



National Managers' Community Community

Annual Report 2021

Prepared for the Interim Clerk of the Privy Council

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Government Gouvernement of Canada du Canada

Message to the Interim Clerk

To the Interim Clerk of the Privy Council:

Managers in the Federal Public Service have had an amazingly complex year once again. They yielded unprecedented results and responded to the continuing pandemic by taking care of their staff as well as delivering services and policies that made critical differences to Canadians.

Their incredible efforts to serve the public, while also taking on new and different responsibilities for their organizations, has been motivational and inspiring. From learning new ways to create safe workspaces, to balancing a range of employee needs against operational requirements, managers embraced transformation at a startling pace and depth.

To support them, the National Managers' Community (NMC) continued to expand its reach and focused on targeted efforts that kept managers' needs at the centre of its work. We enabled opportunities for the important conversations that managers from sea-to-sea-to-sea have been seeking and living, by connecting partners, central agencies with the managers on the ground.



Arun Thangaraj

Arun Thangaraj, Deputy Minister Champion, NMC

In addition, the NMC truly embraced the interim Clerk's Call to Action on Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion in the Federal Public Service as a foundational pillar of its efforts to support managers, believing that managers are 'the action in the Call to Action'.

Managers from across Canada participated wholeheartedly and enthusiastically in NMC events, demonstrating once again their dedication towards improving the Public Service.

And as we move into 2022, we continue to build on the Call to Action, as well as excellence in approaches to management, by strengthening existing partnerships, pursuing new ones, and re-invigorating existing networks and committees.

The National Managers' Community is standing strong to enable and sustain relationships across departments and agencies. We are proud of its role in this core work of building up the management cadre, and thus the whole Public Service, into the aspirations of 'Beyond 2020' and an inclusive Public Service.

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Isabelle Racine, Executive Director, NMC

First Nations Acknowledgement

The National Managers' Community Secretariat acknowledges that our work spans many Territories and Treaty areas. We recognize the traditional knowledge of the peoples, the land and the benefits it provides to us all. We share this knowing as an act of Reconciliation, as recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) 94 Calls to Action and in gratitude to those on whose territory we work, live and visit.



Executive Summary

In 2021 public servants at all levels, from all corners of the country, pulled together and found ways to be resilient in the face of unprecedented change and adversity. The way we work and communicate was altered swiftly and dramatically. Canada's Federal Public Service managers and their teams successfully navigated this change and played key roles in ensuring the Government of Canada continued to deliver critical services to all Canadians.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a light on how vital managers roles are to a well-functioning Federal Public Service. Managers continued to go above and beyond in order to implement the government's agenda while embracing new ways of doing things. They supported their teams when they needed them the most, while also navigating their own challenges. Recognizing these complexities, the National Managers' Community (NMC) acted by working closely with managers, leaders and partners across organizations to bridge gaps and to find ways to provide managers what they needed.

In being the voice of managers, the NMC connected and engaged with managers and central agencies in an unprecedented number of meetings, focus groups and callouts. For example, the NMC was instrumental in facilitating pandemic briefings by the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer to managers across Canada.

Additionally, we continued to connect managers interdepartmentally and were there for smaller departments that do not have well established internal managers networks. We enabled conversations in both official languages around such issues as: anti-racism, mental health, upskilling for the future, linguistic security, accessibility, accommodations, career growth, and other key topics of interest to managers.

In particular, 2021 saw the NMC take up the Clerk's <u>Call to Action on Anti-Racism</u>, <u>Equity, and Inclusion in the Federal Public Service</u> and examined our plans to ensure the Secretariat and our members were promoting and protecting diversity and inclusion in the Public Service to better serve Canadians and to engage in genuine reconciliation. From bilingual sessions on inclusive recruitment, to connecting executives with managers to have real conversations about racism in the workplace, the NMC kept the Call to Action at the centre of our strivings.

As we look towards 2022 and beyond, we are renewing our connections and pursuing new collaborations to continue to meet the evolving needs of managers and aspiring managers. As has been previously written: "This organization is unique in that it touches all operations, programs, regions, disciplines, functions and personnel of the Public Service of Canada at levels that impact and shape its culture, responsiveness and effectiveness. It is not just about managers, it is about management and leadership." NMC members are amazing in that they are not just managers doing their important work for Canadian citizens, but they are also volunteering their time in service to creating a Public Service wherein managers and supervisors are better trained, more inclusive, and have the people management and technical skills they need.



