencies had developed a range of approaches to staffing and recalibrated their staffing models to reflect the intent of the New Direction in Staffing, all supportive of a merit-based system.

As part of the New Direction in Staffing, the Commission established a streamlined set of reporting requirements for deputy heads for key authorities delegated to them. Areas include the use of internal investigations, making exceptions to the national area of selection and specific Official Languages provisions. The resulting reporting allows the Commission to monitor these areas more closely and, if necessary, provide more targeted engagement and support.

The Commission also conducts staffing assessments to provide an informal evaluation of a participating department or agency's staffing system and appointment processes, to identify strengths and potential areas for improvement.

This year, 2 staffing assessments were undertaken, one of the Canada Border Services Agency and the other of the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Each staffing assessment involved a close partnership between the Commission and human resources and internal audit professionals at each agency, to help build capacity within the organization.

Results indicate that both agencies put in place the necessary requirements and have implemented the New Direction in Staffing in ways that reflect their respective operational contexts and business needs.

A System-Wide Staffing Audit was launched to obtain information on the integrity of public service staffing and to gather further information on progress in New Direction in Staffing implementation.

Set to be completed in 2017-18, the audit will provide the Commission with a good understanding of the performance of the staffing system and identify areas requiring attention to support system-wide improvements.

Investigations

The Commission identifies and corrects errors and irregularities in staffing through the investigation of staffing processes.

While the number of requests for investigations related to errors, omissions or improper conduct fluctuated slightly, 2016-17 witnessed a rise in the number of cases of suspected fraud in staffing processes, such as lying about past experience, academic or professional credentials or falsifying official documents.

This increase is due in part to a new requirement for departments and agencies to refer to the Commission all cases where fraud, political influence or improper conduct are suspected. It's also the result of the Commission communication efforts to reinforce the importance of referring such cases.

	Error, omission or improper conduct in external processes			Fraud		
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Number of requests for Investigations	171	125	141	78	70	139

	Error, omission or improper conduct in external processes			Fraud		
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Number of cases completed	194	135	139	89	77	128
Number of cases closed without investigation	156	128	127	13	16	57
Number of investigations unfounded	26	4	7	22	19	23
Number of investigations founded	12	3	5	54	42	48

Notes: 1) No allegations of political influence in staffing have been received over the past 3 years.
2) 'Cases completed' include requests for investigation from both this year and the previous fiscal year.

Modernizing investigations

The Public Service Employment Act calls for investigations to be conducted as informally and as expeditiously as possible. As identified during a previous external review, we have been falling short of meeting this objective.

However, this year we made progress, reducing processing times by better triaging cases at the outset and by streamlining the way we work.

For errors that are simple, small in scope, or the result of a misunderstanding, the Commission uses a facilitated resolution process. This approach is quicker and less formal than an investigation. This year, we used facilitated resolutions to resolve 24 cases, compared with 7 cases last year.

In 2016-17, the average time for conducting an investigation, from the receipt of an allegation (or referral) to the Commission's final decision, dropped 25% from last year, to 274 days. We recognize that further improvement is still required and this remains a priority for us.

Finally, the Commission launched a redesigned [Investigations web page](#) after consulting with departments and agencies and other users. Our redesigned web presence is simple and easy to use. It has a more intuitive interface, contains new and interactive tools and more complete information on the investigations process for concerns related to appointment processes or political activities.

Ongoing oversight

Beyond our traditional approaches to overseeing the integrity of the staffing system, the Commission also monitors and analyzes hiring data and conducts surveys, research and studies.

The information collected through these activities provides departments and agencies with an informed view of the dynamics of the staffing system and guides any potential adjustments the Commission's policies, programs and services.

Open Government

As part of its commitment to [Open Government](#), in 2016-17 the Commission released 60 open data sets in accessible and machine-readable format on topics related to hiring and staffing activities, employment equity, applications, priority entitlements, investigations and testing and assessment.

This directly supports the Commission's mandate by ensuring that information regarding the dynamics of the staffing system is widely available to stakeholders.

Updates on the trends and patterns of public service hiring will be provided once the 2016-17 data becomes available.¹

¹ Data to report on hiring and staffing activities for departments and agencies under the Public Service Employment Act was unavailable at the time of tabling of this Annual Report.



Staffing Dashboard

The Commission's 'Staffing Dashboard' was launched on April 1, 2016 to support departments and agencies in adapting to the New Direction in Staffing.

By bringing together a broad range of timely and relevant staffing data, the Dashboard gives deputy heads, hiring managers and human resources professionals an understanding of staffing activities and trends within their organizations.

It also allows them to compare their data with that of other departments and agencies, including similar-sized or similarly mandated ones, or to the public service as a whole.

