

Speaking Notes for
Patrick Borbey
President of the
Public Service Commission of Canada
Regarding the
Public Service Hiring Process

Standing Committee on Government
Operations and Estimates

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Check against delivery

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the invitation to appear today. The Public Service Commission (PSC) appreciates the Committee's interest in public service recruitment. Accompanying me today is Stéphanie Poliquin, Vice President of Services and Business Development. Ms. Poliquin is responsible for the PSC's recruitment programs.

I would like to remind Committee members that, while the *Public Service Employment Act* authorizes the PSC to make appointments, it also provides for the delegation of this authority to deputy heads. The Act also encourages further delegation so that managers who best understand the type of talent needed and who can identify the strongest candidates make the actual hiring decisions.

Recruitment is a fundamental part of the PSC's work and we have provided Committee members with documents that highlight some of our programs. Our 2017–18 Annual Report also contains a wealth of information on staffing. To support renewal and to ensure that the public service can continue to meet the needs of Canadians, the recruitment of students and new talent are a major focus of our efforts.

As described in our annual report, student recruitment programs resulted in nearly 13,000 hires in 2017–18. The Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP) accounted for more than half of these hires, while Post-Secondary Co-op/Internships accounted for nearly 5,000 hires. Another 280 students had work assignments through the Research Affiliate Program.

To help the public service more accurately reflect the population it serves, FSWEP also includes some targeted inventories. The Indigenous Student Employment Opportunity, for instance, led to the hire of 186 Indigenous students last year, while 61 students with disabilities were hired under the Youth Accessibility Summer Employment Opportunity.

These numbers are certainly promising, but the results for the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program hint at one of the challenges we face when it comes to timely hiring. Of the almost 16,000 applicants to the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program, about 4,300 were found qualified for the five career streams identified in consultation with departments and agencies, for example an IT stream. But managers hired only 711 of them. This means that relatively few managers are hiring from these pools created based on their identified needs. Clearly, we need to raise awareness of the advantages of PSC recruitment programs and encourage managers to make use all of the flexibilities they have when it comes to hiring.

I understand that the Recruitment of Policy Leaders Program is of special interest to members of the Committee. This is a relatively small and highly specialized program designed to identify candidates with post-graduate degrees for positions as mid- to senior-level policy advisors. Last year, 21 individuals were hired from over 1,500 applicants. I would like to mention to Committee members that we are currently conducting an evaluation of the program to ensure that it continues to meet the evolving needs of the government's policy community.

Three years ago, the Public Service Commission introduced the New Direction in Staffing which greatly simplified staffing rules and provided significant flexibilities for departments and agencies to tailor their hiring practices to their particular context and needs.

Changes to the Human Resources culture within Canada's public service will not happen overnight, but we are making progress. There are more and more departments demonstrating innovation when it comes to hiring, for instance, making on-the-spot offers at job fairs or using creative job advertisements.

At the PSC, we continue to modernize our recruitment programs to better match the new skill requirements identified by departments and to reduce time-to-hire. For example, our work to transform GC Jobs, the portal that connects candidates and managers across the public service, continues to progress. The objective is to create a user-centric, intuitive recruitment platform built on the government's Digital Standards.

We are also partnering with universities to enhance graduate job search experiences and trying out new ways to match students with assignment opportunities. We piloted a speed staffing event at the University of Montreal to connect students and managers who were looking to fill hard to staff positions. Highlights of this pilot include 32 graduate students receiving on-the-spot job offers and hiring processes that were completed within a month. A similar event was recently held at York University, also with positive results.

Our pilot work on an Employee Referral Program is being implemented within the PSC to recruit psychologists for our Personnel Psychology Centre. These are all important steps toward a larger goal of renewing the public service and building a more accessible, more diverse and more inclusive workforce.

I understand the Committee is starting a study on hiring Veterans for public service positions. As you know, the *Veterans Hiring Act* facilitates entry into the public service through mobility, preference and priority provisions. These are efficient ways to quickly staff and connect public service managers with qualified and experienced candidates. I would be pleased to appear again to share information on our approach to placing veterans in the public service and on progress achieved since the new provisions of the Act came into force four years ago.

In closing, Mr. Chair, the PSC continues to work with departments and with our partners at the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer and the Canada School of the Public Service to attract, develop and retain the talent that will serve Canadians today and into the future.

We are pleased to answer any questions that Committee members may have for us.

Merci. Thank you. Meegwetch.