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Communications Community Office 2023- 2024 Annual Report

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Communications Community Office 2023-2024 Annual Report

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Land acknowledgement

In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge that the Communications Community Office is located on the traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe people. We pay our respects to their Elders—past, present, and emerging.

We invite members of the communications community to recognize the traditional lands where they live and work across the country.

Message from the Communications Community Champion

I am pleased to present the 2023–24 annual report of the Government of Canada’s Communications Community Office (CCO).

This report reflects the CCO’s efforts to support the Government of Canada’s communications community.

The government has effective programs, policies, and services, but it couldn’t achieve its objectives without the strategic vision, innovative spirit, and sustained efforts of communicators to reach, inform and engage the public, stakeholders, and employees.

Communicators use their expertise to connect with different segments of society and develop an understanding of their needs and expectations. This helps us meet our core objective of ensuring the public can access the supports available to them. Today, communicators are working in a media environment where the public’s trust in government is eroded through misinformation and disinformation. This trust lies at the heart of our democracy. Achieving our core mandate is more complex, challenging, and important than it’s ever been.

The communications community must therefore be empowered to play a role in the decision-making process, in partnership with their policy colleagues, as well as in delivering programs and services to the public.

We also have ongoing work to do in the areas of reconciliation and inclusion. We have an important role to play both in communicating about our progress and in improving representation in our communications branches.

As communications community champion, I am proud to represent the interests of the federal government’s communications specialists and leaders, whose creativity, excellence, and commitment never cease to inspire me.

I thank the CCO for its efforts over the past year to support the communications community and help it reach its full potential.

Wela'lioq!



Valerie Gideon

Associate Deputy Minister of Indigenous Services and President of FedNor
Champion of the Communications Community

Message from the co-chairs of the Communications Community Office Steering Committee

Not one of us has come through 2023–24 untouched by the serious issues we've seen this year: labour action, service challenges, soaring inflation, severe climate events, international conflict, and so many more. Issues like these, and the debates they fuel, have shone a spotlight on the key role communicators play in the relationship between the government and the public.

Communicators have leapt into the fray to respond and react to these issues and other important situations. We have worked to inform, correct facts, raise awareness, mobilize individuals and communities, and encourage people to participate. And we have done so in a challenging environment marked by misinformation and a growing distrust of government and democratic institutions.

In 2023–24, the CCO supported communicators who were working in these difficult circumstances. By creating virtual and physical spaces for communicators to gather, the CCO gave them opportunities to take advantage of available resources and tools, work together better, exchange best practices, learn and develop innovative approaches, and turn challenges into opportunities.

Following are some highlights of the CCO's work in 2023–24:

- We brought together over 1,900 communicators (over 700 in person and 1,280 online) for [Learning Day 2023](#) (GC network only), a day of workshops, presentations by inspiring speakers and networking. This was our first in-person event since 2020.
- We provided hiring managers with a list of 67 partially qualified IS-06 candidates as part of an extensive external staffing process.

- We worked to make communications more inclusive. In partnership with the Interdepartmental Inclusive Writing Working Group, the CCO developed an online course on inclusive writing that will be offered next year to all federal public servants.
- To help address training needs in the community, we developed a course on strategic communications.
- We held community dialogues with over 300 Indigenous, Black, and racialized communicators to gather information on their professional and lived experiences. Following these sessions, we are developing a set of recommendations to help these employees advance their careers.
- We recognized the community's best and brightest at the Government of Canada's 2024 Communications Awards. Congratulations to all of the nominees and winners! We certainly ended the year on a high note!

Our sincere thanks to the CCO for all their efforts and to the Steering Committee for their commitment, guidance, and support. Together, we form a strong, strategic, and competent community dedicated to supporting the government's vision and priorities.



Laurie-Anne Kempton

Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet
Communications and Consultations
Privy Council Office



James Stott

Assistant Secretary

Strategic Communications and Ministerial Affairs

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

What we do

The Communications Community Office (CCO) supports Government of Canada communications professionals through:

- learning and development resources and events;
- communications tools and news;
- staffing processes;
- networking opportunities;
- coordination across community.

To fulfill its mission, the CCO works closely with departments, central agencies, communities of practice, and other functional communities, as well as with partners in the public and private sectors. We rely on an active community of volunteers to share knowledge through learning events, to write articles for our blog and newsletter, to serve on selection committees, and to organize events.

Our governance

The CCO's Steering Committee provides direction and helps the CCO set priorities. The committee is made up of directors, directors general, and assistant deputy ministers of communications. Members come from large, medium, and small organizations, with at least one representative from the regions.