Mission

The mission of the NMC is is to be the voice of managers across the country, a vehicle for 2-way communication with Senior Leaders and to support the pursuit of excellence by managers in the Public Service.

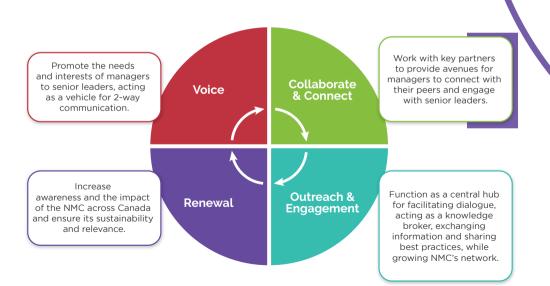
How We Work

Strategic Objectives in Action

The NMC network is leveraged by Departments, Communities and Programs to ensure that new initiatives being developed are in sync with the reality of what managers need and are facing every day.

By collaborating with key stakeholders, the NMC is better equipping managers by offering timely and relevant learning activities on hot topics affecting the evolving responsibilities of managers. Led by our Deputy Minister Champion, departmental and regional champions, advisory boards, provincial steering committees and stakeholders/key partners, the NMC develops innovative ways to reach and support managers and aspiring managers across departments and regions.

This is all accomplished by a small and mighty NMC Secretariat. See <u>appendices</u> for more information.



The Work & the Results

The last two years has required the Public Service to respond in ways that haven't been seen in generations. Managers have taken up that challenge and have been leading a wide range of transformations, some of which have at their root, the most complex challenges that a society must face. They have worked to keep their teams healthy and safe, while also taking action to build a Public Service that is representative of the society that we serve.

Indeed, managers set the culture of departments through hiring, training and supervising employees all while executing government priorities. This year, not only have they led their teams through conversations on sensitive topics, they have also supported staff in new ways and adjusted to innovations in serving the Canadian public. Even though at times there has been uncertainty and a demanding pace, managers have ensured that the government's agenda was enacted, and that Canadians have been able to access the programs and services they need.

Managers told us that they came together under the banner of the National Managers' Community to:

- Gain leadership and connections by volunteering on committees
 and working groups
- Acquire new and transferable skills
- Learn best practices about how to be a manager or supervisor
- Connect with other operational managers and those
 in different programs

"My region covers the three Prairie provinces and the Northwest Territories. Some offices are quite small and the NMC is a great avenue for managers to connect, support their mental health and break isolation. By engaging with the NMC, they also receive timely information about government priorities that they may not receive through traditional channels or that may take longer to trickle down to them."

> Lisbeth Savard Regional Lead, Prairies and Northwest Territories National Managers Community

- Interact with managers in other departments and regions
- Have their voices heard by senior leaders and key stakeholders
- · Break the isolation that is experienced in smaller offices
- Benefit from the experience and knowledge of other managers
- Get the most current information from a reliable source

Addressing the Impacts of COVID-19 and equipping managers for the post-pandemic reality

Building on the efforts of 2020, managers gathered together to immerse themselves on a wide range of topics related to working in our pandemic reality and preparing for post-pandemic work needs. Managers shared best practices of work done in their departments and across organizations, thus contributing to shifting and shaping the way we work.

The National Managers Community:

- Hosted several Clicks and Tips session with over 3000 participants who learned how to use current and new software and technologies in more effective ways
- Co-delivered events with Innovation Lab Quebec to equip managers on how to maximize technology, onboard in a virtual environment, optimize team cohesion in a virtual context and facilitate employee engagement
- Held a session with Flex GC on thriving with your teams in a hybrid environment
 - Partnered with the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS) to pilot a course focused on upskilling managers to navigate the new reality, as well as the event "Navigating the Hybrid Model"



- Coordinated COVID-19 Technical Briefings with Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO) reaching about 2000 participants. These briefings provided managers and senior leaders with updates and important information that was needed to understand the state of the pandemic and possible impacts for their teams and program delivery
- As part of our annual Symposium, engaged with Heads of HR and OCHRO to discuss different approaches to return to work as well as share developments from a policy and guidance perspective
- In partnership with OCHRO, facilitated timely dissemination to managers about the new requirements for the Government of Canada's Vaccine Mandates (Briefing for Managers on the Policy on COVID-19 Vaccination)

Throughout these and other regional and national events, the NMC has been there to provide timely information, share pandemic lessons learned across departments, and facilitate the transfer of information from the central agencies out to managers across Canada.

