



Review of the Priority Entitlements Program

Internal Audit and Evaluation Directorate

Performance Measurement and Evaluation Committee (PMEC)
March 9th, 2022



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Acronyms

EMC – Executive Management Committee

DND – Department of National Defence

HR – Human Resources

IAC – Internal Audit Committee

IAED – Internal Audit and Evaluation Directorate

PPE – Person with a Priority Entitlement

PEP – Priority Entitlements Program

PIMS – Priority Information Management System

PSC – Public Service Commission

PSEA – Public Service Employment Act

PSER – Public Service Employment Regulations

RCMP – Royal Canadian Mounted Police

VAC – Veterans Affairs Canada

VHA – Veterans Hiring Act

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Supporting Rationale and
Recommendations

Executive Summary (1 of 2)

The review of the Priority Entitlements Program was carried out as part of the Public Service Commission of Canada's 2021–23 Internal Audit and Evaluation Plan. Covering the period of July 2015 to May 2021, its goal was to measure the effectiveness of and satisfaction with the services, tools and resources that support program delivery, and how these deliver against program objectives and priorities.

The program administers, oversees and monitors staffing practices related to priority entitlements. Persons with one of the [11 types of priority entitlement](#) are to be appointed to federal public service positions ahead of all others, as long as they meet the essential qualifications and conditions of employment.

Persons with a priority entitlement

Persons with a priority entitlement were actively engaged in their job search, and had varying degrees of awareness of program services, resources and tools. They were less satisfied as they moved through the program, and were least satisfied with the consideration process by hiring organizations. They were not satisfied

with the support they received from the program, human resources and managers. They felt that jobs identified through the Priority Information Management System's limited search criteria did not align with their job search preferences.

Managers

Managers were aware that priority entitlements represent a talent pool offering persons with experience, knowledge and familiarity with the public service. They were less aware of their roles and responsibilities, and relied on human resources practitioners.

Managers' greatest challenge was the timing to consider persons with a priority entitlement, given the program requires them to have decided the appointment process type well before consideration takes place. They also felt that their managerial discretion in making appointment decisions was limited and talent management opportunities were restricted. They also felt that the system's matching did not provide candidates that suited their position, and wanted to have a better picture of the skillsets in the talent pool.

Executive Summary (2 of 2)

Human Resources Practitioners

Human resources practitioners were highly aware of their roles and responsibilities, as well as program services, resources and tools. They were highly satisfied with support received from the program, the system and program guidance. While they had positive views of the system, they saw a need for more functionalities to support them in their work, for managers to search the talent pool and for persons with a priority entitlement to manage their job search.

Appointment Patterns

Program data shows that as requests for priority clearance increased, interest in job opportunities by persons with a priority entitlement decreased. Over the review period, there was a shift towards a shared responsibility for job search, with persons with a priority

entitlement increasingly conducting independent job searches instead of relying solely on the program to identify job opportunities through the system. Persons with a disability and members of visible minorities continued to rely on job identification through the system, and they were less likely to be appointed after an independent job search.

Program Infrastructure

Internal stakeholders felt that the program has not successfully promoted the merits of its system to governance and IT planning committees. As a result, system functionalities that support user needs have stagnated. The system was viewed as working well, with performance issues mainly related to coding. Stakeholders believe that GC Jobs Transformation represents an opportunity for automation and to mitigate risks.

Supporting Rationale and Recommendations

Rationale for recommendation 1

Managers raised concerns they were already advanced in staffing when the program required them to consider persons with a priority entitlement. They were also concerned about the impact on their flexibility to make hiring decisions, and the effectiveness of the system's job matching.

Rationale for recommendation 2

From the time persons with a priority entitlement onboard the program to when they are considered for positions by organizations, their satisfaction levels decreased. Many reported that the program was not working well for them, they received inadequate support and job matching did not align to their skillset.

Rationale for recommendation 3

Compared to all persons with a priority entitlement, those with a disability and members of visible minorities were less likely to be appointed when searching for work independently using their priority status than through the system's referral process. This finding points to inequities in the job search experience of persons with a priority entitlement who belong to these employment equity groups.

Rationale for recommendation 4

While human resources practitioners were satisfied with the Priority Information Management System, they also indicated it had inadequate functionalities to support their organizational staffing needs.



Recommendation 1

Increase managers' access to improve their consideration of persons with a priority entitlement and expand outreach activities directed towards them.



Recommendation 2

Increase access to job opportunities for persons with a priority entitlement and align program support available to them.



Recommendation 3

Remove systemic barriers related to the job search experience of persons with a priority entitlement.



Recommendation 4

Improve the system's functionalities, explore IT solutions to meet organizations' staffing needs, and integrate systems.

Review of the priority entitlements program

Introduction

Review Approach

Introduction



This icon represents information related to the experience of diverse groups of persons with a priority entitlement.

A review of the Priority Entitlements Program was completed by the Public Service Commission of Canada's Internal Audit and Evaluation Directorate in 2020–21. This review was carried out with support from the Staffing Support, Priorities and Political Activities Directorate in accordance with the organization's 2021–23 evaluation plan and the Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada's Policy on Results.

Covering the period of July 2015 to May 2021, the review looked to measure the effectiveness of and satisfaction with current services, tools and resources that support program delivery, and how well they deliver against program objectives and priorities.

Review Approach

Methods

The review used multiple lines of evidence including:

- interviews with internal program administrators and stakeholders as well as external human resources practitioners, including a limited number of managers (n=25)
- surveys with hiring managers (n=145), human resources practitioners (n=290) and persons with a priority entitlement (n=288)
- a document review of program tools, guides and related studies
- an administrative data review from the Priority Information Management System

For more information on the methods used and limitations refer to [Appendix A](#).

Review Questions

The review was carried out based on the program logic model and the following review questions:

1. To what extent are program stakeholders aware of the Priority Entitlements Program, its services, resources and information it provides?
2. To what extent are stakeholder expectations related to the program being met?
3. To what extent has the priority identification and referral process been successful in furthering the employment of persons with priority entitlements?
4. To what extent is the program infrastructure delivering against program priorities?

The logic model can be found in [Appendix B](#) and a detailed review matrix can be found in [Appendix C](#).

Program Background

[The Priority Entitlements Program](#)

[A Changing Landscape](#)

[Past Program Evaluations and Audits](#)

[Spotlight on program tools](#)

[Priority Consideration Process](#)

The Priority Entitlements Program

The [Public Service Employment Act](#) and [Public Service Employment Regulations](#) provide entitlements for persons who meet specific conditions to be appointed to federal public service positions ahead of all others, as long as they meet essential qualifications and conditions of employment. The Priority Entitlements Program is responsible for administering, overseeing and monitoring staffing practices related to priority entitlements. The program helps people cope with career and life events by providing access to federal public service job opportunities. Managers use it to quickly meet staffing needs, and it helps the public service retain the knowledge, skills and experience of public servants.

The program is supported by a policy framework that includes the Appointment Policy and the Priority Administration Directive. The policy outlines requirements related to priority entitlements, while the directive outlines the roles and responsibilities of persons with a priority entitlement, departments and agencies, and the Public Service Commission of Canada. The program has several resources for stakeholders including the Priority Information Management System, which supports the priority consideration process.

The 11 priority entitlement types can be found in [Appendix D](#).

A changing landscape

Federal staffing has been impacted by various exercises and initiatives, some of which have also affected the Priority Entitlements Program.

The 2012 Deficit Reduction Action Plan resulted in an influx of over 3 000 persons with a surplus priority entitlement over a 3 year period. Persons with a surplus entitlement represented 64% of all entitlements in 2012–13. In response, the program implemented enhancements to the Priority Information Management System to make the consideration process and assessment more transparent for persons with a priority entitlement. The Priority Portal also came online, enabling persons with a priority entitlement to register and manage their profile.

Since the Veterans Hiring Act came into effect in 2015, the program has employed 2 veterans advisors, former Canadian Armed Forces members who support veterans who have a priority entitlement and want to transition from a military to a civilian career. Their role is to provide information and guidance on the program to medically released veterans, and to advocate on their behalf with organizations. Medically released Canadian Armed Forces members with an entitlement represented 33% of all persons with a priority entitlement in 2020–21.

The 2016 Appointment Policy provided each deputy head with flexibility in their staffing framework, reflective of their operational realities. As a result, organizations sought more flexibility from the Priority Entitlements Program for their unique staffing needs. The new policy also brought changes to the Public Service Commission of Canada's oversight practices.

While priority clearance requests continued to rise steadily during the review period, appointments of persons with a priority entitlement consistently decreased. In 2020–21, there were 465 priority appointments, the lowest number in 10 years. The program conducted an analysis to better understand this decrease. In addition to the initiatives described above, the program identified key factors including:

- changes in the makeup of the population of persons with a priority entitlement
- fewer responses to job opportunities
- a higher likelihood for persons with a priority entitlement to be found qualified in external appointment processes

A key deliverable in the Public Service Commission of Canada's 2021–22 Integrated Business Plan includes establishing a modernized framework to transform the Priority Entitlements Program.

