



Public Service Commission
of Canada

Commission de la fonction publique
du Canada

Annual Report 2020-21

Building tomorrow's public service today



Candidate for Open Government

Canada 

For more information, please contact:

The Public Service Commission of Canada
22 Eddy Street, Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0M7
cfp.infocom.psc@canada.ca

Twitter: @PSCofCanada

This report is also available on our website at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-service-commission.html>

Catalogue No.: SC1E-PDF
ISSN: 1912-0842

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, represented by the Public Service Commission of Canada, 2021

Contents

Message from the Commissioners	4
Taking stock	6
Advancing diversity and inclusion	18
Hiring persons with a priority entitlement and veterans	29
Protecting merit and non-partisanship	31
Looking forward	36
Endnotes	38

Message from the Commissioners

Every year, the Public Service Commission of Canada reports to Parliament on the health and integrity of the staffing system and the non-partisanship of the federal public service. While similar in focus to last year's annual report, the 2020-21 Annual Report looks back on one of the most unique and challenging years in the history of Canada's public service.

The COVID-19 pandemic pushed public servants to find new ways of delivering programs and services to Canadians and to adapt to new ways of working. We would like to give a heartfelt thanks to all public servants across Canada for their determined efforts throughout the past year. Their resilience, perseverance and agility have highlighted the importance and excellence of our public service.

We would also like to thank the staff of the Public Service Commission, whose tireless work helped departments and agencies quickly adapt to a remote work environment and contributed immensely to the continuity of hiring during the pandemic.

Fiscal year 2020–21 marked the fifth anniversary of the [New Direction in Staffing](#), a fundamental shift in our policy framework and oversight approach. The new direction emphasized each department and agency's unique realities and created space for each deputy head to establish a hiring model to meet their distinct needs. This past year underscored the value of this organizational flexibility, as we saw departments address urgent and unforeseen needs to deliver critical services to Canadians.

This year also reminded us of the importance of maintaining a public service-wide perspective. It is through this lens that we can uncover systemic issues and barriers. The [Audit of Employment Equity Representation in Recruitment](#) contributed significantly to this effort. It found that barriers and biases exist in our hiring systems. We must expose these barriers and biases and make every effort to address them or mitigate their impact in order to build a diverse workforce. Change is needed now.

For this reason, we welcomed [recent amendments to our enabling legislation](#), the *Public Service Employment Act*. The changes aim to remove barriers and biases in the public service hiring process for all equity-seeking groups. They also enhance our ability to oversee the hiring system to ensure it is inclusive and that it allows everyone to realize their full potential on an equal playing field.

Readers of this year's report will see that COVID-19 has impacted public service staffing. Amid great change and uncertainty, departments and agencies adapted their approaches to hire candidates from across the country to address pandemic challenges and provide continued services to Canadians. We encourage job seekers to apply to the public service, departments and agencies to adopt modern and inclusive approaches in recruiting for tomorrow's top talent, and all public servants to foster a more diverse and inclusive public service. Together, we can grow and learn from the experiences of the

pandemic, and ensure that the federal public service is stronger, more diverse and inclusive, and ready for whatever may lie ahead.

Taking stock

In a year like no other, hiring trends shifted course. After 7 years of growth across all indicators of hiring (advertisements, applications, staffing activities and population), 2020–21 saw changes in some of these indicators.

External hiring

In 2020–21, departments and agencies subject to the Public Service Employment Act made 52 232 hires from outside the public service. This was down by 15.5% (9 562 hires) from the previous year and represents the first decline in external hiring since 2012–13. This reflects the decrease in federal public service job postings open to all Canadians, which was down 18.0% to 2 754. Despite the drop, the number of people who submitted a job application increased by 18.5% to 1 017 082.

2020–21 total hiring activity

52 232
↓ 15.5%

Indeterminate: 8 244	↓ 27.4%
Term: 17 041	↑ 14.9%
Casual: 16 675	↓ 18.5%
Student: 10 272	↓ 32.1%

(Student breakdown)

Federal Student Work Experience Program

6 001 ↓ 36.3%

Co-op/Internship Program

4 208 ↓ 25.2%

Research Affiliate Program

63 ↓ 25.9%

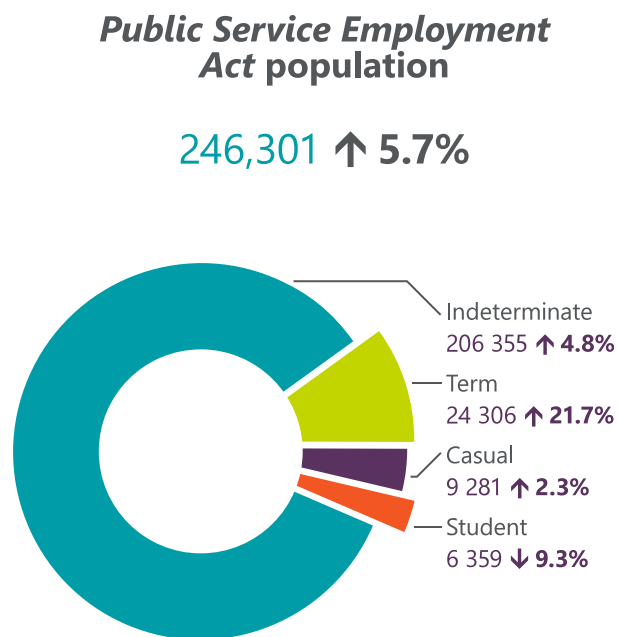
The decline in hiring was even more striking for students, who experienced the most significant drop in external hires, decreasing by 32.1% or 4 862 hires from the previous year. In 2020–21, there were 6 001 total hires from the [Federal Student Work Experience Program](#). This was a decrease of 36.3% (3 422). Graduate hiring through the [Post-Secondary Recruitment program](#) also saw a decline of 28.2%, with 472 hires.

Dedicated human resources teams at Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada

Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada were called upon to aid the federal government's efforts against the pandemic. They created dedicated teams of human resources specialists who were assigned client portfolios and quickly identified large volumes of recruitment pressures. The teams worked together to address urgent needs and streamlined services to ease the administrative burden for managers. In 2020–21, Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada hired 1 626 new indeterminate and term employees, compared to 1 380 in 2019–20, an increase of 17.8% or 246 hires.

Public service population

The total federal public service population increased by 5.7% (13 325) to 246 301 as of March 31, 2021. The indeterminate and term populations increased by 4.8% (9 440) and 21.7% (4 327), respectively. The casual population also increased by 2.3% (209). However, the student population decreased in 2020–21 by 9.3% (651).



(as of March 31, 2021)

The population increase was due in part to a system-wide decline in departures, as well as the hiring activities of 5 departments that accounted for almost half of indeterminate and term hires:

- Employment and Social Development Canada (25.7%)
- National Defence (public service employees) (7.3%)
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada (6.3%)
- Correctional Service Canada (5.0%)
- Public Services and Procurement Canada (4.8%)

Staffing during the pandemic at Employment and Social Development Canada

Employment and Social Development Canada was a leader in the Government of Canada's response to COVID-19. Due to the enormous demands brought on by the pandemic to increase capacity on the frontlines and for critical areas, the department increased its external hiring of indeterminate and term employees by 76.4% in comparison to 2019–20.

They also hired 107 Indigenous students and 81 students with disabilities through the Federal Student Work Experience Program. These students provided much-needed capacity for a virtual call centre that was quickly stood up to respond to the needs of Canadians applying for government benefits in the early stages of the pandemic.

Regional hiring

The National Capital Region continues to hold the largest share of the population of public servants (47.2%) compared to other regions, and an even greater share of external hiring activities for indeterminate positions at 58.8% (4 757).

Since the pandemic forced many to work remotely, an opportunity has emerged for more hiring outside the National Capital Region. With the federal government committed to exploring greater flexibility in working arrangements, departments and agencies are more likely to expand their search for candidates across Canada, a move that could further diversify the federal public service.