"The National Managers' Community continues to be a valuable partner in engaging with managers across the Public Service – a group that plays a key role in supporting our workforce and driving our transition to be more agile, inclusive, and equipped, both now and in a post-pandemic future. Specifically, its 2020 survey of managers on people management needs resulted in meaningful collaboration and greater knowledge-sharing on the *Duty to Accommodate, the Directive on Occupational Health Evaluations*, and *Managing through COVID*: tools for self-care and caring for your teams. As we continue to build a future-ready Public Service, NMC has provided invaluable support for our engagement with managers on topics such as a principled approach to enabling a hybrid workforce."

> Christine Donoghue Chief Human Resources Officer Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

Responding to the Clerk of the Privy Council's Call to Action on Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion

The NMC's focus as it related to the Call to Action was multifaceted. We ensured that we built manager awareness, we played a role in increasing managers' capacity to respond to the Call to Action, and we engaged with numerous horizontal networks and partners to help expand their reach and connect them to the broader manager audience.

In the wake of Deputy Minister Daniel Quan-Watson's (Crown-Indigenous Relations and Indigenous Affairs) video response to a well-known journalist's questions on racism in Canada, the NMC held an event on February 23 with Deputy Minister Quan-Watson, Senior Associate Deputy Minister Gina Wilson (Diversity, Inclusion and Youth, Canadian Heritage), and Nathalie Laviades Jodouin (Vice President, Canada School of Public Service) on building diversity and inclusion for managers. This session was attended by almost 1500 people and was an interactive discussion with managers on their role in these important efforts in their own teams. Through the panel discussion, the NMC shared tools, advice, and resources for managers to understand, identify and combat racism and discrimination.

Powerful regional activities took place, such as in the NMC Prairie region, which hosted small group sessions between executives and managers on having difficult conversations about taking action on anti-racism. Through this opportunity, managers benefited by having authentic discussions and hearing live from executives on questions that may not always get asked during day-to-day efforts.



In the Atlantic region, the NMC Regional Lead was on the Atlantic Building Black Leaders Program Steering Committee. While in Ontario, managers organized an event to share an "Inclusion and Diversity Manager Toolkit".

Nationally, the NMC hosted a Virtual Talk on the Indigenous Mentorship Initiative and, as part of our annual Symposium, held "Reconciliation and the Call to Action for Managers". This event focused on the role managers must continue to play to advance progress, the path ahead, and how the Knowledge Circle of Indigenous Inclusion can support managers. Some key take-aways for managers were that respect, empathy and compassion are key to bringing about the culture change, and to talk openly with teams about reconciliation.

In addition, NMC was a partner of the Government of Canada's Diversity and Inclusion Conference 2021 during which we facilitated a conversation on culture and the role of managers that reached over 6000 participants. "The NMC has been an important partner of the Canada School of Public Service: sharing information on managers' needs; helping to pilot courses and to design manager-focused events; and amplifying our outreach efforts. The NMC also supported the Government of Canada's diversity, equity and inclusion priorities and contributed to horizontal efforts to advance the conversation."

Nathalie Laviades Jodouin

Vice-President, Public Sector Operations and Inclusion Branch Canada School of Public Service The NMC held various consultations with the Public Service Commission (PSC) on strategic topics, including a consultation on mandatory training for inclusive hiring practices. Furthermore, the NMC partnered with the PSC and the Human Resources Council (HRC) on the Hiring of persons with disabilities working group and hosted a session to facilitate meeting this objective. Connecting groups like the HRC and PSC with managers directly allows managers to have a voice which may not have otherwise been foreseen.

The Office of Public Service Accessibility (OPSA) Workplace Accommodation Consultation series engaged managers on workplace accommodation, adaptive technology, and accessible procurement. As part of the series, a highly interactive session held on May 14th showcased the services available via the Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT) program at Shared Services Canada and helped to raise awareness on resources available to support employees.

Overall, the NMC contributed to horizontal efforts, helped to identify barriers and raised awareness on the need to build a more inclusive and competitive Public Service by hiring and attracting more diverse talent. The NMC was there to equip managers with tools to enable them to understand these issues, to support and champion their diverse staff, and to create an environment where employees can bring their true selves to work and feel like they belong. Managers have embraced the challenge to foster an inclusive environment that is truly accessible to all employees. "The Office of Public Service Accessibility is very grateful to have had the valuable collaboration of the National Managers' Community again this year. They were key partners in several events and projects such as the Workplace Accommodation Consultation Series, the GC Workplace Accessibility Passport, the Recruitment of Persons with Disabilities Working Group, and the OPSA Virtual Kiosk at the NMC Symposium. Their partnership has been instrumental in engaging and equipping the management community on the various facets of accessibility, enabling us to build a more diverse and inclusive Public Service!"