Past program evaluations and internal audit



2011 Evaluation of the Priority Administration Program

Key findings:

- Program seen as being highly relevant
- Concerns with quality of referrals
- Lack of understanding of roles and responsibilities

Program response:

- System enhancements: increased transparency (i.e. feedback)
- Creation of Priority Portal
- Community of practice established
- Implementation of Priority Administration Directive



2016 Audit of the Priority Administration Program

Key findings:

- Program duties carried out effectively
- Inefficiencies in referrals
- Limitations in monitoring and case tracking

Program response:

- Pre-screening shifted to organizations
- Creation of orientation program
- Business process improvements and transformation not fully realized due to changes in organization's priorities



2020 Joint Evaluation of the Implementation of the Veterans Hiring Act

(In partnership with Department of National Defence and Veterans Affairs Canada)

Key findings:

- Implementation initiatives are relevant and support government priorities
- Coordinated approach is needed to achieve benefits of the act
- Barriers in transferring military experience and skills
- Veterans report priority appointments have been a good match for their skills

Implementation of responses to recommendations is underway

Spotlight on program tools



Orientation program for persons with a priority entitlement

- Launched in December 2018 as an optional onboarding program for persons with a priority entitlement
- Provides videos, facilitated sessions, and an online guide explaining entitlements, roles and responsibilities and the priority consideration process, including job search aids



Guide on Priority Entitlements

- Provides general information on priority entitlements, including registration and priority clearance process
- Includes information on each entitlement, including eligibility, and common situations for each entitlement



Priority Information Management System Support Centre

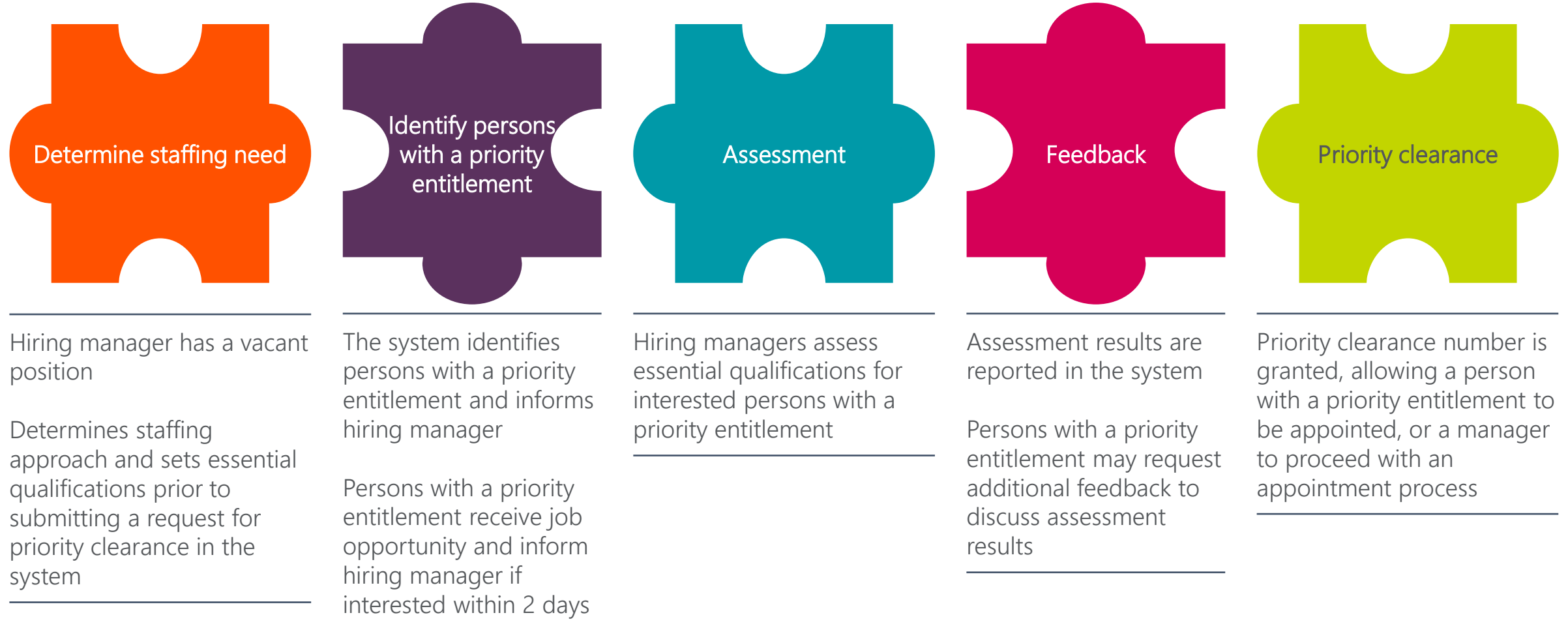
- Available to users internal to the Government of Canada to support HR and managers
- Provides tutorials, references and instructional material on completing actions in the system, including completing a clearance request, providing feedback, completing registration and generating reports



As these documents are key resources on priority entitlements, keeping the information current is essential for program stakeholders

Priority consideration process

Managers must consider persons with a priority entitlement ahead of all others, by searching for matches to their requirements in the priority talent pool. HR practitioners help managers by submitting priority clearance requests in the Priority Information Management System to do these searches. Priority clearance is required for all types of appointment processes, with some exceptions.



Program awareness and satisfaction

PPEs understand their role but differ in resource awareness

Knowing your role and available resources as a manager and HR

PPEs satisfaction starts strong, but then tapers...

Managers satisfaction levels vary

HR practitioners are satisfied with the program

Opportunities for managers and HR align but challenges differ

Persons with a priority entitlement understand their role but differ in resource awareness

Actively engaged in job search

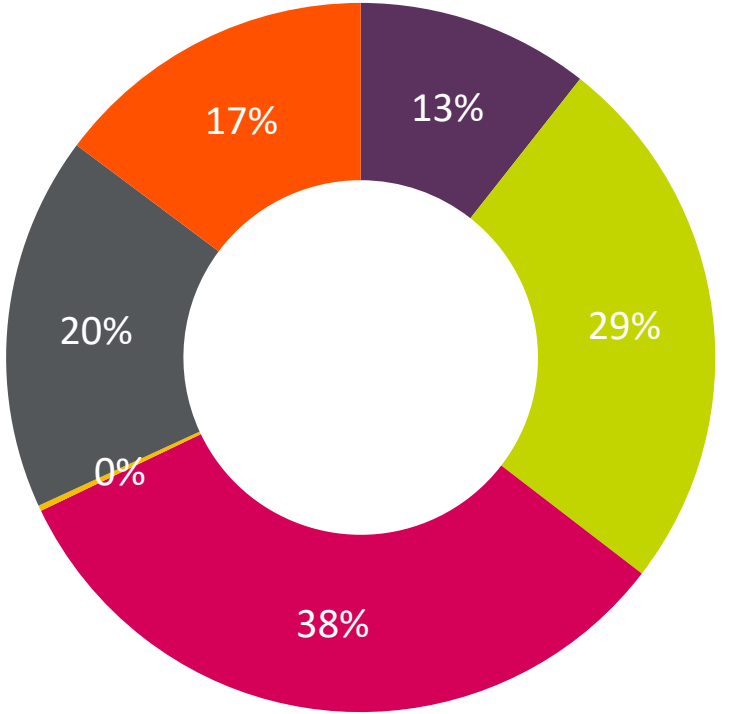
Understanding how persons with a priority entitlement use their entitlement provides insight into their level of awareness of roles and responsibilities. Most of those who responded to the survey indicated that they are registered in the system and actively seeking employment; a smaller portion reported they had indicated interest in a position and were waiting for assessment results. A few respondents indicated that while they are registered in the system, they are not actively seeking employment. As for appointments, almost a quarter of respondents indicated they were appointed as a result of their entitlement, and a smaller portion reported they were appointed after conducting an independent job search while they had an entitlement.

Where and how do I find information?

Persons with a priority entitlement can

access resources to help them find new employment. A large portion (53%) are aware of the Priority Portal, where they complete their registration and manage their profile. The same proportion (53%) were less aware of the Priority Information Management System, the main tool used by HR practitioners. Persons with a priority entitlement were not familiar with the orientation program launched as part of a strategy following the [2016 Audit of the Priority Entitlements Program](#), or the program's website. Over 60% of persons with a priority entitlement reported having no or minimal awareness of support provided by program advisors and HR practitioners. A detailed table of program resources can be found in [Appendix E](#).

Most persons with a priority entitlement learn about priority entitlements through a manager or an HR practitioner. They tended to rely more on word of mouth than official information found on Government of Canada websites.



- Government of Canada website, portals or social media
- Manager or supervisor
- Human resources professional
- Media or other social media
- Word of mouth
- Other

Sources: Survey responses

Managers and HR know their roles; managers less aware of resources

Managers understand their role, but are less aware of resources

Managers can consider persons with a priority entitlement for vacant positions, and they can also support a person with a priority entitlement who reports to them. Managers who understand their roles directly support program outcomes. Most managers indicated they had a moderate to great awareness of their roles and responsibilities. Over 50% also indicated having hired or considered a person with a priority entitlement. While these reported levels are high, only 15% of managers reported providing support to a person with a priority entitlement.