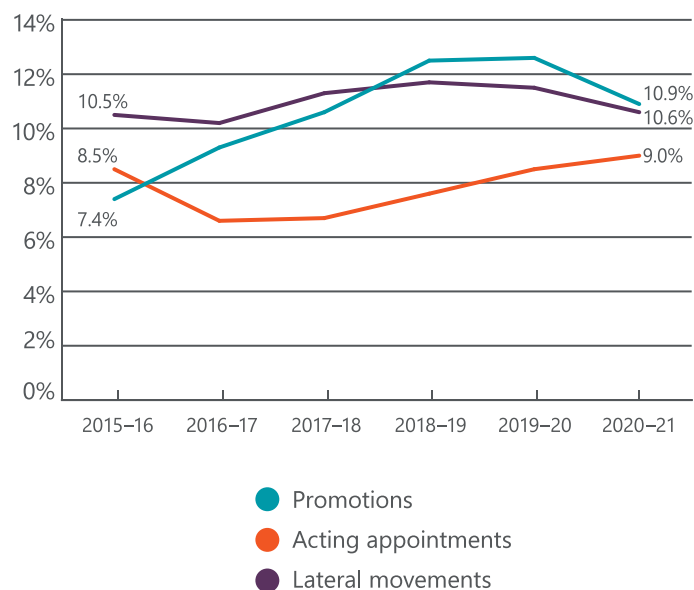
Regions	Hires	<i>Public Service Employment Act</i> population as of March 31, 2021
1. British Columbia	3 586	20 003
2. Alberta	2 647	12 586
3. Saskatchewan	903	5 206
4. Manitoba	1 320	7 684
5. Ontario (except NCR)	5 003	29 246
6. National Capital Region (NCR)	23 874	115 294
7. Quebec (except NCR)	5 124	25 446
8. New Brunswick	1 984	9 574
9. Nova Scotia	2 322	10 096
10. Prince Edward Island	576	2 368
11. Newfoundland and Labrador	1 684	4 388
12. Yukon	72	350
13. Northwest Territories	100	468
14. Nunavut	58	275
15. International	19	1 336
Unknown	2 960	1 981

Link to interactive data visualization of map of *Public Service Employment Act* population and applicants by region: <http://devextranet.psc-cfp.gc.ca/dad-dad/ar-2020-2021/index-map-en.html>

Internal mobility

In 2020–21, acting appointments, promotions and lateral movements within the public service remained relatively consistent with previous years. This degree of internal mobility, while high, reflects both the transferable skills of federal employees and the many opportunities for public servants to work in different positions or organizations. In total, a quarter of employees changed jobs this year.

Internal mobility rates



The latest data, from 2019–20, highlights that the share of promotions for 3 of the 4 designated employment equity groups is higher than their workforce availability. Of these 4 groups, only persons with disabilities had a share of promotions (4.2%) below their workforce availability (9.0%). Members of visible minorities (19.9%), Indigenous peoples (4.9%), and women (61.1%) all saw their share of promotions exceed their workforce availability.

In 2020–21 there were 768 new indeterminate executive appointments in departments and agencies subject to the *Public Service Employment Act*. Of these appointments, 90.4% were internal to the public service, similar to previous years.

The New Direction in Staffing turns 5 years old

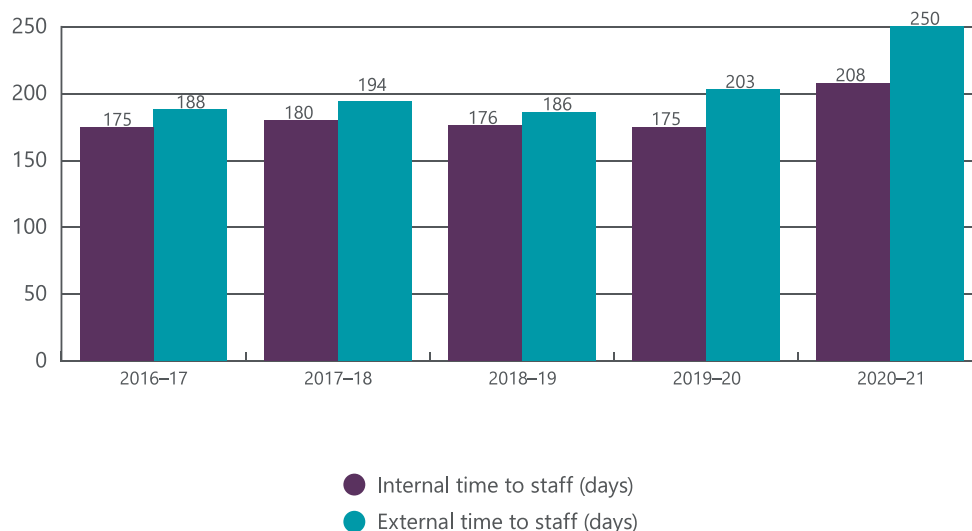
On April 1, 2016, the Public Service Commission of Canada introduced a new framework for public service hiring: the [New Direction in Staffing](#). It represented the most significant change to public service staffing in 10 years, reducing the complexity of hiring rules and giving more discretion to departments to establish hiring systems that fit their unique needs. In essence, it intended to simplify and streamline staffing.

As 2021 marks its fifth anniversary, it is important to look back and assess the impact the New Direction in Staffing has had on public service hiring.

One indicator is how departments and agencies are embracing the policy framework to seek out innovative recruitment methods. During the last 5 years, departments and agencies have looked for new ways to attract talent, going well beyond relying on a single job advertisement. They have also implemented new ways of assessing candidates to build the workforce for the future.

While this shift is promising, it has not yet reduced the time it takes to staff a position, which could leave a negative impression on job seekers. In fact, in 2020–21, the median time to staff for advertised external processes increased by 47 days to 250 calendar days, or close to 8.5 months. Before the New Direction in Staffing, the median time to staff for advertised external processes was 154 days.

Median time to staff for departments and agencies subject to the *Public Service Employment Act*

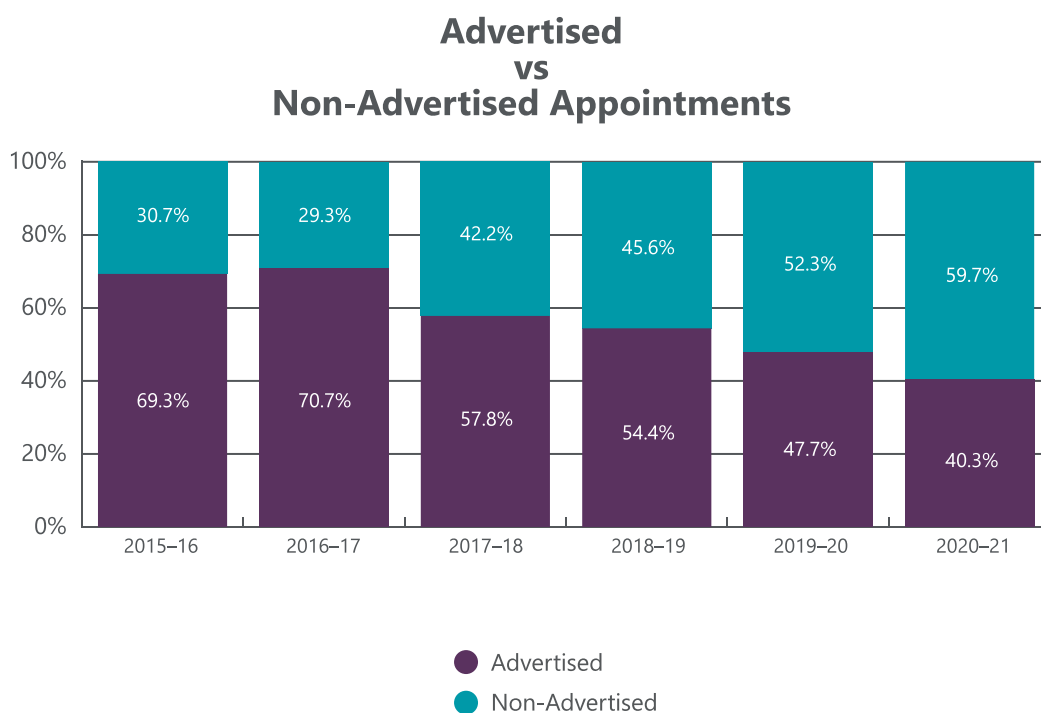


While the pandemic slowed staffing as departments and agencies faced uncertainty and adapted to virtual hiring, time to staff had already been increasing. Several factors beyond the control of hiring managers, such as inefficient security clearance processes and new pay administration requirements affect the time it takes to staff a position. Even so, hiring managers continue to have a significant influence on time to staff. As organizations adapt to virtual staffing, time to staff will need to decrease if the federal public service is to attract top talent.

Another striking trend since the new framework was implemented is a steady increase in non-advertised appointments. These appointments can be made for a range of reasons, including:

- student bridging (graduating students hired into indeterminate or term positions)
- acting appointments to perform the duties of a position on a temporary basis (for example, to replace an employee on parental leave)
- promotions within a development program (for example, the Financial Officer Recruitment and Development program)

In all cases, non-advertised appointments must be based on merit.



Non-advertised appointments for external hiring activities, promotions and acting appointments (indeterminate and term) increased to 59.7% (32 027) in 2020–21. This is nearly double the percentage of non-advertised appointments in 2015–16 (30.7%) when the New Direction in Staffing was launched. It is important that a balance be maintained in the public service between advertised and non-advertised appointments, and we rely on deputy heads to determine the appropriate balance within their organizations based on their unique needs and context.