Yazmine Laroche (she/elle/ella)

Deputy Minister, Public Service Accessibility Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat Addressing mental health and wellness and supporting managers to respond to the shifting organizational culture

Managers at all levels have responded to the real challenges of mental health and wellbeing in their organisations.

One of the most difficult tasks since the outset of the pandemic has been for managers to help their teams deal with the pressures of workload, while juggling the impacts of the pandemic in their own and their employees' personal lives. Many employees have been struggling with mental health issues created or exacerbated by the current situation, affecting them on a professional and a personal level. In light of these tensions, Public Service managers have had to further develop their communication and relational skills. Their vital role as a foundation for creating and sustaining a psychologically safe workplace cannot be underestimated.

The Canada School of Public Service is a key partner of the NMC's on a range of topics. Of note, the NMC joined with them on the Mental Health Learning Advisory Committee and an event that addressed "Managing Anxiety During Workplace Transitions" with over 4000 participants.



For the NMC Virtual Talk: "Employee Mental Health: Find out how EAP helps Managers", we worked with Health Canada's Employee Assistant Services and the Centre of Expertise on Mental Health in the Workplace to explore with managers a range of tools at their disposal that they can use to not just help themselves, but also to better support the health and well-being of their employees.

Furthermore, we engaged with managers on a national and regional scale to discuss specific topics that gave managers the tools, techniques, and new knowledge they were asking for.

We discussed topics such as:

- Building Resilience and Preventing Burnout for Managers
- Compassionate Conversations Around COVID-19
- · Tools for self-care and caring for your team
- · Appreciation in the workplace and understanding our personality types
- · Employee Mental Health: Find out how EAP helps Managers
- Domestic Violence in the Workplace: Leadership Seminar
- · Happiness at work and career development

"The National Managers' Community is a trusted and valued partner of our Centre of Expertise on Mental Health in the Workplace. Whether it's providing instrumental input into psychological health and safety tools or making space for authentic conversations around well-being and self-care for managers, the NMC continues to play a pivotal role in promoting mental health in federal workplaces."

Jennifer Feeney-Svab Director, Wellness and Mental Health Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer During these sessions, in our committee meetings, and in our learning surveys, managers clearly expressed to the NMC that they wanted to learn more about being responsive to their employees' needs while taking care of themselves. We therefore used these sessions to enhance managers' knowledge of how to help their colleagues or team members with their mental well-being. The NMC shared practical information and tips for managers on developing a relationship with employees in a virtual environment, reading the signs and symptoms of potential struggles, how to approach the employee and listen actively, as well as directing them to the right resources to improve their mental well-being.

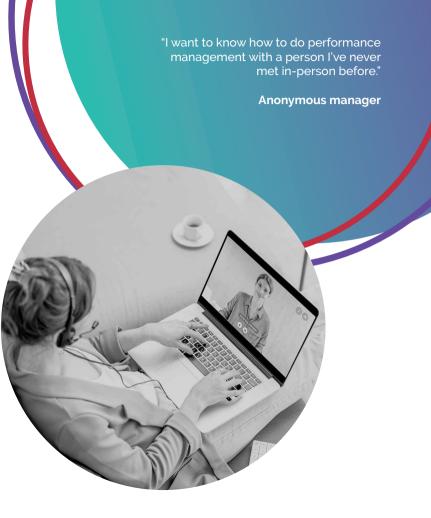
We also worked to include the sharing of stories of courage, hope and resilience as well as powerful testimonials, in order to sensitize managers to what their employees could be going through. These efforts contributed to changing the culture to be a more respectful one when it comes to the mental health of teams. Networking in a virtual environment and providing opportunities for development, peer collaboration and engagement

Throughout the year, the NMC fostered opportunities for development and peer to peer collaboration. The NMC was a key enabler allowing for managers to connect horizontally. Whether it was leveraging virtual networking platforms or organizing formal NMC hosted events, managers had the opportunity to interact with their peers and discuss the challenges they were facing in their various roles and responsibilities.

The NMC continued our long history of promoting peer coaching and learning opportunities such as the long standing Codéveloppement groups in Quebec and ongoing peer coaching groups in many of the provinces. These group opportunities have managers and supervisors practicing coaching skills with each other all while solving real work problems.