Updated on a quarterly basis, the Dashboard was downloaded more than 12,000 times by users in 2016-17.



Surveys

In 2016-17, the Commission conducted extensive consultations with a full range of stakeholders to gather input for its renewed staffing survey.

Set to be launched in early 2018, the Staffing and Non-Partisanship Survey will provide a more complete view of staffing by including the perceptions of staffing specialists, in addition to hiring managers and employees (both those who participated in a staffing process and those who did not).

The Commission has also expanded the survey beyond its traditional scope to find out how much employees know about their rights and responsibilities for maintaining a politically impartial public service.

In addition, managers and staffing specialists will answer questions on the New Direction in Staffing and the [Veterans Hiring Act](#) to determine their level of knowledge on these key areas of recent change.

Diversity IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

In supporting recruitment into the federal public service, the Public Service Commission (the Commission) has a responsibility to promote a representative public service, reflecting the rich diversity of the Canadians it serves.



The Public Service Commission's first major efforts to improve representation started in the 1970's when individual programs aimed at recruiting French Canadians, women and Aboriginal peoples were put in place.

Representativeness

We believe that more and better communications outreach is key to attracting candidates from diverse backgrounds. To this end, in 2016-17 we collaborated with departments and agencies to develop outreach activities that attract high quality candidates from a range of backgrounds, including employment equity groups and Official Languages minority communities.

We also know that reducing barriers in assessment is key to achieving a truly representative workforce. In 2016-17, the Commission continued to invest in reducing barriers in assessment to improve accessibility for all persons and to improve the recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities.

We recognize that we collectively still have much work to do to bring more persons with disabilities into the federal public service. Within this group there remains a significant gap between the number of applicants to the federal public service and their workforce availability.



When Parliament revised the Public Service Employment Act in 1967, the Public Service Commission (the Commission) was given the responsibility for ensuring, either directly or through delegation, that the public service was staffed according to merit and without discrimination. 2017 marks the 50th anniversary of the Commission's enlarged mandate to work at preventing discriminatory practices in the treatment of candidates for positions in the public service.

To help departments and agencies build a more diverse workforce, the Commission has partnered with the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer on targeted recruitment initiatives designed to bring more Indigenous students and students with disabilities into the federal public service.

The results to date are promising. In 2016-17, the Indigenous Youth Summer Employment Opportunity and Youth with Disabilities Summer Employment Opportunity had 99 participants. Many of them expressed their intention to pursue a career in the federal public service.

With Indigenous peoples representing one of the fastest growing segments of the Canadian population, the Commission is partnering with the Interdepartmental Collaboration Circle on Indigenous Representation in the Federal Public Service (a committee whose interest is to improve Indigenous representation), to develop a public service-wide Indigenous recruitment strategy.

In partnership with Pilimmaksaivik, the Inuit Centre of Excellence in Employment, the Commission supported the development of a whole-of-government Inuit Employment Plan. The goal is to improve access to federal public service jobs for Inuit persons in Nunavut and help the Government of Canada meet its obligations under the [Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act](#).

Applicants to advertised processes, by employment equity designated group and fiscal year, compared to 2011 workforce availability

	Aboriginal peoples	Persons with disabilities	Members of visible minorities	Women
Applicants 2016-17	3.3%	2.7%	22.1%	53.4%
2011 workforce availability	3.4%	4.4%	13.0%	52.5%

Notes: This table includes applicants whose latest application was to an external advertisement that included indeterminate positions and/or term positions of at least 3 months. The number for women is derived from the gender profile in the Public Service Resourcing System, and is calculated using the total number of applicants that indicated their gender. The remaining applicant percentages are based on applicants who self-declared through the Self-Declaration Form for Members of Employment Equity Groups in Public Service Resourcing System.

The 2011 workforce availability for the public service was provided by Treasury Board Secretariat. The 2011 workforce availability data became available in 2015. This data is used by the Public Service Commission to compare with data on designated group applicants and appointments.



The [Employment Equity Act](#) was proclaimed on August 13, 1986.

Its goal was to achieve workplace equality by ensuring that ability and qualifications are the only criteria for employment opportunities, benefits and advancement.

Specifically, the intention was to correct disadvantages experienced by 4 designated groups: Women, visible minorities, Aboriginal peoples and persons with disabilities.

The Act has 3 major premises:

- no one shall be denied employment opportunities and benefits for reasons unrelated to ability
- special measures are necessary to improve the employment situation of members of the designated groups
- “reasonable accommodation” requires employers to recognize legitimate differences between groups and take reasonable steps to accommodate those differences

Renewal in the public service

A number of recent reports (such as [Millennial Voices: Informing the Future of Canada's Federal Public Service](#) by the Inter-Union Youth Caucus and [Building a Dynamic Future: The Next Generation of Public Service Talent](#) by the Public Policy Forum) on millennial hiring have highlighted some common challenges in recruiting individuals from this segment of the Canadian population.