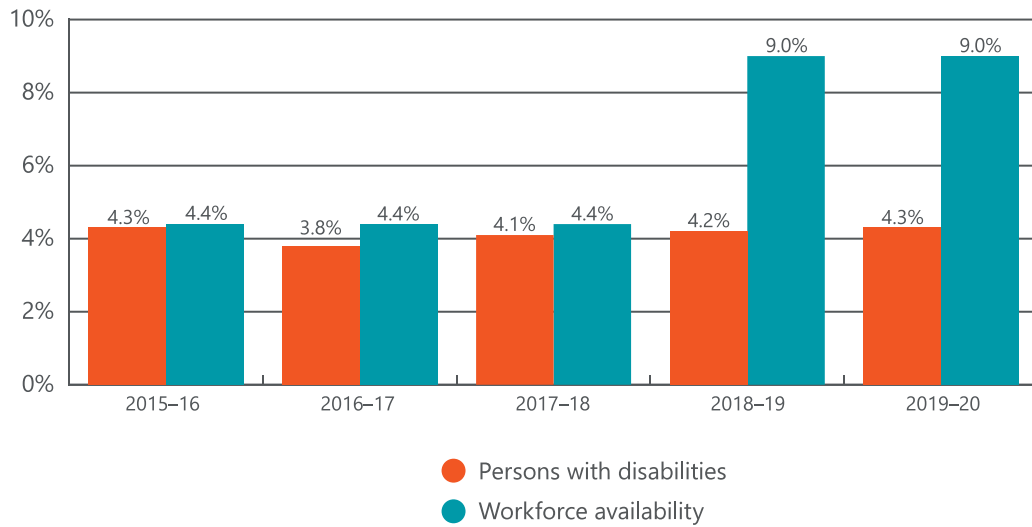
Non-advertised appointments often present an option for departments and agencies looking to appoint a skilled and talented member of an employment equity group. In 2019–20, women, members of visible minorities and Indigenous peoples were appointed through non advertised processes above their workforce availability. Persons with disabilities were the only group whose share of these appointments (4.3%) was below their workforce availability (9.0%). We will continue to monitor these appointments to ensure they do not have a negative impact on the representation of equity-seeking groups.

Non-advertised appointments – Employment equity impact



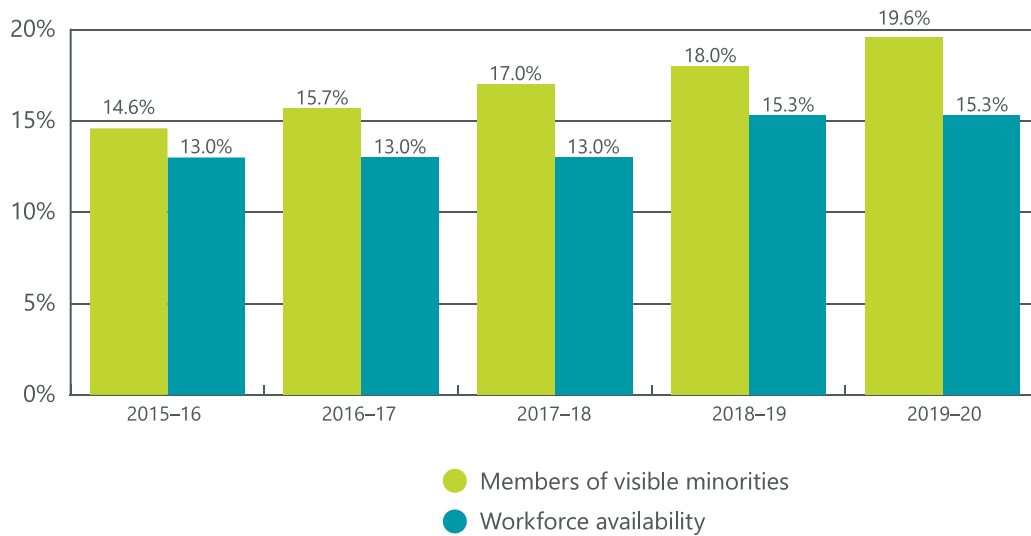
Non-advertised appointments – Employment equity impact

Persons with disabilities

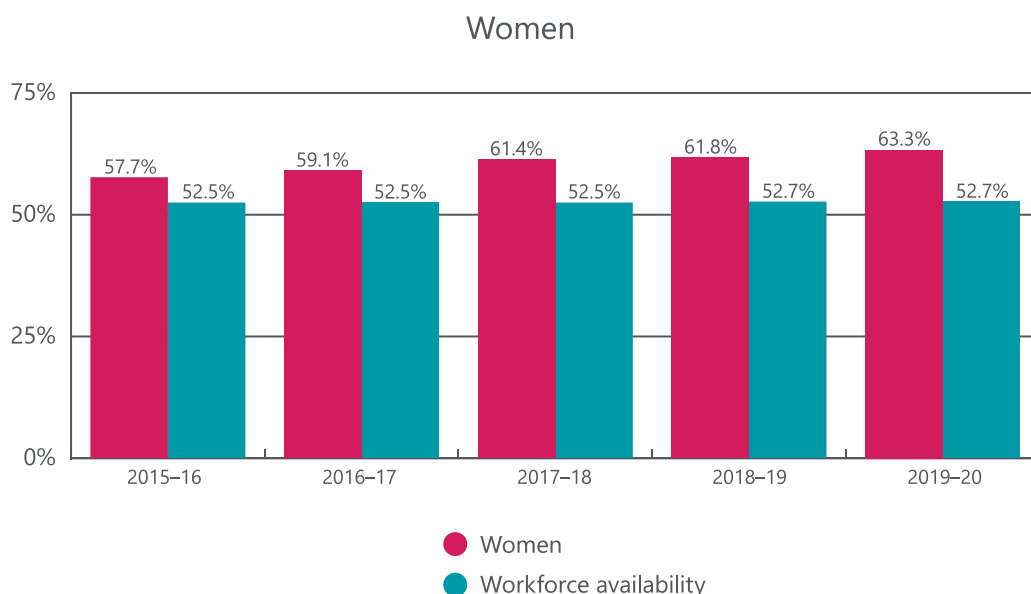


Non-advertised appointments – Employment equity impact

Members of visible minorities



Non-advertised appointments – Employment equity impact



It is encouraging that departments and agencies are implementing new ways of staffing, delegating hiring authority to lower levels of management, and focussing on different measures of success, including candidate experience, quality of hire and employee perceptions of fairness. We will continue to work with departments and agencies to further simplify staffing, and to make sure the goals of the New Direction in Staffing are achieved.

Canada Revenue Agency's staffing redesign project

The Canada Revenue Agency's Staffing Redesign Project was a bold effort to modernize staffing by examining every aspect from start to finish. Beginning in 2018, the project resulted in over 50 approved ideas for change, including:

- eliminating ineffective assessment processes and introducing online tests
- launching an internal recruitment team for hard-to-staff jobs
- creating a national mobility bank
- automatically sharing all pools after 90 days
- extending the timeframe for student bridging (students hired into indeterminate or term positions) from 18 months to 5 years and allowing students to be employed when studying part-time during their last semester

These experiments have shown encouraging results and decreased time to staff by over 50%, while dramatically reducing the administrative burden for hiring managers. The project is on target to meet its objectives and will help the agency advance as an agile and innovative organization. While the agency is not subject to the *Public Service Employment Act*, its efforts to modernize its staffing processes provide valuable examples of staffing innovation for other departments and agencies.

Assessment and Recruitment innovations

For many decades, we have searched for, examined and promoted the latest innovations in staffing assessments. Our Personnel Psychology Centre offers departments and agencies a range of professional assessment products and services for recruitment, selection and personnel development.

This past year, while adapting its entire operation to a remote work environment, the centre faced increased demand for candidate assessments for high-risk positions. These assessments measure a candidate's ability to cope with psychologically demanding situations, such as exposure to offensive material, isolation or carrying a weapon.

In partnership with private sector organizations, the centre also launched an online personality test for managers and executives. This test assesses key leadership competencies and includes indicators of openness to diversity and inclusion, providing a comprehensive understanding of the candidates.

Leadership simulations

During the pandemic, the Public Service Commission of Canada could not deliver its simulations [for team leaders](#) and [for supervisors](#), since the content and methodology are designed for face-to-face administration. These simulations allow candidates to demonstrate their leadership competencies. The Personnel Psychology Centre developed an alternative remote assessment to continue to offer hiring managers a professionally developed tool for selection at these levels. The [team leader/supervisor remote assessment tool](#) was developed and is administered with a focus on objectivity, standardization and fairness to equity-seeking groups. By the end of the fiscal year, 135 candidates were assessed using this tool.

GC Jobs Transformation

To enhance the experience of job seekers and to modernize hiring, the Public Service Commission of Canada continues to work on [the recruitment platform](#) that all Canadians can use to access federal public service jobs. In 2020–21, we completed proof-of-concept assessments to inform live pilots of the new platform. Key to this work was ensuring a broad range of views and perspectives in the testing, with 90 participants from across the country, and representatives from all 4 employment equity groups and LGBTQ2+ communities taking part in this crucial phase.

Accommodation measures

The Personnel Psychology Centre also offers assessment accommodation services to federal departments and agencies.

Assessment accommodation is a change made to a test procedure, format or content. It is designed to remove barriers to a fair assessment and allow candidates to fully demonstrate their competency.

In 2020–21, assessment accommodation requests noticeably decreased. The Personnel Psychology Centre received 621 requests for accommodation services in 2020–21, compared to 3 160 requests in 2019–20. This decrease parallels the reduced use of our standardized tests, including second language tests, which were designed to be administered in person. It remains vital that candidates with a disability be offered the opportunity to receive assessment accommodation, and the Personnel Psychology Centre is available to provide guidance in this area.

The Assessment Accommodation Ambassadors Network was launched in 2020–21. The network trains representatives in the federal human resources community on best practices for assessment accommodation. Under this train-the-trainer model, ambassadors share what they have learned within their organization. This information sharing will help create a self-sustaining network of experts in assessment accommodation throughout the federal public service. In the first year of the project, 31 ambassadors representing 24 departments and agencies met regularly and completed the first part of the curriculum designed by the Personnel Psychology Centre.