Over 50% of managers reported no or minimal levels of awareness of services, resources and information available to them, apart from the related legislation and regulations. The main tools that support a manager include their departmental priority program liaison, information on the program's website, the Guide on Priority Entitlements, and the Priority Administration Directive.

Managers did comment that knowing about and understanding the program is a challenge for them. Some managers also commented that relying on HR support worked well for them.

HR highly aware of their role

HR practitioners are the program's main partner in administering and overseeing entitlements. Their level of program awareness is key to its success. The overwhelming majority of HR practitioners (92%) indicated a moderate to great awareness of their roles and responsibilities, with over half (52%) reporting awareness to a great extent. The largest portion of respondents indicated they had provided support to a manager who was considering a person with a priority entitlement, provided support to a person with a priority entitlement, and provided support to a manager in their organization who has a person with a priority entitlement that reports to them. Despite these high levels of reported awareness, some HR practitioners indicated a

desire to have greater knowledge of the program.

HR highly aware of resources

HR practitioners reported a high level of awareness of services, resources and information related to priority entitlements. Awareness to a great extent was reported for:

- the Priority Information Management System (72%)
- information related to the program (the website) (58%)
- the Guide on Priority Entitlements (57%)

The only response rate below 50% for a moderate to great level of awareness was for the system superuser found in each organization. The document review found that tools such as the Guide on Priority Entitlements and the Priority Information Management System Support Centre provide detailed information and tutorials for completing key tasks in the system. While some information was outdated, these tools provide key program information to the HR community. Detailed tables can be found in [Appendix F](#)

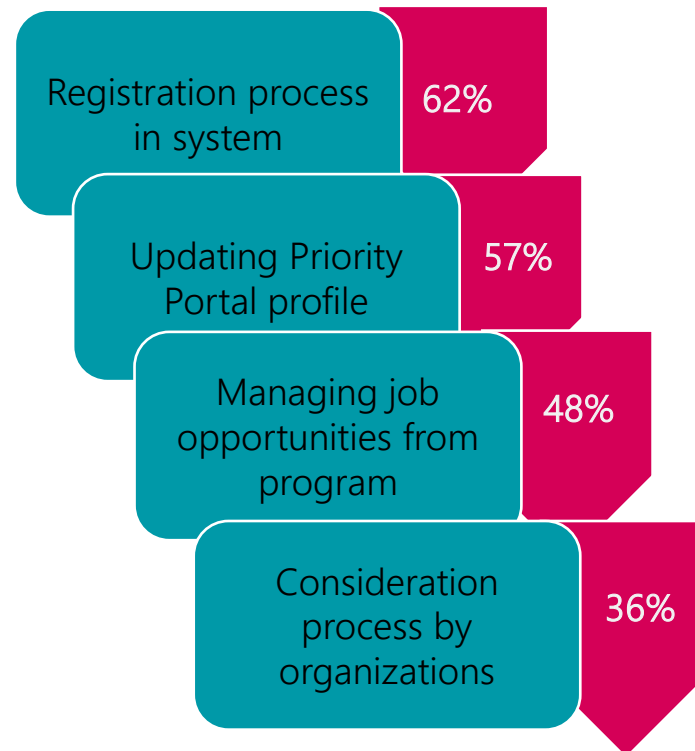
Sources: Interviews and survey responses

Persons with a priority entitlement: satisfaction starts strong but tapers off

Program satisfaction levels of persons with a priority entitlement provide an indication as to whether program activities support them in their search for continuity of employment. Persons with a priority entitlement were highly satisfied during the onboarding stages of the program; however, satisfaction levels decreased as they progressed through different aspects of the program.

They were moderately satisfied with the system and the Priority Portal, and more satisfied with the registration process and the ability to update their profile. When it came to managing the system's job opportunities, while they said that receiving job opportunities worked well for them, the main challenge was the ineffectiveness of the job matching. Because the system matching uses limited criteria, it excludes many elements that they found valuable in their job search, including: greater visibility

of job opportunities, profile options such as qualifications, salary expectations, greater control on classification levels, position requirements and organizations they wish to consider.



Sources: Survey responses



Persons with a priority entitlement belonging to employment equity groups also reported decreasing levels of satisfaction as they moved through the program. One exception: persons with a disability and members of visible minorities reported higher levels of satisfaction in managing job opportunities in the system than all other persons with a priority entitlement.

Orientation

53% had low levels of satisfaction with this resource, consistent with reported low awareness of program resources

Support and experience

- 57% had low levels of satisfaction with support received from the program and managers, and 60% were not satisfied with HR support
- Some said the program was not working well for them and they did not have a good experience

Managers' satisfaction levels vary

Satisfaction with program services, resources and tools

When asked to rate satisfaction with program services, resources and tools, the highest response rate from managers was in the "Not Applicable" category, with the exception of guidance on priority administration. The low level of responses on satisfaction is consistent with their low level of awareness of services, resources and tools.

Best fit hiring

Most hiring managers believed that the requirement to appoint persons with a priority entitlement prevents the use of best fit. Since persons with a priority entitlement only need to meet essential qualifications, managers felt their flexibility in assessment and appointment was limited. Managers also reported that appointing a persons with a priority entitlement limits talent management and succession planning.

Managers seek earlier access to the Priority Information Management System

Managers highlighted that the timing for considering persons with a priority entitlement is a significant challenge. Because the system requires managers to choose the appointment process type at the

outset, when it comes time to consider persons with a priority entitlement, a manager will already have taken many steps in deciding how to fill their position. Once it is time to submit a clearance request in the system, the manager will often have already identified a potentially suitable candidate.

Candidate matching

Managers are often unsatisfied with the system's matching of persons with a priority entitlement to their position. Some wished they had greater access to the pool and the ability to search based on different criteria including experience, competencies and areas of interest to assist them in finding a good match.

HR Support

When asked what is working well for them, managers overwhelmingly mentioned the support they received from human resources.

Legislation and regulations

40% reported positive levels of satisfaction with legislation and regulations, reflecting their level of awareness.

Sources: Interviews and survey responses

HR practitioners are satisfied with the program

Satisfaction with program

HR practitioners are the program's main partner, and they expressed high levels of satisfaction with the program's services, resources and tools.

86% were satisfied with the clarity, and 85% were satisfied with the timeliness of program responses

85% were satisfied with legislation and regulations

84% were satisfied with Priority Information Management System

84% were satisfied with program guidance

Program advisors and veterans advisors were seen as engaged, prompt and responsive. Activities that received positive feedback included outreach sessions tailored to organizational needs, the

community of practice, the Guide on Priority Entitlements, the Priority Information Management Support Centre, the Orientation Program and toolkit for managers and HR (including testimonials).

Satisfaction with Priority Information Management System

The main users of the system are HR practitioners. Tasks they carry out in the system include: initiating a registration, submitting priority clearance requests and pulling reports. HR practitioners expressed positive views of the system related to initiating registrations, providing feedback on assessments, and shortened timelines for responding to job opportunities. HR also identified improvements to the system, including:

- expanding the ability to search and view their requests
- focusing on persons with a priority entitlement interested in job opportunities

- reducing number of clearance requests by accepting a combination of search criteria
- saving drafts
- allowing updates to requests
- monitoring self-referrals
- increasing user-friendliness

HR practitioners felt that the Priority Portal could be expanded to allow persons with a priority entitlement to manage their job search, allowing them to better sort through jobs, manage job opportunity emails and increase profile criteria used in job matching.

HR practitioners and managers felt the system could be improved by providing earlier access to the talent pool, and allowing for searches in the talent pool, including dashboards that provide a better picture of the persons with a priority entitlement and their skillsets. Both groups felt it would be beneficial to provide managers with more access to the talent pool for parts of the process.

