

Office of Conflict Resolution

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

The Office of Conflict Resolution (OCR) supports employees and managers with developing effective communication skills and helping people resolve conflicts in the workplace. The OCR works with teams and individuals to build trust, learn how to understand each other better and create smoother working relationships.



The OCR takes a confidential and impartial approach to help IRCC staff at all levels work through challenges. Services include:

- Initial meetings/Options exploration
- Conflict Coaching
- Facilitated Conversations/Mediations
- Group Interventions
- Workshops/Training

The 2022-2023 fiscal year was another challenging year for IRCC with the increase in work targets and pressure to deliver amidst the return to office and the Public Service Alliance Canada (PSAC) strike. Although IRCC staff numbers increased from 11,043 to 13,265, many teams reported struggling with trying to develop psychologically safe workplaces that encourage open communication, while still meeting ever-increasing targets. Clients report that the conflicting priorities of wellness and increased targets are negatively impacting their own and others' resilience and capacity to communicate and interact compassionately.

The OCR provided services and workshops virtually, and in the second half of the year began delivering services in person as well as hybrid. The return to regional and international travel allowed for providing in-person services to a wide variety of clients.

OCR had **244 service requests**, involving **326 clients**, during the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

OCR Clients at a Glance

71.3% First-Time Users
28.7% Returning Clients
50.0% Employees
50.0% Management

Employment Status of Clients

93.4% Indeterminate
4.1% Term/Casual
2.0% Other

Occupational Group of Clients

37.3% PM	8.2% FS
10.2% EC	7.0% LES
14.8% EX	6.1% CR
6.1% AS	10.2% Other

Issues raised in OCR's cases during 2022-2023:

Themes

29.4% Interpersonal / Work Issues
25.5% Management Practices, including Duty to Accommodate
22.3% Alleged Harassment / Bullying, including 5.7% Racism, 4.5% Discrimination
11.1% Performance Management
6.2% Organizational Issues
3.2% Human Resources
2.1% Code of Conduct
0.2% Other/COVID



OCR Services



- During the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year, 155 clients received coaching, making up **66.8%** of OCR's service requests.
- **22.1%** of the service requests were clients asking for an initial meeting to learn about the OCR's services, talk about their situation in a safe space and get information on the various internal and external recourse mechanisms and options available.
- Mediations and Facilitated Conversations comprised **10.3%** of the service requests. OCR proposed 13 mediations / facilitated conversations last year, which included **26 clients**. Of the mediations completed, **75%** were successful, and **17%** resolved a formal grievance.
- OCR conducted 3 Group interventions comprising **0.9%** of the service requests.
- OCR co-facilitated 11 Trust circles with the Anti-Racism Task Force and 1 talking circle, which included **123 participants** in total.

Relationships between clients

Interpersonal

- 19.3%** Between Employees
- 55.3%** Employee-Manager
- 5.7%** Between Managers

Group

- 8.2%** Within a group/team
- 3.7%** Between groups/teams

Systemic

- 0.8%** Departmental

Intrapersonal

- 2.9%** Within self

Not applicable

- 0.8%** Unknown

Client use by Geographical area

International

Represents **1.7%** of IRCC (CBS only)

17.2%* of clients were from the International region



* Although the IN represents 1.7% of employees on the IRCC HR dashboard, the percentage of cases are greater because OCR also offers services to the LES in Missions (whom are not included in HR Dashboard).

Western Region

Represents **13.8%** of IRCC

12.1% of clients were from the Western region

Ontario Region

Represents **4.5%** of IRCC

11.6% of clients were from the Ontario region

Eastern Region

Represents **12.2%** of IRCC

18.5% of clients were from the Eastern region

NHQ

Represents **52%** of IRCC

56.2% of clients were from the NHQ

Trends



It is evident from communications with staff from across IRCC that employees care about their work and want to positively work towards meeting IRCC's mandate. Employees continue, year after year to meet ever-increasing targets with less resources, less security, and increased need for overtime. Many employees and managers at all levels still struggle with providing effective and objective feedback to the relevant person, in a timely manner, perpetuating a culture of conflict avoidance. This contributes to challenging work relationships and increases the risk of mental health injuries. People at all levels report feeling overwhelmed and, while wanting to communicate better and do well, they are struggling with finding the space and time for compassion and communication.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

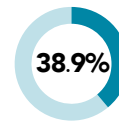


This fiscal year **5.7%** of cases were related to perceived racism and **4.5%** of cases were related to other types of discrimination, which reflects no significant changes from the previous year. However, this may not be an accurate reflection of employees' experience as the Pollara report indicated that many staff do not feel safe coming forward to report situations of racism/discrimination.