Advancing diversity and inclusion

This past year, the priority on diversity and inclusion in the federal public service intensified significantly. The commitment to diversity and inclusion by departments and agencies reflects a resolve to identify and remove any systemic barriers for equity-seeking groups in the federal public service.

A commitment must translate to action. For this reason, the Public Service Commission of Canada welcomed the [recent Public Service Employment Act amendments](#) that aim to remove bias and barriers in hiring. We will implement the changes in close consultation with our stakeholders to ensure they are successful and lasting.

Audit of Employment Equity Representation in Recruitment

In 2020–21, we released the [Audit of Employment Equity Representation in Recruitment](#), one of several initiatives to inform and support efforts to increase diversity and inclusion in the federal public service staffing system.

The audit looked at how employment equity groups were affected through the main stages of a hiring process: job application, screening (automated and organizational), assessment and selection. The findings were striking.

The audit found that employment equity groups did not remain proportionately represented throughout the recruitment process, and revealed that:

- women were the only group not to experience a decrease in representation from the application to the appointment stage
- Indigenous candidates experienced a reduction in representation at the assessment stage
- persons with disabilities experienced the largest drop in representation of any of the employment equity groups, with decreases at the assessment and appointment stages
- members of visible minority groups experienced decreases in representation at the organizational screening and assessment stages
- of the visible minority subgroups examined in our audit, Black candidates experienced a larger drop in representation than other members of visible minorities, both at the organizational screening and assessment stages

Employment equity group representation rates following each stage of the recruitment process (Source: Audit of Employment Equity Representation in Recruitment, Table 2)

Employment equity group	Job application	Automated screening	Organizational screening	Assessment	Appointment
Women	52.8%	53.2%	59.7%	59.8%	58.2%
Members of visible minorities	30.4%	30.3%	27.4%	24.6%	24.7%
Indigenous peoples	3.5%	3.6%	4.0%	2.9%	2.9%
Persons with disabilities	4.4%	4.7%	4.5%	3.6%	2.4%

The audit made clear that much needs to be done to ensure that barriers and biases are identified and eliminated in appointment processes. We have set out concrete actions to address the audit's results, including:

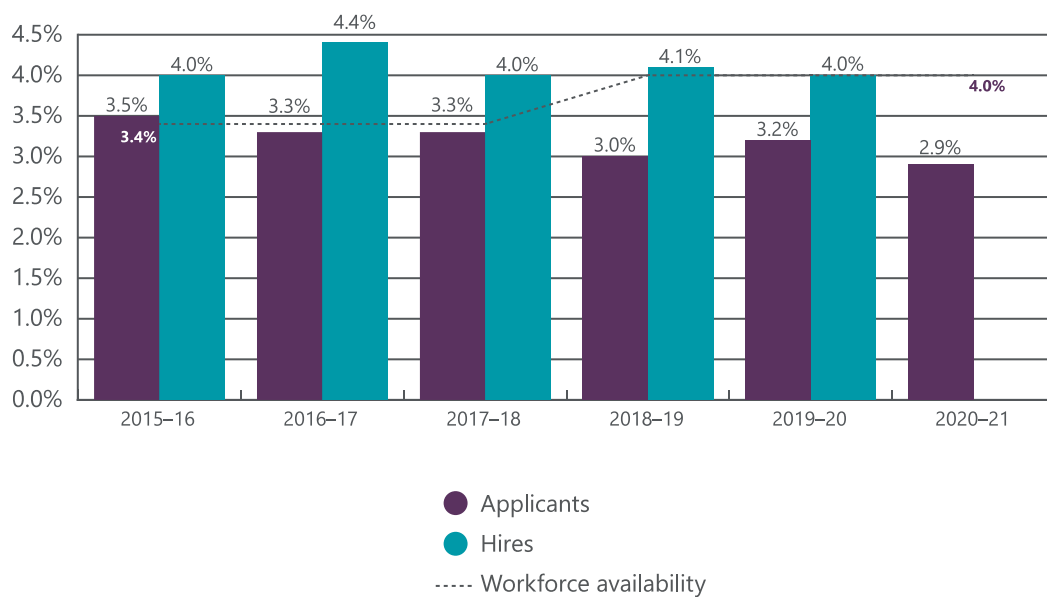
- requiring training on unconscious bias in recruitment for hiring managers
- using diverse interview boards
- strengthening employment equity obligations for deputy heads
- modernizing the GC Jobs recruitment platform

We shared the audit results and recommendations widely, holding over 40 information sessions with employment equity groups, diversity and inclusion networks, audit and human resources groups, bargaining agents, and departments throughout the country. These actions are a starting point, and we will build on them to increase diversity and inclusion across the federal public service.

Indigenous peoples

The number of Indigenous applicants to public service jobs increased from 10 021 to 10 916 in 2020-21, but the share of Indigenous applicants as a proportion of all applicants was only 2.9%, which is lower than the 3.2% share in 2019–20. It is also below the workforce availability (4.0%). More efforts are needed to increase application rates of Indigenous peoples to ensure they remain well represented in the federal public service.

Indigenous peoples applicants to advertised processes and hires compared to workforce availability



Subgroup distribution for Indigenous peoples

Subgroup	2019-20 applicants to external advertised processes	2019-20 hires	2020-21 applicants to external advertised processes	2020-21 hires*
Inuit	3.9%	53	3.6%	-
Métis	40.9%	298	42.1%	-
North American Indian / First Nation	48.2%	481	46.9%	-
Other	7.1%	162	7.3%	-

Link to interactive data visualization of Indigenous applicants to advertised processes and hires compared to workforce availability (percentage) (2015–16 to 2020–21) and subgroup distribution for Indigenous peoples (2019–20 & 2020–21):

<http://devextranet.psc-cfp.gc.ca/dad-dad/ar-2020-2021/index-ee-en.html?ee=auto-ind>

Hiring managers looking to hire Indigenous people can turn to the [Indigenous Student Employment Opportunity](#), a national recruitment initiative for students who self-declare as Indigenous under the Federal Student Work Experience Program. It features an onboarding guide, training, mentoring activities and support services tailored for students and hiring managers. When participants graduate, they are invited to join the Indigenous Career Pathway inventory for student bridging opportunities. Through the pathway, hiring managers can access graduates who are ready to be hired to a public service job. In 2020–21, 6 students were bridged into the public service using this inventory.

Our Aboriginal Centre of Expertise offers [tools for Indigenous employees](#) and [resources for hiring managers](#). The centre connects managers with eligible and available Indigenous students and graduates in diverse fields. In November 2020, it launched an Indigenous recruitment toolbox which provides guidance on recruiting Indigenous peoples.

Persons with disabilities

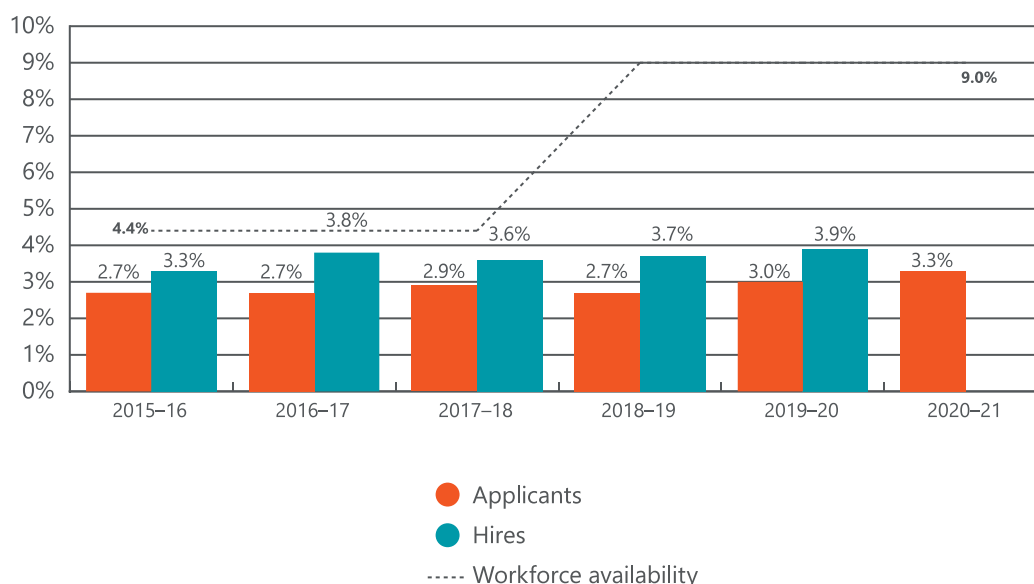
In 2020–21, we continued to work with departments and agencies to increase the representation of persons with disabilities in the federal public service. Working with the Office of Public Service Accessibility, we provided departments and agencies with hiring targets in order to close representation gaps within 5 years. With this data, departments and agencies will be more aware of any representation gaps and can introduce targeted solutions.