Sources: Interviews and survey responses

Opportunities for managers and HR align, but challenges differ

Greatest opportunity for managers and HR

Greatest challenge for managers

Greatest challenge for HR

Access to a talent pool of persons with experience, knowledge and familiarity with the public service

Managerial discretion in making appointment decisions is restricted, preventing use of best fit

Manager may already have someone in mind by the time it comes to consider persons with a priority entitlement

Efficiency in an appointment process resulting in time savings

Quality of matches identified by the system

Low level of interest and responses from persons with a priority entitlement in job opportunities and their participation in the assessment process

Retention of talent and return on investment

Timing to consider persons with a priority entitlement, causing delays in the appointment process

Persistent stigma of persons with a priority entitlement as poor performers, and preconceived ideas about former Canadian Armed Forces members

Continuity of employment for persons with a priority entitlement

Limits talent management and succession planning

Impact on persons with a priority entitlement, including reintegration and accommodation needs

Sources: Survey responses

Appointment patterns and program infrastructure

Interest in job opportunities continues to decline

Fundamental shift in job search approach by PPEs

Appointment patterns for different entitlement categories

Unequal job search experience for diverse PPEs

Having room at the table

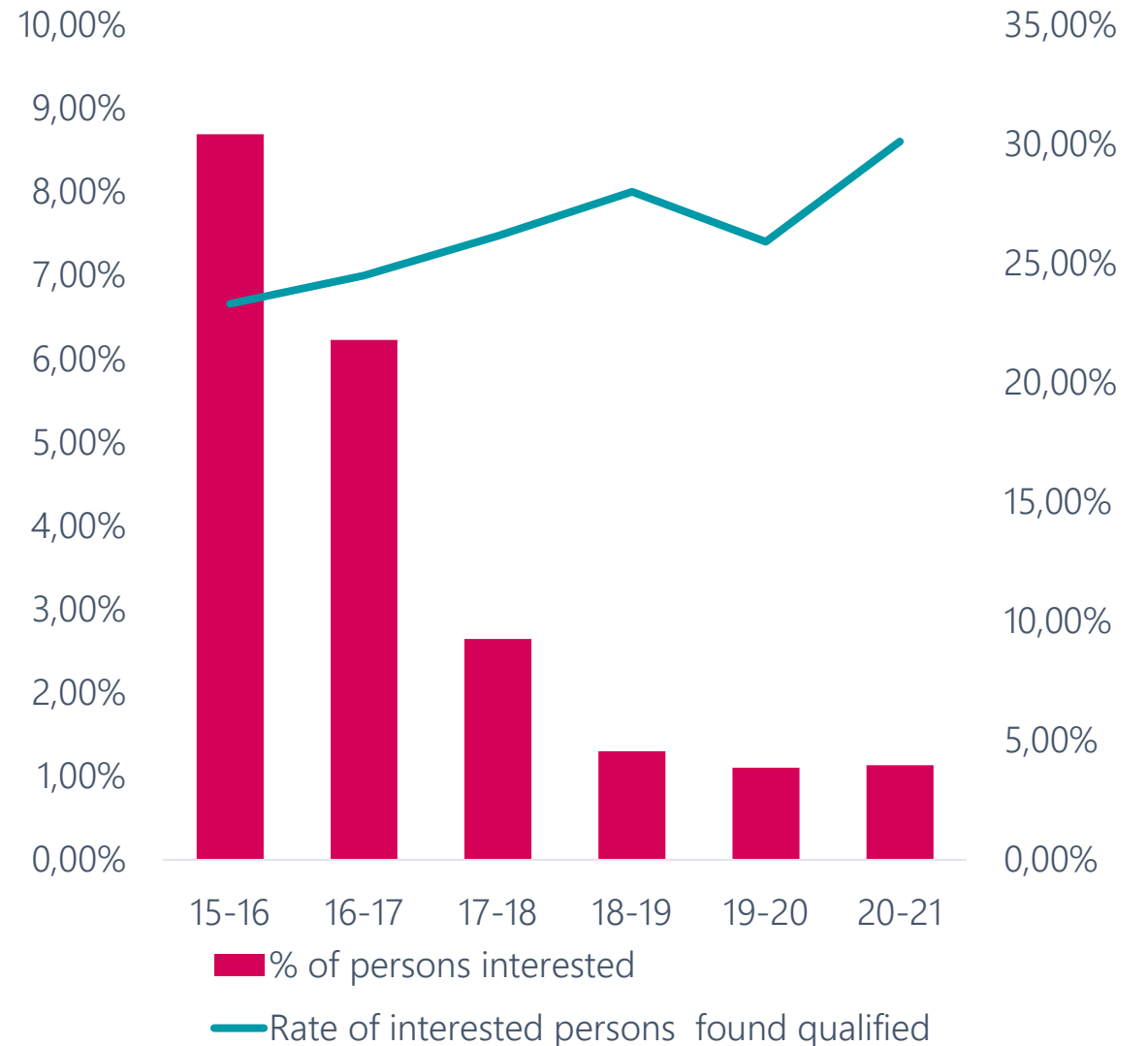
Planting the seeds for future success

Interest in job opportunities continues to decline

Job opportunities increased significantly during the review period, as priority clearance requests where a person with a priority entitlement was identified went from 14 863 to 33 850. At the same time, the level of interest in these jobs by persons with a priority entitlement decreased, and so did the number of appointments.

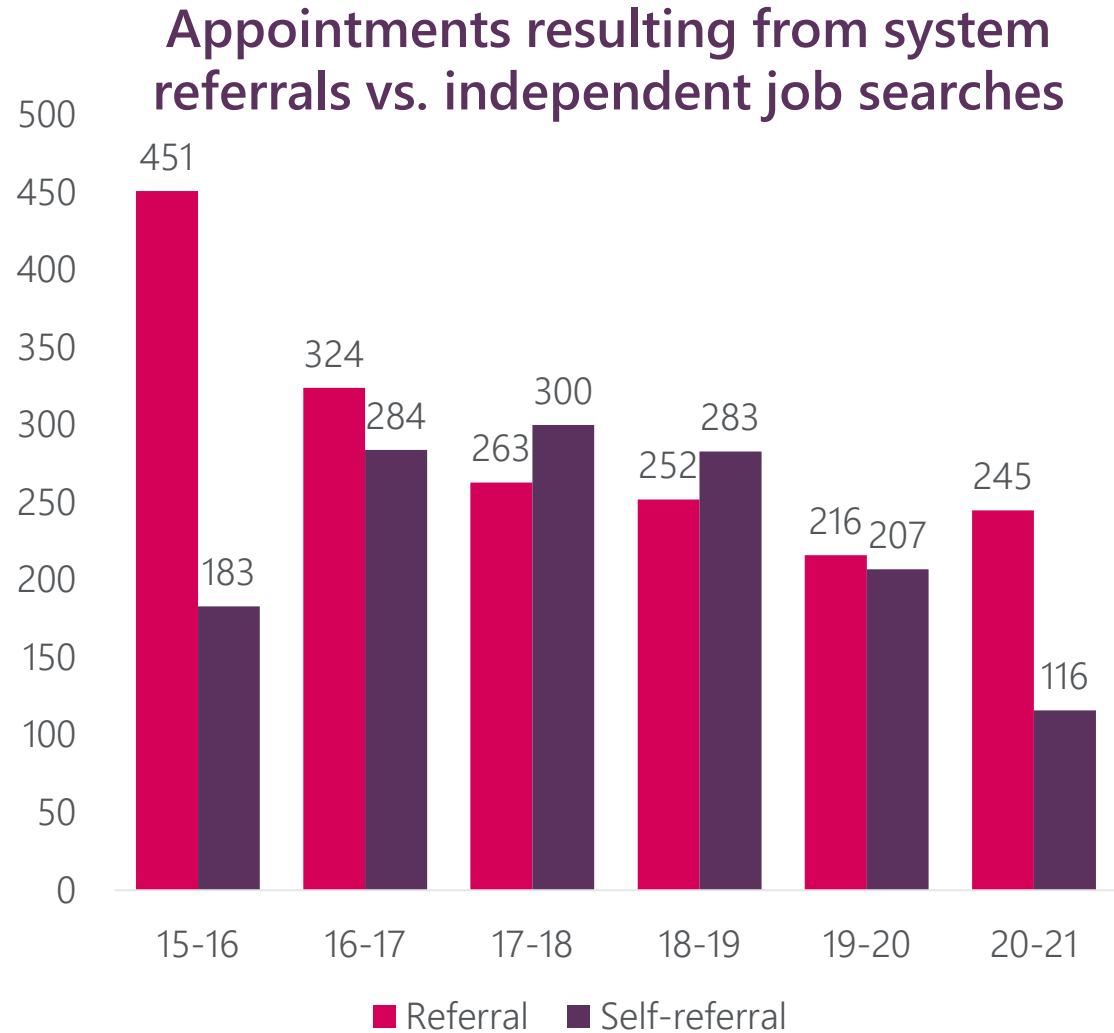
Although the level of interest significantly decreased over the review period, there was an increase in the rate at which those who demonstrated interest were found qualified. This finding is important, as increases in interest could lead to more qualified persons with a priority entitlement being identified, and possibly more appointments.

The landscape in which the program operates has changed, and this has had an impact on the program's ability to meet changing needs of stakeholders.



