



Summary of the Recruitment of Policy Leaders Program Evaluation Report

The program began as a pilot in 2001 and became permanent in 2004. Since 2006, 260 Canadians have been hired through the program to strengthen federal public service policy capacity.

What is the Recruitment of Policy Leaders Program?

The program hires highly educated, skilled Canadians to become policy leaders and make a significant contribution to federal public service policy development and implementation.

Context

The evaluation was included in the Public Service Commission 2018–21 Internal Audit and Evaluation Plan. The last evaluation of the program was in 2008.

Objective

The goal of the evaluation was to assess and report on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the program's development, administration and achievement of outcomes. The report provides a neutral, independent view on how the program is operating and performing.

Key findings

Relevance: The program is aligned with federal government priorities, roles and responsibilities. There is a continued need for this type of program as a hiring mechanism to build federal public service policy capacity. However, there is a risk that if the program continues to operate as currently administered, it may become less relevant.

Efficiency: Areas for improvement — governance, resource management, outreach and alumni — should be addressed to enhance program performance.

Effectiveness: From 2006 to 2011, the program was successful in placing candidates into policy leadership positions. Since 2012, both the placement rate of qualified candidates and the number of alumni promoted to the executive level have declined. While the program attracts qualified candidates, there is a need to ensure they are hired. To enhance program effectiveness, placement processes used to hire from partially assessed inventories should be strengthened.

Recommendations

- #1 Establish a formal governance structure that includes a lead department or functional area that is responsible for administering the program with the support of the Public Service Commission .
- #2 Review program intent and value proposition to ensure that program officials understand the current operating environment, and that the program remains relevant in hiring highly qualified candidates.
- #3 Develop a data collection and performance measurement strategy to support evidence-based decision-making and performance reporting.
- #4 Develop an outreach strategy to communicate program benefits to policy executives, hiring managers and human resources professionals.
- #5 Provide training and support to mentors so they can better assist candidates in obtaining policy positions within the public service.
- #6 Develop an orientation program and support structure (for example mentoring, rotational assignments and specific training activities) for alumni to help them navigate their federal public service career.