The NMC Regional Lead for Quebec and Nunavut hosted a panel on "Coaching, Codéveloppement and Mentoring" and she facilitated an event on the future of coaching which provided managers opportunities for free coaching sessions and sharing tools and resources available to support managers in coaching their teams.

The NMC held a series of events on professional development covering a variety of topics such as recognition, career management and progression, and why career management needs to be at the heart of any future of work activities.





In response to feedback about developing skills around managing performance of virtual teams, British Columbia/Yukon held an interactive session led by a long serving senior manager about leveraging best practices during the performance management cycle both for oneself, and to uplift one's team. This region also facilitated a session with the BC Federal Council on "Celebrating Agility and Embracing Innovation" in which managers shared their early successes during the start of the pandemic. Participants were able to interact with the panelists and each other in a small group exploration of best practices, which created a much-needed opportunity to collaborate.

The Atlantic region created opportunities for managers around language, organizing three events in particular:

- Managing Linguistic Insecurities a panel that explored insights into how managers can create safe places at work to use one's second language
- Communication with Plain Language how the use of grammar, plain language
 and accessibility can improve client service
- Official Languages Regulations Updates a presentation that highlighted for managers, several key elements of the recently amended Regulations and the various stages of implementation



The National Managers' Community regularly works with a wide range of departments, central agency groups and other interdepartmental organizations. By executing our operational plan, we consistently connected with over 28 different groups, including the Federal Youth Network, Regional Federal Councils, the Human Resources Council, and we collaborated with more than 59 stakeholder departments. (See appendices for the complete list)

In addition to the examples provided in previous sections, we also facilitated consultations between central agencies and managers on diverse issues, such as with the Public Service Commission around a decrease in the hiring of students.

The Working Group on Actings approached the NMC early in the summer for assistance in identifying participants and setting up focus groups of managers from across Canada and in both official languages. The focus groups were held to gather the perspective of hiring managers around short-term actings.

The WGA wanted to better understand how and why short-term actings are being used by managers, with the goal of recommending improvements based on the workplace reality. The feedback from the managers was shared with senior executives in the compensation community and central agencies such as the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer and the Public Service Commission.

Much of the success and strong impacts of NMC members comes in the form of interdepartmental relationships developed as part of our governance committees. Our Regional Steering Committees connected in all 6 regions, accounting for over 125 volunteer hours. These committees give managers a regular chance to network, bring their voices to important working groups, and to organize learning sessions quickly on topics that mattered to them. For example, our Managers Advisory and Regional Advisory Boards were consulted by the Office of the Chief Human Resources Office about the Senior Leaders Strategy (Executive talent management, compensation, etc.), as well as Classification Transformation.

We often turned to our advisory boards to align our work to the needs of managers. We met with our Governance Committees on a quarterly basis (i.e., Associate Deputy Ministers, Management Advisory and Regional Advisory), relying on them for guidance, for insights, for advice and for keeping the voice of managers grounded in the real-life experiences of managers and senior leaders across Canada. (See appendices for more information.) "The National Managers' Community is a trusted partner of the human resources community. The NMC has been a key method to reach managers to provide them with the information they need to do their jobs. The NMC insights and guidance on what managers are encountering have enabled our community to advance a variety of recruitment initiatives. The NMC is an important conduit between managers and the HRC."

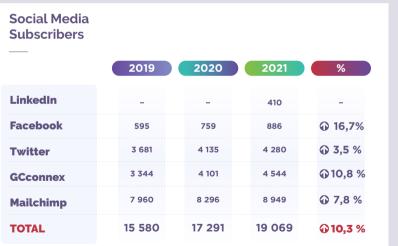
> Elaine Coldwell Executive Director Human Resources Council

Outreach & Engagement

In addition to attending live sessions in record numbers, managers have been connecting with the National Managers' Community across a variety of channels, including GC connex and public social media channels. In fact, 32,990 participated in 192 events across Canada in 2021, more than doubling the previous year's total of 13,788 participants.