Sources: Priority Information Management System data

Fundamental shift in approach to job search



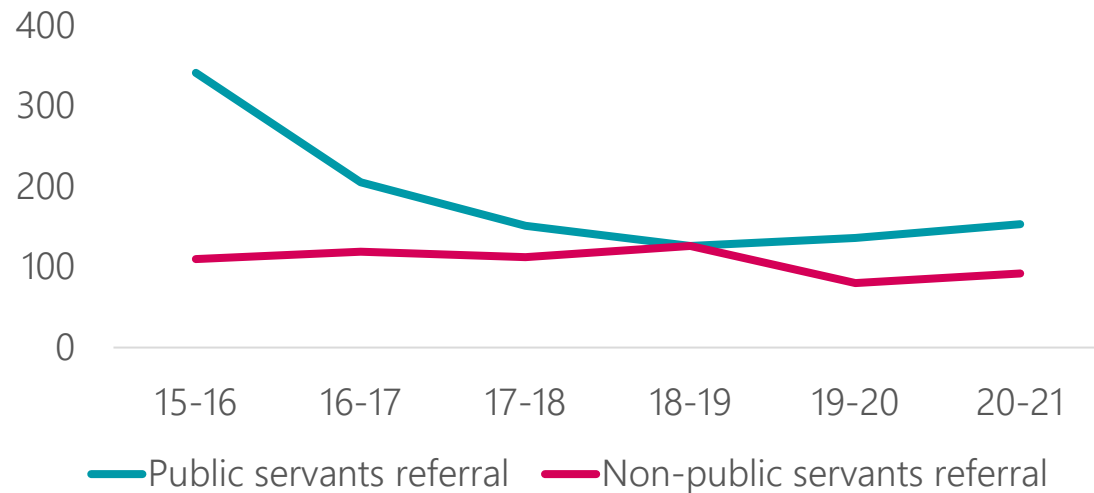
The program has historically provided managers with referrals identified through the system’s matching of job requirements to persons with a priority entitlement in the talent pool. Increasingly, the program has encouraged persons with a priority entitlement to conduct job searches independently, using their priority status to increase the likelihood of being appointed.

A comparison of appointments resulting from job searches supported by the system’s identification process (known as “referrals”) versus independent searches by persons with a priority entitlement (“self-referrals”) shows reliance on the program decreased over the review period until 2020–21. The last year of the review shows an increase in appointments as a result of the system’s referral process, which coincides with a workforce move to remote work as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

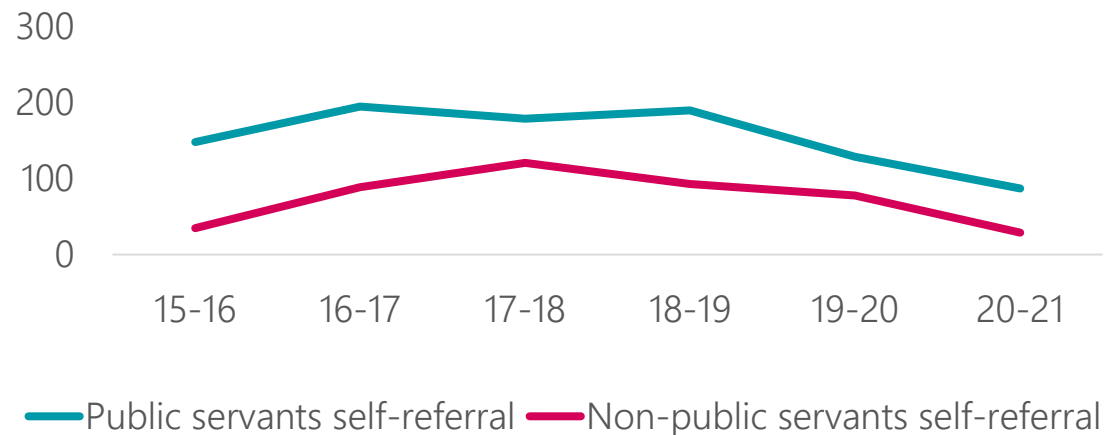
Sources: Priority Information Management System data

Appointment patterns for different entitlement categories

System referral appointments



Independent job search appointments



There was no significant difference between appointments of persons with an entitlement who were not public servants with those who have an entitlement as a result of employment in the public service. Both groups had similar success in being appointed, whether as a result of the system's identification process or an independent job search.

Persons with a priority entitlement who obtain a priority entitlement as a result of their employment in the public service:

- surplus employee
- employees returning from a leave / replacing an employee on leave
- persons laid off
- reinstatement
- relocation of spouse or common-law partner
- employee who becomes disabled

Persons with a priority entitlement who are not public servants:

- Canadian Armed Forces members released for medical reasons
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police members discharged for medical reasons
- surviving spouse or common-law partner if the death is attributable to the performance of duties

Sources: Priority Information Management data

Unequal job search experience for diverse persons with a priority entitlement



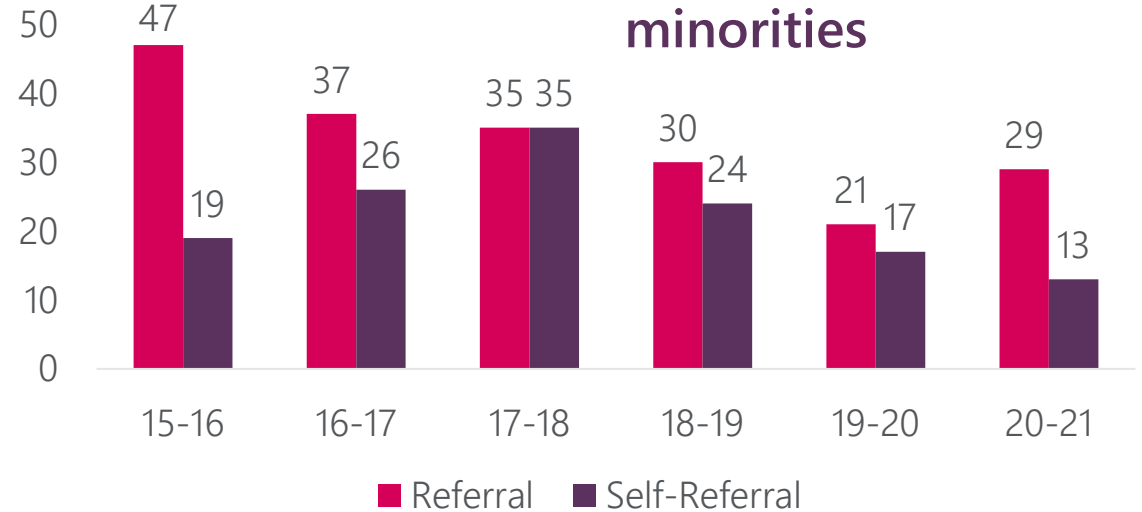
A comparison of appointments from system referrals with appointments from independent self-referrals by persons with a priority entitlement belonging to an employment equity group demonstrates an unequal experience:

- only women experienced similar appointment patterns as all persons with a priority entitlement
- while appointments following independent job search for all persons with a priority entitlement peaked during the review period before then decreasing, Indigenous people experienced a consistent decrease and persons with a disability remained relatively constant
- those who self-declared as having a disability or as a member of a visible minority consistently had greater success in finding employment through the system's referral process than through independent job search
- these 2 groups also had higher levels of satisfaction managing the system's job opportunities

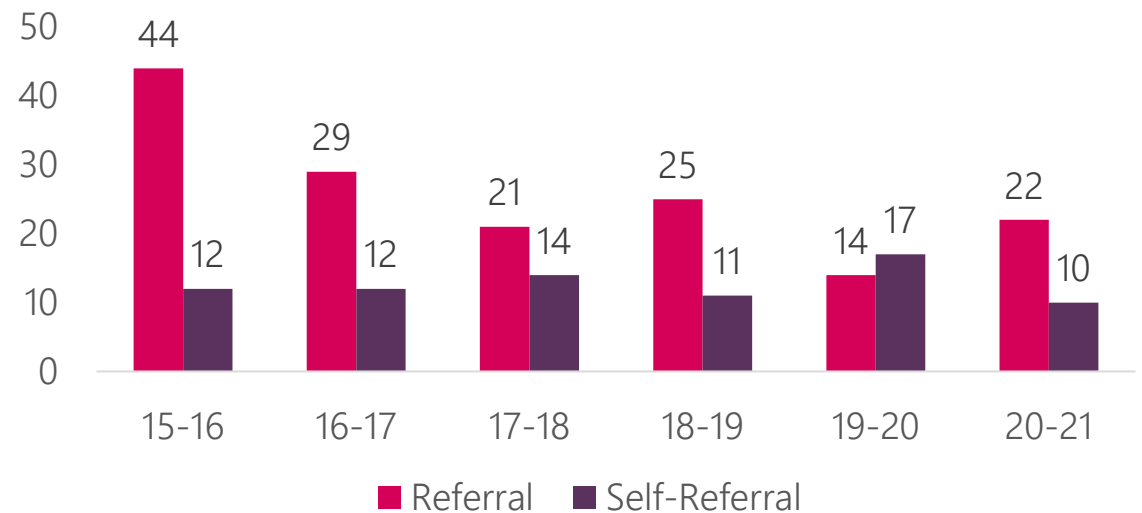


These findings aligns with the [Clerks Call to Action Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion in the Federal Public Service](#) and [recent changes to the Public Service Employment Act](#) that aim to strengthen diversity and inclusion, and address biases and barriers faced by equity-seeking groups.

Appointment of members of visible minorities



Appointment of persons with a disability



Sources: Priority Information Management data

Having room at the table



Aligning IT planning

To access organizational resources to advance its systems, a program must demonstrate its value and its alignment with organizational priorities. Internal stakeholders raised concerns that changes to the Priority Information Management System and the Priority Portal have often been restricted, and planned changes have been stopped. Planning and prioritization decisions often cite upcoming changes to the recruitment platform, which has resulted in prolonged delays over the years.