The OCR found that **12%** of cases involved issues related to Duty to Accommodate, more specifically challenges between employees and management in communicating regarding barriers and possible solutions.

The OCR is also seeing systemic concerns with the disparity between management and employees in access to assistance in understanding and utilizing various recourse options. As neutral third parties, OCR practitioners often encourage clients at all levels to seek information from their representatives to make informed decisions regarding available recourse options. While management have access to paid Labour Relations Advisors, employees rely on the availabilities of their union representatives, whose important work is often done on a volunteer basis and in addition to their regular full-time jobs. Clients frequently mentioned the challenge of not being able to access union representatives due to operational constraints.

Client Service Evaluation



of respondents were considering filing a grievance or complaint before using OCR



felt the situation improved after using OCR services



would recommend or use OCR services again

Evaluation Quotes:

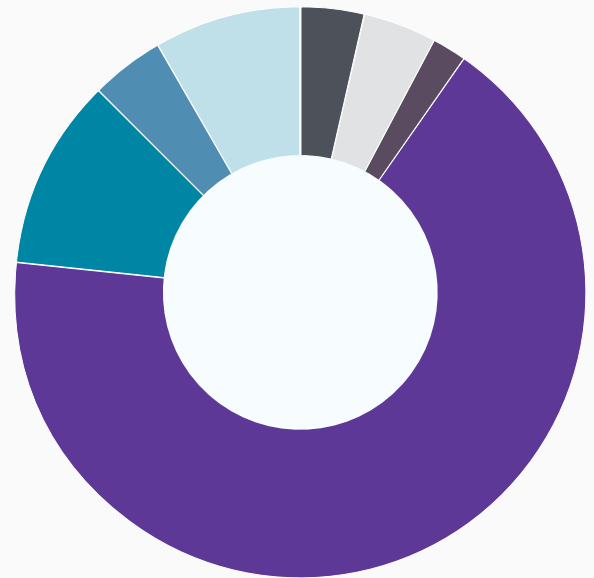
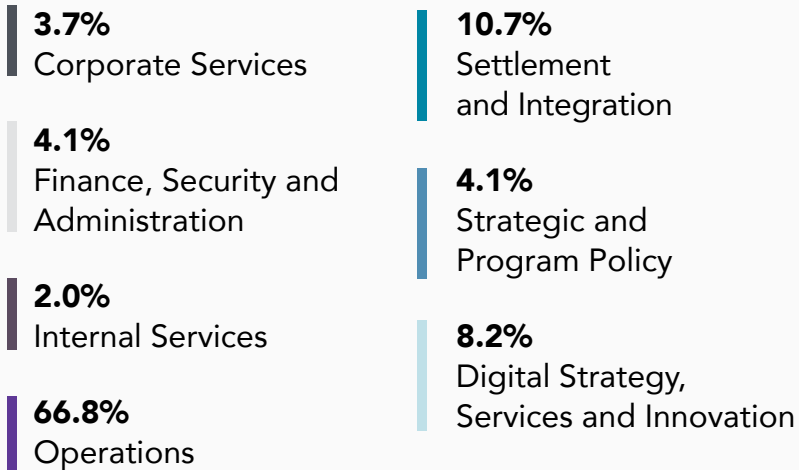
“ The OCR practitioner was empathetic and provided both practical solutions and emotional support. ”

“ The OCR practitioner had a very positive demeanor, they actively listened and paraphrased most of what I was sharing to make sure they got the point; it was so refreshing to share sensitive issues at a human level and discuss options. ”

“ The feedback was objective and confidential. Provided a great technique and strategy on how to overcome the conflict. ”

“ Good services overall and flexible with meetings and appointments. ”

Client use by Sector



Training Delivery at a Glance

Name of Workshops	Number of Sessions	Number of Participants
OCR Awareness Session	4	160
Giving and Receiving Feedback	17	357
Stress Management and Conflict	10	157
Communicating Effectively in a Hybrid Environment	13	269
Organizational Trust	1	51
Conflict Resolution 1: Introduction to Options and Skills	19	386
Conflict Resolution 2: Building Skills	7	95
Tailored Training	12	221
Total	89	1962



“...taking this session as a team is an excellent team-building exercise, as there are several opportunities to learn about colleagues' specific approaches to workloads; this helps everyone learn how to work together most effectively.”

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