Managers joined us on our social media channels in increasing numbers. When they couldn't attend sessions in person, they tuned into our YouTube recordings which include past events, quick clips of helpful tips, as well as our Symposium breakout sessions







Successes & Challenges

What went well

We were able to:

- Adapt to the needs of managers by providing frequent, on-topic sessions
 that created connection and improved outcomes
- Balance our mandate of being a voice for managers with requests from Central Agencies to share important information
- Re-invigorate regional networks and committees with new volunteers, new Co-Chairs and renewed the Secretariat team
- Grow our following in social media channels, resulting in a greater reach, and began our transition to the <u>GCxchange</u> platform
- Strengthen our existing partnerships and created new ones, setting the stage for even more horizontal opportunities for managers

Things to consider

- There are opportunities to continue to broaden partnerships and to work with a variety of groups and horizontal networks to offer a wide range of learning experiences for managers
- Uncertainty around the pandemic continues to impact planning related to in-person events and travel costs
- Departmental internal manager network capacity varies across departments, resulting in inconsistent supports for managers
- Need for increase insights into the manager reality, to address knowledge gaps in areas such as: demographics, numbers of managers, departmental and regional ratios, and employment equity group representation
- NMC is dependent on organizations seconding talent and volunteers. Staffing the Secretariat has become an increased challenge
- The NMC has not received an increase to our base funding since 2014. Additional resources may be required to carry on the work in the long term
 - Twenty-two percent (22%) of funding for 2021 came from voluntary departmental contributions on a two-year cycle, with one department providing the majority of the contributions



Looking Ahead

In order to better address our membership's needs and to be an even more effective voice for managers, we must deepen our understanding of who our membership is, and the challenges they face. The last NMC Managers' Pulse Survey took place more than 4 years ago, before the pandemic and the several societal transformative shifts that have occurred. Without a manager specific dataset, there is a gap in our knowledge and ability to continue to be the voice for managers as they try to address important issues within their work spheres, such as the implications of the Clerk's Call to Action on Anti-Racism, Equity and Inclusion. We will therefore be collaborating with departments and partner groups to compile and create datasets to support our upcoming work.

The NMC is looking to complement virtual events with select in person events, once the pandemic situation permits it. When feasible, we will be initiating hybrid networking and learning sessions, ensuring best practices are 'baked in'.

We are also committed to strengthening existing partnerships and pursuing new ones to create powerful opportunities, make the most of collective strengths, and reduce duplication.

As we have discussed, our Public Service has been grappling with improving diversity and inclusion, supporting employees and their mental health, and helping them transition to a new work reality. We will therefore continue to deliver information, resources and offerings to managers that make a difference on topics that matter.

"There is still enormous untapped energy, knowledge and competency embedded in the Public Service manager ranks that is isolated in silos."

Some opportunities are already being planned such as: a Mental Health series, a Managers Interactive series, Career Conversations with the Association of Professional Executives of the Public Service, peer coaching groups and a session by the Canada School of Public Services' Visiting Scholar, Dr. Rachel Zellars.

This year's annual fall learning days will take place as a three-day symposium, during which we will offer sessions that build on the Clerk's Call to Action on Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion, as well as other similarly core topics.

As always, we will be actively re-invigorating regional steering committees and networks, in recognition of the variety of needs that exist from coast-to-coastto-coast The importance of interdepartmental relationships and the breaking down of barriers continues to be a fundamental driver for our membership and we look forward to continuing that work.

Our renewal efforts will entail a review of our governance structure to ensure that it is effective and able to provide timely and focused guidance.

Acknowledgements

With special thanks to the volunteer members of the following committees:

- Regional Steering Committees
- Regional Executive Champions
- · Regional Advisory Board
- · Managers Advisory Board and
- Assistant Deputy Minister Advisory Board

And special thanks to the community of managers, supervisors and aspiring managers who work so hard to create and support teams, services, processes and enabling systems that ultimately deliver to the public whom we all serve.

For questions or comments, please send your inquiries to:

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This annual report was prepared with the assistance of the following members of the National Managers' Community Secretariat:

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- Ontario Mary Ann Medaric, Marilyn Cavarretta-Latzel (former)
- · Prairies/Northwest Territories Lisbeth Savard
- British Columbia/Yukon Teresa Martin
- · National Capital Region Hélène Larose

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- Natalie Poirier, Communications Sr. Advisor (former)
- · Hamish McPherson, Communications Advisor
- Genevieve Quevillon, Communications Sr. Advisor
- Pauline Picotte, Manager, Program Support



Appendices

- 1. <u>NMC Governance structure</u>
- 2. <u>Associate Deputy Minister Advisory Board</u>
- 3. Management Advisory Board
- 4. <u>Regional Advisory Board</u>
- 5. List of events in 2021 with numbers of managers reached
- 6. Partners and Stakeholders in 2021
- 7. Committees on which NMC was a member in 2021
- 8. <u>Social Media</u>