Interviewees felt that the program's attempts to convey the value of the system in planning discussions have not succeeded, and they questioned whether planning decisions fully considered the legislative mandate of the Public Service

Commission of Canada. Better integration and alignment with the Public Service Resourcing System was seen as a possible solution for gains in planning. While there are limits to how the information in the resourcing system can be made accessible to users of the Priority Information Management System, some information could be applicable, and this was viewed as a missed opportunity.

"We currently have skepticism on efficiency and how it is a roadblock to other processes. Will only get worse when some parts of a process move forward and the rest of it doesn't move forward at the same time and falls behind."

Planting the seeds for future success

Reliability

The Priority Information Management System works well for what it is intended to do. The small number of problems are related to coding, management of priority consideration and system updates. The system's programming language reflects obsolete approaches, and this causes performance issues that have not been seen in the Priority Portal, which was developed in newer language.

The system has struggled to keep up with changing times and demands. Following the 2016 New Direction in Staffing, some program changes were made; however, system changes were restricted, which created challenges for the program. Some interviewees saw a need for better tools for system users, automation and to focus more on the human aspect.

"It should all work in the back-end, and focus on the parts that are the human connection."

Stakeholders raised the risks posed by the limitations of legacy systems and the inability to link systems with each other and gather complementary information. The data in the Priority Information Management System provides insight on the staffing system; it is a critical component of the oversight of staffing actions. This risk is in line with findings related to data quality and limitations identified in the [Formative Evaluation of the Implementation of the Public Service Commission Data Management Strategy](#).

Risk mitigation

Stakeholders see the involvement of the Priority Entitlements Program in GC Jobs Transformation as an opportunity to automate functions in the system, which would remove much of the judgement in screening. This could increase satisfaction with the program and system on the part of hiring managers and persons with a priority entitlement, and allow persons with a priority entitlement to look for new opportunities. There is enormous potential with a software-as-a-service solution, if it is embedded within the process and continuously working in the background. An earlier program visioning exercise was seen as having great potential; however, concerns were raised about the time it takes to get things done in the public service and the risk of other entities moving forward with their own solutions. Failing to leverage an integrated solution comes at a cost and with risks.

Recommendations And Management Action Plan

Conclusion

Recommendations and
Supporting Rationale

Management Response
Action Plan

Conclusion (1 of 2)

The review of the Priority Entitlements Program intended to measure the effectiveness of and satisfaction with current services, tools and resources, and how these deliver against program objectives and priorities.

Awareness of the program and its resources

There are 3 main stakeholders in the Priority Entitlements Program, each with different roles, responsibilities and resources. Stakeholders' understanding of these roles and resources is the foundation for the program's success. The review found that awareness of roles and responsibilities was very high for HR practitioners, high for persons with a priority entitlement, and moderate for managers. Similarly, with regard to resources, HR practitioners were highly aware, persons with a priority entitlement were moderately aware, and managers had little awareness, relying instead on HR.

Program satisfaction

As one of the program's ultimate outcomes is for

persons with a priority entitlement to be appointed, understanding if it is meeting their needs is critical. Persons with a priority entitlement were less satisfied as they moved through the program; they were least satisfied with the consideration process and the support they received. They felt the jobs identified did not align with their job search preferences.

The program's second ultimate outcome is the retention of talent and managers recognized PPEs as an available talent pool. That being said, Managers' greatest challenges included:

- timing of the consideration process in the system
- feeling their managerial discretion was constrained
- ineffectiveness of the system's identification process for their position

HR were highly satisfied with support received from the program, the Priority Information Management System and program guidance. They expressed a desire for improved functionalities to support them, managers and persons with a priority entitlement.

Conclusion (2 of 2)

Program's success at furthering employment

Priority clearance requests increased considerably over the review period, while interest by persons with a priority entitlement in job opportunities decreased. A greater proportion of persons with a priority entitlement who demonstrated interest were found qualified. Increases in the level of interest could lead to more qualified persons with a priority entitlement being identified, and possibly, being appointed. Over the review period, persons with a priority entitlement shifted to conducting job searches independently, and relied less on the system's job referral process. However, persons with a priority entitlement who had a disability and members of visible minorities had less success being appointed through independent job search.

Program Infrastructure

Internal stakeholders shared the view that the program was not successful in advancing the merits of its system in IT planning. Over the review period, the program was unable to implement system functionalities that support the user experience. At the same time, the system

continued to work well, with coding being responsible for performance issues. Stakeholders raised the risks posed by limitations of legacy systems and the inability to link systems to gather complementary information. This echoes the findings on data quality and limitations in previous evaluations. GC Jobs Transformation represents an opportunity to address these risks and for system improvements.

Supporting Rationale and Recommendations

Rationale for recommendation 1

Managers raised concerns they were already advanced in staffing when the program required them to consider persons with a priority entitlement. They were also concerned about the impact on their flexibility to make hiring decisions, and the effectiveness of the system's job matching.

Rationale for recommendation 2

From the time persons with a priority entitlement onboard the program to when they are considered for positions by organizations, their satisfaction levels decreased. Many reported that the program was not working well for them, they received inadequate support and job matching did not align to their skillset.

Rationale for recommendation 3

Compared to all persons with a priority entitlement, those with a disability and members of visible minorities were less likely to be appointed when searching for work independently using their priority status than through the system's identification process. This finding points to inequities in the job search experience of persons with a priority entitlement who belong to these employment equity groups.

Rationale for recommendation 4

While human resources practitioners were satisfied with the Priority Information Management System, they also indicated it had inadequate functionalities to support their organizational staffing needs.



Recommendation 1

Increase managers' access to improve their consideration of persons with a priority entitlement and expand outreach activities directed towards them.



Recommendation 2

Increase access to job opportunities for persons with a priority entitlement and align program support available to them.



Recommendation 3

Remove systemic barriers related to the job search experience of diverse persons with a priority entitlement.



Recommendation 4

Improve the system's functionalities, explore IT solutions to meet organizations' staffing needs, and integrate systems.

Management Response Action Plan (1 of 4)

Recommendation	Response and planned actions	Timelines	Measures of achievement
<p>Increase managers' access to improve their consideration of persons with a priority entitlement and expand outreach activities directed towards them.</p>	<p>Management agrees with the need to improve ease of access for hiring managers to the priority talent pool and to showcase persons with a priority entitlement as a talent pool.</p> <p>Planned actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) With communications partners, develop a comprehensive communications strategy to modernize the program 2) Build, expand and market the tools, guidance and support targeted to managers as part of the Toolkit for Managers and Human Resource Specialists 3) Explore the use of government web-based social forums or available IT solutions to update and improve the ease of access to the priority talent pool as a viable staffing option to fill vacancies for hiring managers 	<p>Planned action 1: Q4 2022-23</p> <p>Planned actions 2: Q3 2022-23</p> <p>Planned action 3: Q3 2022-23</p>	<p>Priority Entitlements Program Modernization Initiative Terms of Reference</p> <p>Spotlight on Priority Talent Pool</p> <p>Priority Hiring Marketplace Communications Strategy</p>
<p>Risk level associated with not addressing the recommendation</p>		<p>Proposed persons responsible</p>	
<p>High</p>		<p>Staffing Support, Priorities and Political Activities Directorate/ Communications and Parliamentary Affairs Directorate (SSPPAD/CPAD)</p>	

Management Response Action Plan (2 of 4)

Recommendation	Response and planned actions	Timelines	Measures of achievement
<p>Increase access to job opportunities for persons with a priority entitlement and align program support available to them.</p>	<p>Management agrees with the need to improve the experience of persons with a priority entitlement in their job search and to improve how they are presented as talent for job opportunities.</p> <p>Planned actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Continue to rebrand and market the priority population as a priority talent pool to showcase their vast experience and skills through communication strategies and outreach activities 	<p>Planned action 1: Q4 2022–23</p> <p>Planned action 2: Q1 2023–24</p> <p>Planned action 3: Q3 2023–24</p>	<p>Priority Entitlements Program Modernization Initiative Terms of Reference</p> <p>New service delivery model</p>
<p>Risk level associated with not addressing the recommendation</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2) Explore options to improve how persons with a priority entitlement are presented to hiring managers when job opportunities are identified that are aligned with their competencies 3) Explore IT solutions to leverage available technology to improve the job search experience of persons with a priority entitlement 	<p>Proposed persons responsible</p>	<p>Talent Pool Development Options</p> <p>Pool Management E-Tool</p>
<p>High</p>		<p>SSPPAD</p>	

Management Response Action Plan (3 of 4)