We also launched the second cohort of the [Federal Internship Program for Canadians with Disabilities](#). This national program provides a 2-year federal internship opportunity to eligible Canadians with disabilities. This past year, 28 organizations participated in the program, hiring 55 interns, more than twice the number of interns hired in the first year. The interns reflect the intersectionality often present when hiring persons with disabilities. Of the 55 interns, 29% also self-declared as visible minorities, 5.5% self-declared as Indigenous, and 49% self-declared as women.

Our [Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities](#) initiative features an onboarding process, training, a mentorship program, activities and support services for both students and hiring managers. In 2021, we launched the Virtual Door to Talent with Disabilities, an inventory open to former participants once they graduate. Through this new inventory, hiring managers can access graduates who gained federal public service work experience and are ready to be hired through student bridging.

Despite these efforts, concerning trends persist. The number of persons with disabilities who applied for federal public service positions still falls short of the levels needed to ensure equitable representation in the federal public service workforce.

Persons with disabilities applicants to advertised processes and hires compared to workforce availability



Subgroup distribution for persons with disabilities

Subgroup	2019-20 applicants to external advertised processes	2019-20 hires	2020-21 applicants to external advertised processes	2020-21 hires*
Blind or visual impairment	5.0%	49	4.8%	-
Coordination or dexterity	4.6%	48	4.3%	-
Deaf or hard of hearing	9.5%	105	8.5%	-
Mobility	13.8%	140	13.3%	-
Speech impairment	1.8%	20	1.8%	-
Other disability	65.4%	710	67.3%	-

Link to interactive data visualization of applicants with disabilities to advertised processes and hires compared to workforce availability (percentage) (2015-16 to 2020-21) and subgroup distribution for persons with disabilities (2019-20 and 2020-21): <http://devextranet.psc-cfp.gc.ca/dad-dad/ar-2020-2021/index-ee-en.html?ee=psh-pwd>

In 2020–21, 12 263 persons with disabilities applied to advertised processes for indeterminate or term positions, representing 3.3% of all applicants. This is an increase of 2 815 applicants compared to 2019–20, when the share of applicants with disabilities was 3.0%. Although these numbers are trending in the right direction, the share of applicants with disabilities remains well below the workforce availability (9.0%).

It will be challenging for the public service to meet its goal of hiring no less than 5 000 persons with disabilities by 2025. However, targeted recruitment programs and data on representation gaps will help departments and agencies focus their efforts to meet the goal.

New inventories to hire persons with disabilities

To help departments and agencies meet the goal of hiring no less than 5 000 persons with disabilities by 2025, the Public Service Commission of Canada partnered with the Human Resources Council on an initiative that also aims to improve time to staff and the experience of candidates and hiring managers. Two ongoing inventories of candidates with disabilities were launched on March 31, 2021, featuring careers in [data and policy analysis](#) and [digital technology](#).

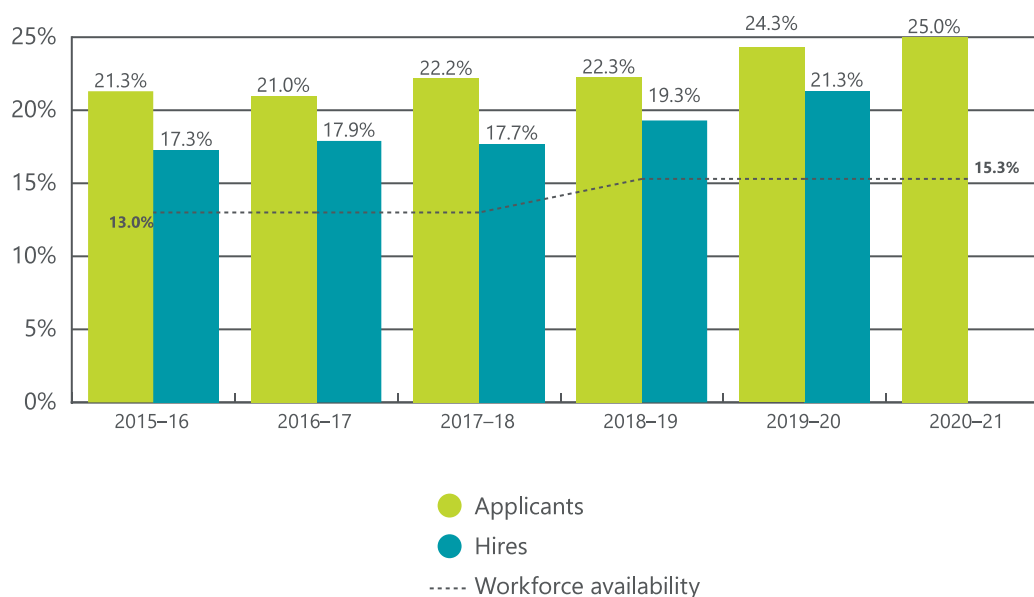
These inventories, advertised on GC Jobs and the [self-declaration for persons with disabilities web page](#), connect public service hiring managers with talented and highly skilled job seekers. To promote the inventories and the self-declaration web page, the Public Service Commission launched a paid advertising campaign. In just under 2 months, the page received more than 96 125 visits. Thanks in part to the campaign, the monthly share of applications by persons with disabilities reached over 5% for the first time in March 2021.

Members of visible minorities

The share of federal public service job applicants who self-declared as members of visible minorities continued its upward trend in 2020–21: 94 008 members of visible minorities applied to advertised processes for indeterminate or term positions, 17 371 more applicants than in 2019–20. This number represents a quarter of all applicants, which is higher than both the share in 2019–20 (24.3%) and the workforce availability (15.3%).

The increased collection of disaggregated data across the Government of Canada has been instrumental in revealing potential systemic barriers and biases in the federal staffing system, allowing for clearer indications of differences among groups.

Members of visible minorities applicants to advertised processes and hires compared to workforce availability



Subgroup distribution for members of visible minorities

Subgroup	2019-20 applicants to external advertised processes	2019-20 hires	2020-21 applicants to external advertised processes	2020-21 hires*
Black	25.8%	1 237	25.0%	-
Chinese	10.3%	657	10.7%	-
Filipino	4.5%	203	4.9%	-
Japanese	0.5%	20	0.5%	-
Korean	1.5%	96	1.4%	-
Non-white Latin American	5.0%	227	5.1%	-
Non-white West Asian, North African or Arab	11.7%	724	11.2%	-
Person of mixed origin	5.0%	533	5.2%	-
Southeast Asian	2.9%	236	2.9%	-
South Asian / East Indian	24.5%	931	25.5%	-
Other visible minority	8.2%	438	7.7%	-

Link to interactive data visualization of members of visible minorities applicants to advertised processes and hires compared to workforce availability (percentage) (2015–16 to 2020–21) and subgroup distribution for members of visible minorities (2019–20 and 2020–21): <http://devextranet.psc-cfp.gc.ca/dad-dad/ar-2020-2021/index-ee-en.html?ee=mv-vm>

Building Black Leadership

In 2020–21, on behalf of the Atlantic Federal Council, Employment and Social Development Canada created, led and launched the Building Black Leadership program. The program provides leadership opportunities, tools, resources and networks to highly skilled Black public servants, increasing diversity at leadership levels and providing for more diverse perspectives in leadership and policy discussions. Participants are supported by the federal community, including the Public Service Commission of Canada, through mentorship, access to psychometric tools, guest speaker sessions, and participation at Atlantic Federal Council meetings, for professional development and career progression.

The program saw 8 organizations nominate 13 candidates for consideration in its first cohort. Of those 13 nominations, 10 individuals will make up the first cohort, supported by the following organizations: the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Canada Border Service Agency, Justice Canada, Parks Canada, Service Canada, Public Services and Procurement Canada and Transport Canada.

EX-1 visible minority campaign

Following the Clerk of the Privy Council's call to action for progress in senior-level representation, National Defence launched an external EX-1 pilot recruitment campaign to increase the representation of visible minorities in their executive cadre. The department implemented several innovative staffing technologies, tools and processes to increase inclusivity and reduce potential biases in the staffing process. These innovations included:

- new tools and technology to support barrier- and bias-free assessments
- character- and behaviour-based assessments
- a diverse selection board
- inclusive language in job advertisements

- a more personalized experience to ensure all candidates, including those who were not successful, benefited from the experience, with feedback and understanding of gaps to progress in their careers

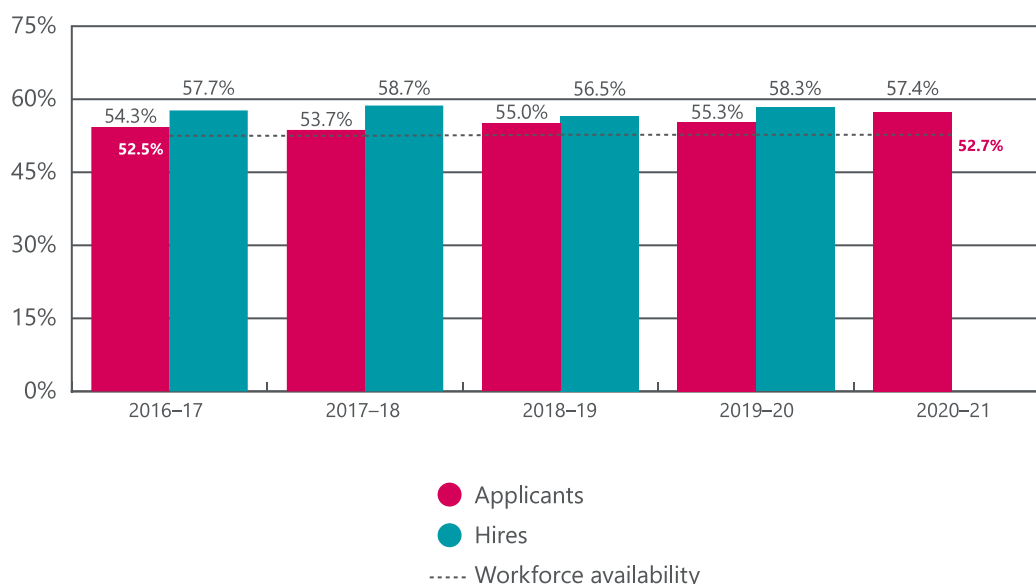
The EX-1 visible minority campaign was advertised from September 11 to 25, 2020, and attracted 471 applicants. In total, 20 appointments were made (10 in 2020 and another 10 in early 2021) and over 70 candidates were found to be fully or partially qualified. This campaign demonstrates the value of implementing innovative and inclusive recruitment and staffing techniques. It highlights the number of highly skilled and talented members of visible minority leaders within and outside the federal public service.