Recognized barriers to attracting the next generation of talent include time-consuming application processes that offer few updates to candidates, insufficient outreach and overly complex selection criteria.

To modernize the outdated and complex student application process, the Commission redesigned the Federal Student Work Experience Program application process, based on the findings of user experience testing. Launched in February 2017, students can now complete their application in approximately 6 minutes. This is a significant improvement to the hour (or more) it took students to apply in the past.

The new, more intuitive interface not only significantly reduced the number of questions students have during the application process, it also allows for improved matching of students' interests to job opportunities.

University and college graduates remain a critical source for public service renewal. Recent graduates bring new knowledge and fresh ways of thinking to the federal public service.

This year, in partnership with participating departments and agencies, the Commission's Post-Secondary Recruitment Campaign targeted graduates in areas of high demand, as identified by hiring managers.

Historically, only 5% of candidates are hired through the annual campaign. In the future, it will be important to more fully leverage this often overlooked resource pool.

We also need to re-examine the design of our recruitment programs to establish the pipeline of talent needed to deal with the expected retirements in the coming years.



The first [Official Languages Act](#), enacted in 1969, recognized the equal status of English and French throughout the federal administration. Its primary goal was to ensure that Canadian citizens had access to federal services in the Official Language of their choice.



© Canadian Space Agency

The Astronaut Recruitment Campaign

This year, the Canadian Space Agency (the Agency) launched an ambitious and wide-reaching campaign to recruit astronauts.

The Public Service Commission of Canada supported the Agency's campaign by enabling a recruitment and assessment strategy that effectively managed the high volume of applicants and ensured a group of highly qualified candidates from a variety of backgrounds and experiences.

Of the 3,700 applications received, it was eventually narrowed down to 2 successful candidates. [The Canadian Space Agency](#) proudly welcomed [Joshua Kutryk](#) and [Jennifer Sidey](#) to the Canadian Astronaut Corps.

Priority hiring

Under the Public Service Employment Act, managers must hire a qualified person with a priority entitlement before all others. Those who qualify for a priority entitlement include employees declared surplus or laid-off, those returning from a leave of absence, employees who became disabled and Royal Canadian Mounted Police or Canadian Armed Forces members who were released for medical reasons.

In 2016-17, 843 individuals with a priority entitlement were appointed to positions in the public service, consistent with historical levels of priority hiring.

The number of persons with a priority entitlement dropped from 1,846 at the beginning of the fiscal year to 1,774 at the end of the year, continuing a downward trend over the last 5 years.

Despite the downward trend in the number of persons with a priority entitlement, the Commission continued to look for new approaches to administering priority entitlements. In 2016-17, the process for referring persons with a priority entitlement was streamlined to improve access to job opportunities and reduce the administrative time and effort.

Supporting our veterans

In 2016-17, there were 214 appointments of medically-released veterans as a result of a priority entitlement. This is the highest number of veterans appointed as a result of their priority entitlement since 2009-10.

Beyond the priority entitlement for medically-released veterans, all veterans are given a preference for jobs open to the Canadian public. They may also apply to jobs open only to federal public service employees in the first 5 years after they leave the military.

The Commission continues to work with Veterans Affairs Canada and the Department of National Defence on initiatives to help veterans find employment. Collectively, the public service needs to do more to retain veterans. Canada's veterans are a rich source of talent, with valuable knowledge, skills and experience and a demonstrated commitment to public service.



As early as 1916, the various governments in Canada agreed to fill vacant positions with partially disabled men who had been injured in battle, if they were capable of doing the work required. The Civil Service Act of 1918 established preferences for 3 classes of individuals: Disabled veterans, veterans who had been on active duty and widows of fallen soldiers. By 1949, some 55,000 had benefited from this measure to help them reintegrate into society.



As of March 31, 2017, there were 497 medically-released veterans with an active priority entitlement (a 22% increase from March 31, 2016).

22%

Which represents 28% of all individuals with an active priority entitlement.

25%

From April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017, 214 medically-released veterans were appointed, representing 25% of all priority appointments over that period.

Safeguarding NON-PARTISANSHIP

Non-partisanship is a cornerstone of an independent, professional public service and the Westminster system of government. Ensuring the integrity of the relationship between the government of the day and the public servants who provide advice and services to all Canadians, regardless of their political views, is central to the Public Service Commission's (the Commission) mandate. It involves weighing and balancing the individual rights of employees with their responsibilities as public servants.