Recommendation	Response and planned actions	Timelines	Measures of achievement
<p>The Priority Entitlements Program should increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in its program development and delivery to remove systemic barriers related to the job search experience of persons with a priority entitlement in designated groups.</p>	<p>Management agrees with the importance of destigmatizing the biases and stigmas associated with persons with a priority entitlement in the priority talent pool, including identifying and removing the systemic barriers that affects their job search experience.</p> <p>The program will engage subject-matter experts in employment equity and diversity and inclusion to ensure that the job search experience is bias and barrier free.</p> <p>Planned actions:</p>	<p>Planned action 1: Q3 2022-2023</p> <p>Planned action 2: Q4 2022-2023</p>	<p>Priority Entitlements Program Modernization Initiative Terms of Reference</p> <p>Video showcasing persons with a priority entitlement in the priority talent pool</p>
<p>Risk level associated with not addressing the recommendation</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Integrate diversity, accessibility and inclusion concepts in developing communication products and tools, such as videos and testimonials to showcase persons with a priority entitlement 2) Review the program's guidance and tools to ensure they reflect new amendments to the <i>Public Service Employment Act</i> that support bias- and barrier-free assessments of persons with a priority entitlement 	<p>Proposed persons responsible</p>	<p>Employment equity hiring scenario</p>
<p>High</p>		<p>SSPPAD</p>	<p>Employment Equity Priority Pool</p>

Management Response Action Plan (4 of 4)

Recommendation	Response and planned actions	Timelines	Measures of achievement
<p>Improve the system's functionalities, explore IT solutions to meet organizations' staffing needs, and integrate systems.</p>	<p>Management recognizes the work completed to date on iterative systems improvement to better meet the needs of HR practitioners, and will continue to explore all IT solutions in developing and implementing a modernized program framework.</p> <p>Planned actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) In the short-term, in collaboration with IT partners, continue to improve system functionalities to the Priority Information Management System through ongoing maintenance and support 2) As part of medium-term solutions, explore other system functionality enhancements and available IT solutions to meet organizations' staffing needs 3) The longer term strategy is to continue engaging and collaborating with internal and external partners to integrate the priority consideration process into the GC Jobs Transformation Initiative to achieve a seamless future enterprise-system integration 	<p>Planned action 1: Q4 2022–23</p> <p>Planned action 2: Q3 2023–24</p> <p>Planned action 3: 2025–26</p>	<p>Progressive improvements and refinement of the existing system</p> <p>Integration into a future enterprise-system</p>
<p>Risk level associated with not addressing the recommendation</p>		<p>Proposed persons responsible</p>	
<p>High</p>		<p>SSPPAD/Information Technology Services Directorate</p>	

APPENDICES

Methodology

Logic Model

Review Matrix

Priority Entitlement Types

Survey Responses

Survey Demographics

Appendix A – Methodology



ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REVIEW

The review team obtained, reviewed and analyzed administrative and performance data related to the Program. The PSC’s Staffing and Non-Partisanship Survey was reviewed to gather information on hiring managers and human resource practitioners



DOCUMENT REVIEW The document review included an examination of strategic departmental and policy documents related to the program and available resources and related tools (Priority Information Management System, Priority Portal, etc.)



SURVEYS Surveys were sent to human resources practitioners, hiring managers, and persons with a priority entitlement to obtain insights into their experience as it relates to awareness of and level of satisfaction with the program, and input related to available resources and tools (Priority Information Management System, Priority Portal, etc.)



INTERVIEWS 25 stakeholders were interviewed (19 internal and 6 external). The focus of the interviews was to obtain their insights on their experience and input related to the program’s available tools, services and resources (Priority Information Management System, Priority Portal, etc.)

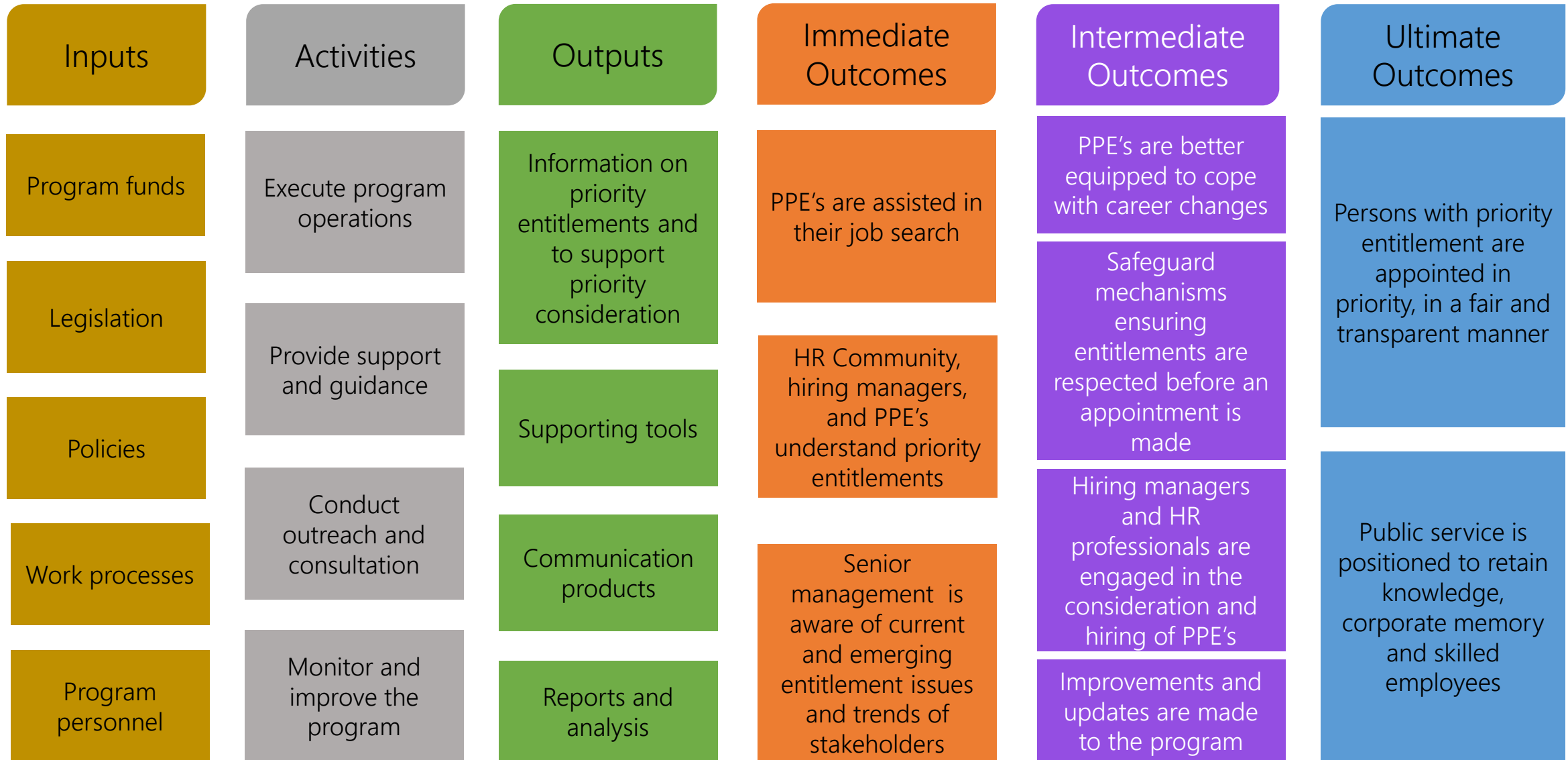


LIMITATIONS Two surveys were conducted to solicit the perspectives of hiring managers, HR practitioners and persons with a priority entitlement, rather than conducting a large number of interviews. This methodology allowed for information to be collected from a large number of respondents, but likely reduced the richness and quality of the information provided.



GBA+ The survey included a GBA+ demographic analysis to assess how diverse groups of persons with a priority entitlement may experience the Priority Entitlements Program. Administrative data from Priority Information Management System was limited to the 4 employment equity groups and was not available for equity seeking groups.

Appendix B – Logic Model



Appendix C – Review Matrix

Q1. To what extent are program stakeholders aware of the Priority Entitlements Program, its services, resources, and information it provides?	Q2. To what extent are stakeholder expectations related to the program being met?	Q3. To what extent has the priority identification and referral process been successful in furthering the employment of persons with priority entitlements?	Q4. To what extent is the program infrastructure delivering against program priorities?
1.1 Level of awareness among persons with priority entitlements regarding services, resources and information provided by the program.	2.1 Level of satisfaction amongst persons with a priority entitlement regarding services received and available resources and tools from the program.	3.1 Number of persons with a priority entitlement who have demonstrated interest after having been identified through the system to hiring organizations.	4.1 Level of satisfaction among program managers, human resources practitioners, home and hiring managers related to Priority Information Management System data capabilities (storage, maintenance, reporting, data quality, privacy and ethical usage requirements) and functionality (user experience/friendliness).
1.2 The extent to which persons with priority entitlements are aware of their roles and responsibilities related to the program.	2.2 Level of satisfaction among human resources practitioners regarding services received and available resources and tools from the program.	3.2 Number of persons with a priority entitlement appointed after having demonstrated interest following identification through the system.	4.2 Level of satisfaction among persons with priority entitlements regarding the Priority Portal functionalities (user experience/friendliness).
1.3 Level of awareness among home and hiring managers regarding services, resources and information provided by the program.	2.3 Level of satisfaction among home and hiring managers regarding services received and available resources and tools from the program.	3.3 Number of persons with a priority entitlement who have been appointed after having conducted an independent job search in comparison to the number of persons with a priority entitlement appointed through the Priority Information Management System identification process.	4.3 Extent to which the program IT infrastructure is appropriately housed within the Public Service Commission and aligned with IT planning.
1.4 The extent to which home and hiring managers are aware of their roles and responsibilities related to program delivery.	2.4 Level of satisfaction amongst hiring managers regarding the priority consideration process and available resources and tools.		4.4 Extent to which the current program infrastructure is reliable and sustainable in the handling of future needs.
1.5 Level of awareness among home and hiring human resources advisors regarding services, resources and information provided by the program.			4.5 Extent to which measures are in place to mitigate any risk to the program infrastructure.
1.6 The extent to which home and hiring human resources advisors are aware of their roles and responsibilities related to program delivery.			