Women

The pandemic had a significant impact on the employment status of women in Canada. In April 2020, [Statistics Canada reported](#) that women living in Canada experienced a 17% decline in employment. Within the federal public service, the [Employment Equity in the Public Service of Canada for Fiscal Year 2019 to 2020](#) report highlighted that women's employment status in the federal public service has remained above workforce availability, with women representing 55% of the core public service workforce in 2019–20.

In 2020–21, the share of women applicants to public service jobs grew to 57.4%, an increase of 41 094 applicants from 2019–20. This share of applicants continues to surpass the workforce availability for women of 52.7%. Despite this increase, we must not lose this momentum. The federal public service needs to support women who want to join, and its hiring strategies must consider the impact on individuals with intersecting identities (people in more than one equity-seeking group).

Women applicants to advertised processes and hires compared to workforce availability



Link to interactive data visualization of women applicants to advertised processes and hires compared to workforce availability (percentage) (2015–16 to 2020–21):

<http://devextranet.psc-cfp.gc.ca/dad-dad/ar-2020-2021/index-ee-en.html?ee=f-w>

Board+

In 2018–19, several participants at retreats held by the Innovation Lab of the Quebec Federal Council brought up the need for diverse staffing selection boards. In response, the Innovation Lab, in partnership with the Quebec National Manager Community, created the Pool of Members for Diversified and Inclusive Selection Boards, or Board+.

Board+ is a pool of federal public servants belonging to an employment equity group or official language minority community and willing to sit on a selection board to help hiring managers optimize the participation, inclusion and diversity of selection board members. The tool is available to all public service organizations and aims to increase diversity and inclusion in the federal public service, and strengthen interdepartmental relationships. As of the end of March 2021, there were 137 public servants in the pool.

Official languages

Ensuring that public servants can work in their official language of choice and that people are served by public servants in their official language of choice remains a priority for the Public Service Commission.

Before staffing a bilingual position, managers must decide if it will be staffed on an imperative or a non-imperative basis. An **imperative appointment process** means that a person must meet the language requirements of the position at the time of appointment. A **non-imperative appointment process** means that the position can be staffed by a person who does not meet the language requirements of the position and who either agrees to become bilingual within 2 years or is exempt for medical reasons. In 2020–21, departments and agencies subject to the *Public Service Employment Act* made 445 non-imperative appointments.

To help hiring managers determine the official language capacity of a candidate, we offer second language tests for imperative appointments. Before the pandemic, we conducted thousands of in-person second language tests each year, including a test of oral competency, but in March 2020, due to the pandemic, we closed our test centres across the country.

In response, we introduced 2 temporary measures to give departments and agencies flexibility in assessing second language qualifications. The first measure lets them conduct their own second language tests under specific conditions; the second measure allows the validity period of existing test results to be extended. In 2020–21, 4 611 people were appointed using alternate tests, and 3 209 received an extension of their results.

In addition to giving departments and agencies the flexibility to develop and conduct their own assessments, we created new second language tests for oral interaction, reading comprehension and written expression that can be administered remotely.

In May 2020, we launched second language interviews by telephone to temporarily replace our test of oral proficiency for staffing positions that were related to the pandemic or that ensured the effective functioning of the federal government. In December 2020, we began using a virtual platform to conduct second language interviews, confirm candidate identity and make results valid for 5 years and transferable across positions. Through these efforts, we conducted 10 500 second language interviews in 2020–21.

In the summer of 2020, we also released an unsupervised test of written expression and reading comprehension. In 2020–21, we administered over 13 600 of these unsupervised tests.

Hiring persons with a priority entitlement and veterans

Persons with a priority entitlement

The Public Service Commission of Canada is responsible for administering and overseeing provisions related to priority entitlements. Priority entitlements are provided for people who meet specific conditions to be appointed ahead of others for vacant positions in the federal public service. There are [11 types of priority entitlements](#), including for:

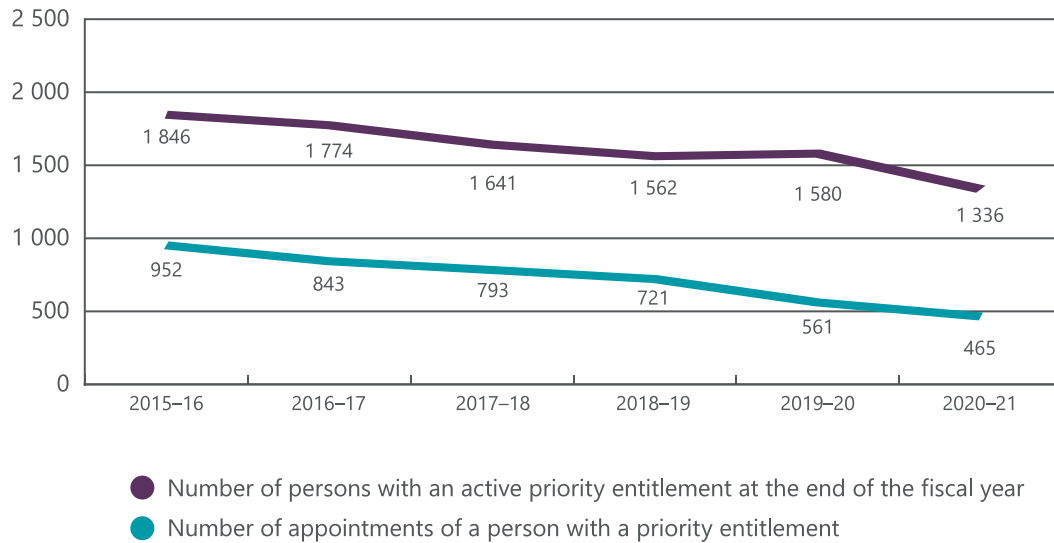
- public servants who are laid-off
- public servants returning from extended leave, such as leave for the purpose of the care of family
- public servants who are no longer able to carry out the duties of their position as a result of a disability
- medically released members of the Canadian Armed Forces or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Hiring persons with a priority entitlement allows the public service to retain expertise while at the same time offering hiring managers a quick and easy solution to staffing needs.

For the 5th consecutive year, appointments for persons with priority entitlements declined. They decreased by 17% (465) as compared to last year. However, in 2020–21, the population of persons with a priority entitlement also reached its lowest level in the last 10 years, with only 1 369 people registered.

To better understand the factors influencing the placement of persons with a priority entitlement and to guide strategies to support their hiring, we reviewed the statistical data on their appointments for the last decade. As well, as part of a rebranding initiative, we published [6 vignettes](#) about people who found work thanks to a priority entitlement.

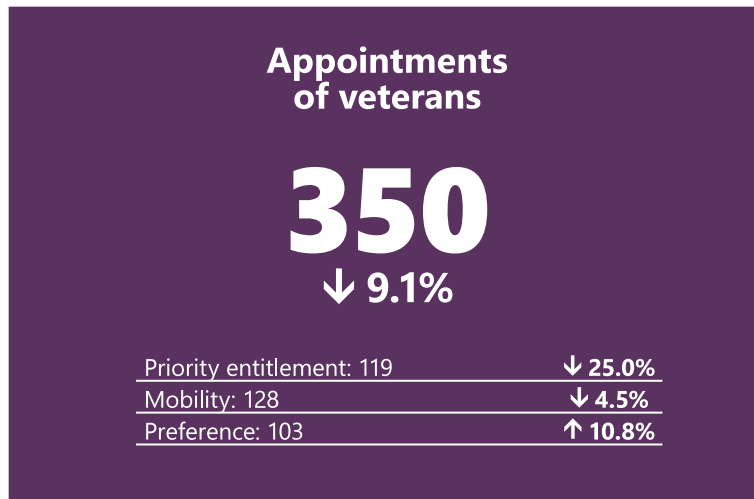
Priority entitlements: population and appointments



Veterans

Veterans offer managers the opportunity to hire employees with a wealth of transferable experience gained while serving in the Canadian Armed Forces. The [Public Service Employment Act](#) provides 3 mechanisms to help veterans transition into a career in the federal public service: priority entitlements, preference and mobility. Veterans make up over a third of the total priority entitlement talent pool.

