

Opening Statement for
Jean-François Fleury
Assistant Deputy Minister, Governance,
Planning and Policy Sector

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Standing Committee on Government
Operations and Estimates (OGGO)

on Recruitment Initiatives in the Public
Service

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From 3:30 - 4:30 pm

Mr. Chair and members of the committee,

It is my pleasure to appear before you today to provide an update on recruitment initiatives.

The office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, within the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, is committed to working with our partners to improve recruitment, development and retention practices.

Recruitment into the federal public service is a shared responsibility between Deputy Ministers, the Public Service Commission and the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer.

Recruitment initiatives are key to addressing demographic changes, planning for the future of work, changes to the nature of work and the workplace, and building and maintaining the capacity to meet the expectations of Canadian citizens.

The Public Service of Canada is strongly committed to recruiting, developing and retaining a high performing workforce that can deliver on the government's current and future priorities.

This requires an approach to people management and recruitment that includes reviewing and testing new and innovative ways to attract top talent for a high performing public service that supports and strengthens diversity and inclusion and explores new ways to serve all Canadians.

Greater diversity and inclusion have been linked to better results for organizations, including higher productivity, lower turnover, better decision-making informed by diverse perspectives and enhanced overall performance and results.

Canada's demographic landscape is changing. The Public Service needs to continue to be a reflection of the citizens it serves, and provide quality bilingual services to the Canadian public.

There are currently 9 million youth across the country representing approximately one-quarter of the population.

The Indigenous population is projected to grow at twice the rate of the general population, and immigration accounts for two-thirds of Canada's current population growth.

According to the 2016 Census, if current population trends continue, the representation of Visible Minorities in Canadian society is projected to grow from 22.3% in 2016 to somewhere between 31.2% and 35.9% in the next two decades.

We strive to employ a diverse public service that reflects Canada and to be a model of inclusion for employers across Canada and around the world. To do that, the Public Service must keep pace with these changes, for example:

Budget 2018 proposed the creation of the Public Service Centre on Diversity, Inclusion and Wellness to support departments and agencies in creating safe, healthy, diverse and inclusive workplaces.

The Treasury Board Secretariat has been collaborating with key partners and is developing a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, as well as, a multi-year Action Plan, including targeted recruitment efforts that will serve the Public Service to increase diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

Overall the public service is representative in each of the four employment equity designated groups since 2012.

We are proud that this overall representation has been sustained for the past six years, but we observe that gaps persist for certain occupational groups and levels in some departments and agencies, and efforts continue to address these.

An important part of improving diversity and inclusion in the public service includes exploring efforts and ideas to target recruitment and eliminate barriers in areas where we would like to increase representation such as Women in Scientific, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics fields; Visible Minorities in Scientific and Professional Groups; and Indigenous persons in executive ranks.

Through our continued efforts on diversity and inclusion and official languages, we will also be able to attract other segments of Canadian society.

The report on Language of Work in the federal public service released by the Clerk of the Privy Council, in 2017, recognizes diversity and inclusion and official languages as complementary values. By implementing the recommendations of this report, flexible and innovative approaches will be explored, such as options to reduce linguistic barriers in the recruitment of members of employment equity designated groups (e.g.: policy changes, improving access to language training, accommodations).

I am very proud of the success of the federal student employment programs.

These programs provide students with meaningful work experience, exposure to a wide range of jobs and future opportunities in the federal government.

They also allow managers to identify potential recruits with diverse backgrounds and skill sets who can later be hired as passionate public servants who bring new innovative ideas and want to make a difference.

We will build on our efforts to expand our learning from these experiences and apply the best practices.

Our focus remains on ensuring that we have the right people in the right jobs at the right time and that we are innovative in our approaches to attract talent of all ages.

Innovative recruitment initiatives help fast-track the ability to bring in or mobilize new talent as we work in partnership with departments and the Public Service Commission to increase access to talent.

Once new employees are recruited, it is also imperative to ensure effective support tools and practices are in place to support onboarding. The Canada School of Public Service delivers Public Service Orientation for all new employees to provide foundational learning on Values and Ethics and how the Public Service works. Departments have a critical role to play in onboarding new recruits that can include specialized departmental orientation and establishing performance agreements and learning plans to help ensure new employees are set up to succeed.

We have made strides already, but we are also working on the next phases to improve our understanding of the workforce, our needs and how to bring the best talent to the public service. This will help us navigate the disruptive changes that lie ahead like quantum computing, or machine learning and understand how this impacts our everyday employees who don't work on data or technology now, in the future.

In order to increase digital and data skills across such a large and diverse organization and to continue to deliver the high-quality services Canadians expect from us, we need to recruit more employees with these skills and also increase data literacy in our existing workforce. Because all public servants are data agents.

Recruitment is an important focus of government-wide HR planning for the future. We know we have already identified a shortage in certain areas. To address this, our focus will be to build strategies to address gaps.

We recognize in parallel that the public service working environment needs to adapt. We have put in place policies to help such as flexible work arrangements or working remotely when it makes sense. Some departments have moved along and now have technology to enable employees to work at any desk on any floor. These changes have enabled different people to come together easily to work together. We will continue to press forward and modernize other people management practices.

Our focus remains on ensuring that we have the right people in the right jobs at the right time, and that we are innovative in our approaches to attract talent of all ages from coast to coast to coast.

Thank you for your time.