The Commission administers the political activities regime set out in the Public Service Employment Act by:

- › providing guidance to public servants on their participation in political activities
- › granting permission for candidacy in elections
- › investigating allegations of improper political activities and taking corrective action, when necessary

Candidacy requests

This year, the Commission received 62 candidacy requests from public servants, compared to 51 last year.

Although Canada did not have a general federal election during 2016-17, there were 2 federal by-elections. The Commission received 2 requests for candidacy, one for each by-election.

2016-17 Requests for Candidacy Permission

Level	Number of elections	Number of requests	Percentage of permissions granted
Municipal	8	40	100%
Territorial	1	7	100%
Provincial	2	13	100%
Federal	0	2	100%
Total	11	62	100%

With each candidacy request, the Commission must balance the rights of public servants to engage in political activities with the importance of maintaining a public service that is impartial, and is seen as being impartial. For this reason, the Commission reviews each request for candidacy on its own merits and issues decisions that explain the process and the basis for denying or approving the request, as well as any conditions that must be met.



The Civil Service Act of 1918 laid the foundation for a non-partisan public service. Today, we can all be proud that political and bureaucratic patronage are no longer the rule, merit is.

Overseeing non-partisanship

Our approach to the oversight of political activities among public servants is simple and proactive. We focus on raising awareness to prevent the deliberate or accidental breaking of rules, thereby reducing the need for formal investigations.

However, the Commission remains responsible for investigating cases where public servants failed to request permission to seek candidacy, have not respected the conditions of permission granted or are alleged to have engaged in an improper political activity.

This year, the Commission completed 4 investigations into the political activities of public servants. Three of the cases were ‘founded’, meaning the investigation established that there was an improper political activity. The founded cases involved public servants who sought candidacy without first obtaining permission from the Commission. None of the 3 public servants were elected. Where required, the Commission took action to address these occurrences.

Employee awareness

Raising awareness about the roles and responsibilities regarding political activities among federal public servants and departments and agencies is key to our mandate to protect non-partisanship.

With this in mind, we redesigned our [Political Activities](#) web page to make it easier to find and navigate. We also updated the content to make it more informative and relevant to public servants.

Social media is an effective platform for raising awareness about political activities among public servants. In early March, we posted [2 short videos](#) on the [Public Service Commission's YouTube channel](#) showing the steps public servants need to take if they are thinking about becoming a candidate in an election.

In today's digital world, the boundaries between our work and private lives are being blurred and redefined. We will continue adapting our outreach activities to make sure all public servants are aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding political activities. Our goal is to ensure that non-partisanship in the public service remains protected and that our guidance is relevant, clear and effective.

Looking FORWARD

With the implementation of a new Appointment Policy framework and a renewed oversight model, 2016-17 was a watershed year for the Public Service Commission (the Commission), the departments and agencies we support and the staffing system we oversee.

We are very pleased that departments and agencies made significant progress in meeting the requirements of the new framework in its first year of implementation. The next step is moving beyond compliance to challenge ourselves to seek fundamental improvements in staffing. Without this forward momentum, it will be difficult to keep pace with the inevitable demographic shift and changes in the work environment.

What does sustaining our efforts look like? We know we need to continue to invest in the renewal of the public service, recruiting the next generation of talent and building a public service that is representative of the diversity of Canada and able to serve Canadians in the Official Language of their choice.



We know it means embracing innovative approaches and promoting experimentation, as we did this year with our remodelled student application interface. In the coming year, we will continue to experiment, exploring new ways to evaluate language proficiency to adapt and reflect advancements in technology, while actively promoting bilingualism in our recruitment.

It also means robust planning to identify future needs and increasing partnerships with key communities. This will make our approach to post-secondary recruitment more cohesive and effective.

At the Commission, we will continue challenging ourselves to modernize our policy support, programs and services to meet the rising expectations of candidates and hiring managers.

We can no longer focus so much of our efforts on efficiently processing applicants (although that remains an important goal). We also need to focus on the talent we want to attract and recruit, removing unnecessary barriers to getting hired into the public service and creating an experience that brands the public service as an employer of choice.

Capturing the unique needs, preferences and experiences of those who access our services will allow us to design relevant and reliable solutions. And we need to do this as expeditiously as possible.

Overseeing the health and integrity of public service staffing and reporting the results to Parliament remains core to the Commission's mandate. The information we gather from our System-Wide Staffing Audit, investigations and surveys, together with the intelligence provided by departments and agencies and our partners, will provide a wealth of intelligence to guide effective monitoring and drive improvements.

We will also be pressing forward on improving the timeliness of our investigations and adopting processes that are more proportional to the nature of the staffing irregularities we encounter.

For the Commission, the year ahead will be just one ongoing effort to modernize recruitment and staffing to build tomorrow's public service.