As well as the priority for medically released members of the Canadian Armed Forces, veterans are provided preference in external hiring, which means that qualified veterans must be hired ahead of other candidates. A mobility provision allows for veterans and Canadian Armed Forces members to apply to job opportunities that are open only to federal public service employees.



In 2020–21, appointments made under the mobility provision declined by 4.5%, from 134 in 2019–20 to 128 in 2020–21. However, appointments under the preference provision increased by 10.8%, from 93 in 2019–20 to 103 in 2020–21.

Despite veterans' valuable work experience, overall veteran hiring continued to decline in 2020–21, decreasing by 25.0% (119). This decline coincided with a 9.0% (184) decrease in veterans who activated their medically released priority entitlement. The uncertainty caused by the pandemic resulted in many medically released veterans deciding to wait to activate their priority entitlement. This priority population was also affected when 104 priority registrations expired in July 2020 as the entitlements for the first 5-year cohort ended. We continue to work with our partners to implement streamlined and comprehensive service and resource offerings for veterans.

Protecting merit and non-partisanship

The Public Service Commission of Canada's oversight function, which consists of investigations, audit and data services, is a core element of its mandate. This function helps us safeguard merit, non-partisanship and representativeness. This past year, we published a report on the [Audit of Employment Equity Representation in Recruitment](#) and launched the Staffing and Non-Partisanship Survey. Oversight activities like these inform our awareness of public service staffing trends, and serve as a basis for changes to ensure the continued integrity of federal public service staffing.

Cyclical assessments

While we examine performance across the public service, deputy heads are required to review their department or agency's staffing system on a cyclical basis to ensure it complies with staffing rules. A total of 76 organizations must report on their cyclical assessment results at least once every 5 years.

By the end of March 2021, we had received reports from 19 organizations. To date, departments and agencies have demonstrated a high level of compliance with staffing requirements and are taking corrective measures to address any identified issues.

Horizontal audits

Our January 2021 [*Audit of Employment Equity Representation in Recruitment*](#) illustrates how our mandate is supported by audits that look at the performance of the staffing system. Other public service-wide activities such as the [*Horizontal Audit of Student Hiring under the Federal Student Work Experience Program*](#) also offer insights into the health and integrity of the federal public service staffing system.

Staffing and Non-Partisanship Survey

In March 2021, we conducted the Staffing and Non-Partisanship Survey. The biennial survey collects public servant feedback on merit, fairness and transparency in staffing actions, and on how equipped they feel to exercise their legal rights and responsibilities related to political activities and non-partisanship within the public service.

Results from the survey also allow us to inform departments and agencies about staffing-related topics from the perspectives of employees, hiring managers and staffing advisors by key demographic characteristics such as employment equity groups and subgroups. For the most recent version of the survey, we added new questions to shed light on staffing-related opportunities and challenges experienced by public servants during the pandemic. Results and analysis of the survey are expected to be available by the end of 2021–22.

Investigations

We conduct investigations under the authority of the [*Public Service Employment Act*](#). We are mandated to investigate external appointment processes to determine if an appointment or proposed appointment was made based on merit, or whether an error, an omission or improper conduct affected the selection of the person appointed or proposed for appointment. We also have the sole authority to investigate internal and external appointment processes if we have reason to believe that an appointment or proposed appointment was not free from political influence or that fraud may have occurred.

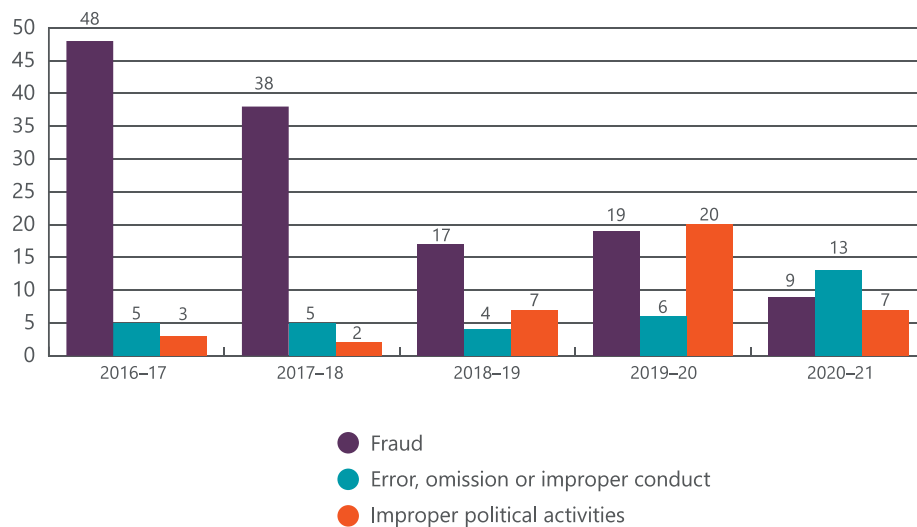
As part of our mandate to safeguard the political impartiality of the public service, we also conduct investigations into allegations of improper political activities of public servants.

In 2020–21, we received 553 requests for investigations. Of these requests, 198 fell under our mandate. These included:

- 8 deputy head requests for investigations on internal appointment processes related to error, omission or improper conduct
- 153 requests related to error, omission or improper conduct, or to merit not being met, in external appointment processes
- 32 requests related to fraud
- 5 requests related to improper political activities

In 2020–21, we did not receive any requests related to political influence.

Number of founded investigations



Examples of investigations completed in 2020–21

Fraud

A candidate created multiple accounts with different email addresses to apply 11 times to 4 public service job opportunities. For one of those processes, the candidate wrote a standardized exam twice under 2 separate accounts. The investigation concluded that the candidate committed fraud since their actions could have compromised the appointment processes by giving them more opportunities to be assessed.

Improper conduct: Favouritism

A manager favoured several students through the Federal Student Work Experience Program. The manager tailored the requests to circumvent the random nature of the referral process to hire the predetermined students. The investigation concluded that the manager committed improper conduct that affected the appointment of these students.

Improper political activities

A public servant in a high-level executive position used their personal Twitter account to show support and opposition to federal political parties. The public servant believed that the political activity did not require a consultation with the Public Service Commission of Canada, their department's values and ethics team, or their immediate supervisor.

The investigation considered the mandate of the employee's organization, as well as the nature of their duties and level of visibility. It concluded that in tweeting support of a federal party and opposition to another federal party and its leader, the public servant could have been seen as not being able to perform their duties in a politically impartial manner.

Community of practice for investigators

The Federal Government Investigators Community was created to be a platform for the professional development of public servants working in the investigation field across the federal public service. It aims to cater to this community's needs and interests and shape how knowledge, information and experience are shared. The goal is to create and maintain a professional community for investigators to develop partnerships, enhance skill sets and share innovative practices.

In 2020–21, the community held 2 events:

- in November 2020, 2 litigators from the Department of Justice presented the Supreme Court of Canada judgment in *Canada (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration) v. Vavilov*, 2019 SCC 65, that established a new framework for judicial review of administrative decisions
- in March 2021, panelists from the Public Service Commission, the Commissioner of Canada Elections and the Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner of Canada discussed how they each changed their investigation process to adapt to the new reality of the pandemic

Non-partisanship and political activities

The political impartiality of the federal public service is a fundamental value ensuring that Canadians benefit from the non-partisan delivery of programs and services, and that appointments are based on merit and non-partisanship. The [Public Service Employment Act](#) balances these principles with the rights of public servants to engage in political activities. Public servants seeking nomination or to be a candidate in a federal, territorial, provincial or municipal election must first request permission from the Public Service Commission.

In deciding whether seeking nomination or being a candidate will impair or be perceived as impairing an employee's ability to perform their duties in a politically impartial manner, we take into consideration factors such as:

- the nature of the election
- the nature of the employee's public service duties
- the level and visibility of the employee's public service position

This is a partial list of factors, and we may consider any other aspects potentially relevant to weighing the right of employees to engage in political activities while maintaining the principle of political impartiality in the public service. In 2020–21, we processed 79 requests for permission to be a candidate.

2020–21 candidacy permissions

Level	Number of elections	Number of permissions requested	Number of permission requests withdrawn	Number of permissions granted	Number of permission requests carried over to 2021–22
Municipal	5	58	1	37	20
Provincial	4	6	2	4	0
Territorial	0	2	0	1*	0
Federal	0	12	4	8	0
Total	9	78	7	50	20

*1 candidacy permission request at the territorial level was not granted.

Public servants are responsible for examining their specific circumstances to assess whether engaging in a non-candidacy political activity would impair, or could be seen as impairing, their ability to perform their duties in a politically impartial manner. While it is not required to obtain permission from the Public Service Commission prior to undertaking this type of activity, employees are encouraged to consult with their manager, their organization's Designated Political Activities Representative, or the Public Service Commission before engaging in the activity.