Appendix D – Priority entitlement types

Statutory

Under the *Public Service Employment Act*

Order of consideration for appointments

1 - Canadian Armed Forces members released for medical reasons attributable to service

2 - Surplus employees within their own organization

3 - Employees returning from a leave / replacing an employee on leave

4 - Persons laid-off

Regulatory

Under the *Public Service Employment Regulations*

No order of consideration for appointments

1 - Canadian Armed Forces members released for medical reasons not attributable to service

2 - Royal Canadian Mounted Police members discharged for medical reasons

3 - Reinstatement

4 - Relocation of spouse or common-law partner

5 - Surplus employee from another organization

6 - Surviving spouse or common-law partner if the death is attributable to the performance of duties

7 - Employee who becomes disabled

Appendix E – Persons with a priority entitlement: their awareness of services, resources and information

Persons with a priority entitlement	N/A	Not at all	Minimal extent	Moderate extent	Great extent
Portal	0.35%	8%	38.9%	31.9%	20.8%
Priority Information Management System	0.69%	14.2%	38.9%	31.3%	14.9%
Orientation	1.74%	27.4%	33.3%	22.9%	14.6%
Website info	1.0%	17.0%	40.3%	29.2%	12.5%
Program advisor	12.5%	31.3%	33.7%	21.5%	12.5%
HR advisor	1.7%	27.8%	42.0%	17.0%	11.5%

Number of persons with a priority entitlement survey respondents: 288

Appendix F – Managers and HR practitioners’ awareness of services, resources and information

Managers	N/A	Not at all	Minimal extent	Moderate extent	Great extent
Priority Program Liaison	3.4%	35.9%	26.9%	23.4%	10.3%
Superusers	5.5%	49.7%	30.3%	11.7%	2.8%
Info related to the program	1.4%	17.9%	35.2%	33.1%	12.4%
Priority Information Management System	4.1%	29.7%	38.6%	21.4%	6.2%
Priority Information Management System Support Centre	4.8%	42.1%	32.4%	15.9%	4.8%
Guide	2.1%	17.2%	37.9%	29.7%	13.1%
Legislation and Regulation	2.1%	11.7%	33.1%	40.0%	13.1%
Priority Administration Directive	2.1%	15.2%	35.9%	35.9%	11.0%

Number of manager survey respondents: 145

Human Resources	N/A	Not at all	Minimal extent	Moderate extent	Great extent
Priority Program Liaison	3.4%	13.4%	31.7%	28.3%	23.1%
Superusers	3.8%	14.5%	36.2%	24.5%	21.0%
Info related to the program	0.3%	1.4%	9.3%	31.4%	57.6%
Priority Information Management System	0.3%	0.3%	7.6%	20.0%	71.7%
Priority Information Management System Support Centre	1.0%	4.8%	27.6%	33.1%	33.4%
Guide	0.0%	2.1%	14.5%	26.2%	57.2%
Legislation and Regulation	0.3%	1.4%	17.9%	33.1%	47.2%
Priority Administration Directive	0.7%	1.7%	18.3%	35.5%	43.8%

Number of human resources practitioners survey respondents: 290

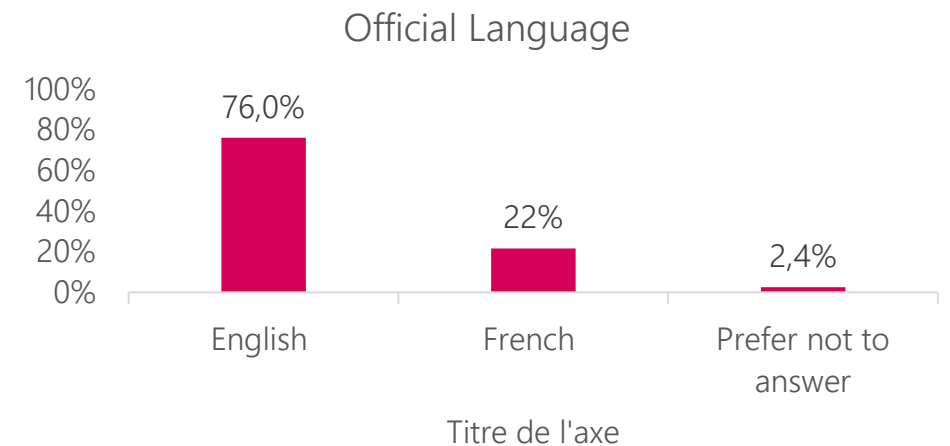
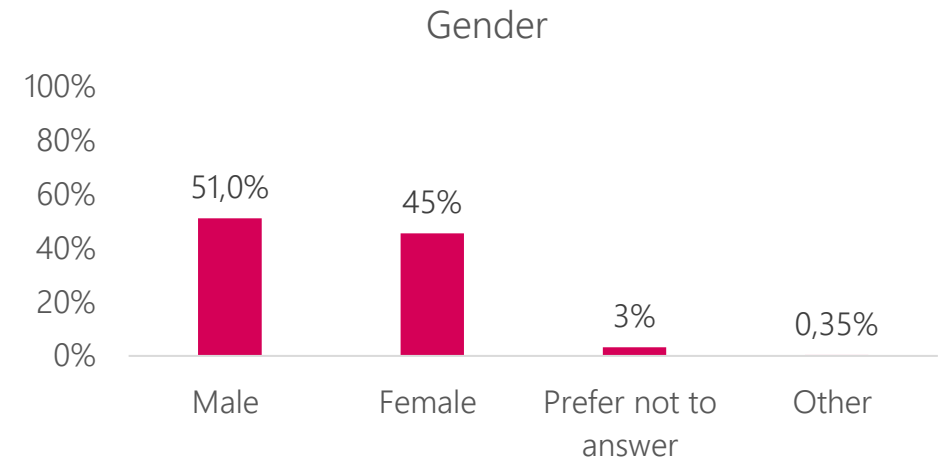
Survey demographics for persons with a priority entitlement

Location	%
Alberta	12.5%
British Columbia	17.7%
Manitoba	2.1%
National Capital Region	14.2%
New Brunswick	5.9%
Newfoundland and Labrador	1.0%
Northwest territories	0.3%
Nova Scotia	9.7%
Nunavut	0.3%
Ontario (excluding the National Capital Region)	17.4%
Quebec (excluding the National Capital Region)	9.4%
Prince Edward Island	0.3%
Saskatchewan	3.1%
Outside Canada	3.8%
Prefer not to answer	2.1%

Employment Equity Group	%
Member of a visible minority	10.1%
Person with a disability	17.7%
Indigenous person	6.9%
Woman	39.6%
Prefer not to answer	36.1%

Age Range	%
25 to 29 years	3.1%
30 to 34 years	8%
35 to 39 years	15.6%
40 to 44 years	16%
45 to 49 years	19%
50 to 54 years	18%
55 to 59 years	11%
60 years and over	5%
Prefer not to answer	4.86%

Education	%
Some high school	0.7%
High school diploma	14.6%
Bachelor's degree	23.6%
College diploma	40.3%
Master's degree	13.5%
Doctorate	1.7%
Other graduate degree	1.4%
Prefer not to answer	4.2%



Survey demographics for managers and HR practitioners

Location	Hiring Manager	Human Resources
Alberta	7.59%	4.1%
British Columbia	8.28%	6.2%
Manitoba	3.45%	3.1%
National Capital Region	43.45%	39.3%
New Brunswick	2.76%	8.3%
Newfoundland and Labrador	0.69%	1.0%
Northwest Territories		0.7%
Nova Scotia	8.97%	5.5%
Ontario (excluding the National Capital Region)	13.10%	11.0%
Outside Canada		0.3%
Prefer not to answer	1.38%	2.4%
Prince Edward Island		0.7%
Quebec (excluding the National Capital Region)	6.90%	16.2%
Saskatchewan	3.45%	0.7%
Yukon		0.3%

Age range	Hiring Manager	Human Resources
24 years and under		2.4%
25 to 29 years	1.4%	10.0%
30 to 34 years	2.1%	17.6%
35 to 39 years	9.0%	17.6%
40 to 44 years	13.1%	20.0%
45 to 49 years	18.6%	9.0%
50 to 54 years	28.3%	11.0%
55 to 59 years	17.2%	3.8%
60 years and over	6.2%	2.8%
Prefer not to answer	4.1%	5.9%