The [Political Activities Self-Assessment Tool](#) is the main advisory tool for public servants on non-candidacy political activities. It is designed to help them make an informed decision about whether to engage in a political activity in support of, or opposition to, a candidate or a political party at the federal, provincial, territorial or municipal level.

Looking forward

The past year has offered much to reflect on and learn. The pandemic forced the federal public service hiring system to adapt quickly, and departments and agencies navigated these changes with extraordinary commitment and results. We must not lose this drive to adapt and innovate.

One area that hiring managers should continue to explore is virtual candidate testing. These tests could increase the public service's regional reach, and improve the accessibility and efficiency of hiring. This means we must continue to explore ways to adapt our technology and tools to reach Canadians from across the country. To this end, the Public Service Commission of Canada will work to [modernize the recruitment platform](#) to provide candidates with a user-friendly, adaptable and accessible system.

With the rise of remote work, the number of external job advertisements open to applicants across Canada could increase. While challenges remain as the public service continues to adapt to a new and evolving concept of work, we see opportunities for regionally diverse teams of employees in locations such as Yellowknife, Red Deer, Thunder Bay, Baie-Comeau and Gander. Talented and interested applicants are ready to serve from across Canada!

The public service is best able to serve Canadians and deliver programs when it is representative of the people it serves, and when it benefits from the rich diversity of our country. The past year's events have brought diversity and inclusion to the forefront of discussions in the federal government. The [Audit of Employment Equity Representation in Recruitment](#) revealed barriers that exist in the staffing system for employment equity groups. This audit serves as a call to action to identify and remove barriers so that all applicants have equal access to fulfilling and successful careers in Canada's public service.

We must ensure a level playing field if we want a truly merit-based hiring system. The [recent changes to the Public Service Employment Act](#) provide a foundation for removing biases and barriers. Success depends on changing behaviours and practices of all who participate in the hiring process. In the year ahead, we are committed to working with employee networks, bargaining agents, and departments and agencies to implement these changes in a way that will have a meaningful and lasting effect.

The past year has shown the resilience of our public service and our tremendous potential for progress when faced with a challenge. We must act boldly and with conviction to create a future-ready public service. Great strides have been made thanks to the determination of public servants to provide uninterrupted services to Canadians during the pandemic. Their resolve has helped to rapidly modernize and advance government staffing operations, programs and services. We must embed this drive to modernize in our mindsets and actions to ensure it becomes a permanent feature of public service culture and staffing.

Endnotes

Taking stock

2020–21 total hiring activity

- **Indeterminate** refers to employment for an indefinite length of time
- **Term** refers to employment for a fixed length of time
- **Casual** refers to employment for a maximum of 90 days per calendar year in a given department or agency
- **Student** refers to employment through one of the student employment programs

The figures shown here for graduate recruitment programs include external term and indeterminate hiring only.

Map of *Public Service Employment Act* population and applicants by region

Some records were missing a regional indicator and for this reason are not included in the breakdown. Regional information is unknown for 2 960 hires and for 1 981 individuals in the *Public Service Employment Act* population. These unknown cases need to be included for the hiring and population regional breakdown to add up to the respective totals: 52 232 (hiring activities) and 246 301 (*Public Service Employment Act* population).

Internal mobility rates

We calculate internal mobility rates using the total number of staffing activities (promotions, lateral movements or acting appointments) for indeterminate and term employees, divided by the total term and indeterminate population at the end of the fiscal year.

Acting appointments exclude acting appointments of less than 4 months.

Median time to staff for departments and agencies subject to the *Public Service Employment Act*

External time to staff is the median number of calendar days between the opening date of the advertisement and the date of the first estimated external hire.

Internal time to staff is the median number of calendar days between the opening date of the advertisement and the date of the first notification.

Advancing diversity and inclusion

Employment equity group representation rates following each stage of the recruitment process

Data in this table reflects data published in the Public Service Commission's [Audit of Employment Equity Representation in Recruitment](#).

Indigenous peoples : applicants to advertised processes and hires compared to workforce availability

Employment equity: the percentages of Indigenous peoples are based on applicants' self-declaration in the Public Service Resourcing System when applying to an indeterminate position or a term position of 3 months or more.

The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's 2016 workforce availability calculation was released in their 2018–19 annual employment equity report and therefore only applies to 2018–19 data and beyond. All previous years listed show the 2011 workforce availability calculation.

The term “Indigenous peoples” aligns with international usage and in this report replaces the legislative term “Aboriginal peoples” that appears in the [Employment Equity Act](#) and the [Employment Equity Regulations](#). The definition has not changed.

Subgroup distribution for Indigenous peoples

The 4 subgroups that comprise Indigenous peoples were identified by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. They are Inuit, North American Indian / First Nation, Métis and Other.

The Indigenous peoples subgroup “Other” represents individuals who have self-declared or self-identified as Indigenous, but did not provide a self-declaration or self-identification for one of the 3 designated subgroups.

The Employment Equity Data Bank reconciliation process for 2020–21 employment equity hiring data was not completed when this report was published. The data will be made available on the open government portal once the process is complete.

Persons with disabilities: applicants to advertised processes and hires compared to workforce availability

In the 2016 Census, the new Activities of Daily Living questions (found on the long form version) more fully represented the diversity of persons with a disability, especially of persons with a cognitive disability or a mental health related disability. Since 2016, the definition of a person with a disability in the Canadian Survey on Disability that is used

to calculate workforce availability includes anyone who reported being “sometimes,” “often” or “always” limited in their daily activities due to a long-term condition or health problem, as well as anyone who reported being “rarely” limited if they were also unable to do certain tasks or could only do them with a lot of difficulty or could not do them at all. Because the coverage of a person with a disability is more inclusive, the target for the workforce availability is higher than previous targets.

Employment equity: the percentages of persons with disabilities are based on applicants’ self-declaration in the Public Service Resourcing System when applying to an indeterminate position or a term position of 3 months or more.

The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat’s 2016 workforce availability calculation was released in their 2018–19 annual employment equity report and therefore only applies to 2018–19 data and beyond. All previous years listed show the 2011 workforce availability calculation.

In the French version of the report, the term “personnes en situation de handicap” aligns with international usage and in this report replaces the legislative term “personnes handicapées” that appears in the French versions of the [*Employment Equity Act*](#) and the [*Employment Equity Regulations*](#). The definition has not changed.

Subgroup distribution for persons with disabilities

The 6 subgroups that comprise persons with disabilities were identified by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. They are mobility, deaf or hard of hearing, coordination or dexterity, blind or visual impairment, speech impediment and other disability.

The persons with disabilities subgroup “Other disability” includes individuals who have self-declared or self-identified as a person with disabilities, but did not provide a self-declaration or self-identification for one of the other 5 designated subgroups.

The Employment Equity Data Bank reconciliation process for 2020–21 employment equity hiring data was not complete when this report was published. The data will be made available on the open government portal once the process is complete.

Members of visible minorities: applicants to advertised processes and hires compared to workforce availability

Employment equity: the percentages of members of visible minorities are based on applicants’ self-declaration in the Public Service Resourcing System when applying to an indeterminate position or a term position of 3 months or more.

The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat’s 2016 workforce availability calculation was released in their 2018–19 employment equity report and therefore only applies to 2018–19 data and beyond. All previous years listed show the 2011 workforce availability calculation.

Subgroup distribution for members of visible minorities

The 11 subgroups that comprise visible minorities were identified by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. They are Black, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, South Asian / East Indian (including Indian from India, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, East Indian from Guyana, Trinidad and East Africa), Southeast Asian (including Burmese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai and Vietnamese), non-white West Asian, North African or Arab (including Egyptian, Libyan, Lebanese and Iranian), non-white Latin American (including Indigenous persons from Central and South America), persons of mixed origin (with one parent in one of the visible minority groups listed) and other visible minority groups.

The subgroup “Other visible minority” includes individuals who have self-declared or self-identified as a member of a visible minority but did not provide a self-declaration or self-identification for one of the 10 designated subgroups.

The Employment Equity Data Bank reconciliation process for 2020–21 employment equity hiring data was not completed when this report was published. The data will be made available on the open government portal once the process is complete.

Women: applicants to advertised processes and hires compared to workforce availability

Employment equity: the percentages of women are derived from the gender profile in the Public Service Resourcing System and are calculated using the total number of applicants who indicated their gender.

The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat’s 2016 workforce availability calculation was released in their 2018–19 employment equity report and only applies to 2018–19 data and beyond. All previous years listed show the 2011 workforce availability calculation.

Hiring persons with a priority entitlement and veterans

Priority entitlements: population and appointments

In 2016–17, the methodology for calculating the total number of appointments changed to include:

- persons with a priority entitlement appointed to public service organizations not subject to the *Public Service Employment Act*
- persons with a priority entitlement appointed to a lower level position who now benefit from another priority entitlement ([Public Service Employment Regulations section 10, Reinstatement](#)) and are eligible to be appointed back to an equivalent level

In previous years, these numbers were captured under “Other Removal” and “Change of Priority Type.”

General note

Unless stated otherwise, all data reflects 2020–21 population and staffing activities to and within departments and agencies subject to the [Public Service Employment Act](#). This does not include separate agencies such as the Canada Revenue Agency, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Parks Canada.

More information is available on the [open government portal](#).