Steering Committee members



Laurie-Anne Kempton

Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet
Communications and Consultations
Privy Council Office



James Stott

Assistant Secretary

Strategic Communications and Ministerial Affairs

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat



Catherine Allison

Associate Assistant

Deputy Minister Communications and Public Affairs Branch

Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada



Mary Dila

Assistant Deputy Minister

Public Affairs

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada



Kevin Dubé

Director General

Communications

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency



Jane Hazel

Vice President

Communications and Public Affairs

Canadian Food Inspection Agency



Stéphane Levesque
Assistant Deputy Minister
Public Affairs
Global Affairs Canada



Leanne Maidment
Director General
Communications
Public Safety Canada



Dawolu Saul

Director General
Communications
Veterans Affairs Canada



Ashley Butcher

Acting Executive Director
Communications Community Office
Privy Council Office

Our community

We connect with over 4,600 communicators through:

- a monthly newsletter (GC network only) that goes out to thousands of subscribers by email
- information we post on social media channels (X and LinkedIn); on GCTools (GCconnex and GCpedia); and on our website, where we post our blog, Key Messengers
- an email box where we are always accessible
- monthly meetings with heads of communications
- an annual retreat for heads of communications



2023 Heads of Communications annual retreat participants

Our partners

The CCO has memoranda of understanding with and receives financial contributions from communications branches in departments and agencies across the Government of Canada.

The CCO also receives support, expertise and advice from partners including:

- volunteers in the communications community;
- heads of communications;
- communities of practice;
- ambassadors;
- functional community partners;
- the Canada School of Public Service.

The CCO also works at the international level with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to share information on communications approaches, tools, and best practices internationally.

Communities of practice

The communications communities of practice are grassroots groups driven by federal communicators who have expertise in and a passion for a particular realm of communications. Members share information, best practices, tools and resources; discuss common challenges; and develop new approaches.

The CCO has a special role in supporting learning and networking opportunities offered by several of the communities of practice.

For general information on our communities of practices, visit the [CCO page on GCpedia](#) (GC network only).

Following is a list of the communities of practice:

- [Accessible Communications](#)
- [Advertising](#)
- [CCO Ambassadors](#)
- [Communicating Science Network](#)
- [Communications Evaluations](#)
- [Copyright Media Clearance Program's User Group](#)
- [Creative Services](#)
- [Digital Analytics](#)
- [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Communications Network](#)

- [Events](#)
- [Government Emergency Communicators Network](#)
- [Indigenous Communications Subgroup](#)
- [Informational Marketing Working Group](#)
- [InterComm](#)
- [Media Relations](#)
- [Ministerial Communications](#)
- [Plain Language](#)
- [Policy Community](#)
- [Public Engagement](#)
- [Public Opinion Research](#)
- [Publications](#)
- [Social Media](#)
- [Speechwriting](#)
- [Storytelling](#)
- [Web Community / Canada.ca](#)

CCO Ambassadors

The CCO Ambassador group serves as a network and helps in community-building, innovating and collaborating in the communications community. Many great and informative conversations were had this year with our ambassadors. For general information on the group, visit the [CCO page on GCpedia](#) (GC network only).

Key Accomplishments

2023–24 mentoring series

The CCO launched its popular annual mentoring series in September 2023. Over 300 communicators from across the country participated. With some mentors taking on more than one mentee, we created over 230 matches. A check-in survey with mentors and mentees at the half-way point of the

program revealed that close to 60% of participants felt they were well matched with their mentor or mentee and that 29% felt they were a perfect match.

In 2023–24, we added the option for participants to self-identify as members of an employment equity group (women, persons with a disability, member of a visible minority or Indigenous), as well as LGBTQ2IA+. Thanks to this new stream, we matched nearly a dozen employees with mentors who are part of these groups.

New training opportunity

Following the publication of the [Guidelines on Inclusive Writing](#), developed by the Interdepartmental Working Group on Inclusive Writing, the CCO proposed an approach, methodology and plan for an online course on inclusive writing for federal public servants. Two working groups were formed: one in French, one in English. The work to develop the course began in the fall of 2023. The CCO plans to start offering the course by the end of 2024.

2023 Learning Day



2023 Learning Day participants

The CCO held its annual Learning Day (GC network only) conference for federal government communicators in September 2023. We were pleased to welcome John Hannaford, Clerk of the Privy Council, who gave the opening address and answered questions from the floor and from online participants.

This year's event was the first to be held in person since 2020. Over 1,900 people took part, either in person or online.

Virtual learning events

The Virtual Learning Series (GC network only) involves understanding and foreseeing upcoming trends to provide the community with useful information that informs their communications work and promotes networking. In 2023–24, the CCO held four virtual learning sessions on topics relevant to the community.

The CCO also supported a virtual session hosted by the Canada School of Public Service in January 2024. The session on social media monitoring featured Carly Dybka, a participant in the Public Servant-in-Residence Initiative and Communications Director at Justice Canada. Laurie-Anne Kempton, Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, Communications and Consultations, Privy Council Office, gave the opening address.

Recruitment and retention

In August 2023, the CCO launched a process to recruit new communications managers at the IS-06 level.

Through the process, the CCO created a pool of 67 qualified candidates from across Canada, which it made available to the communications community in March 2024. Nearly a quarter of qualifying candidates have self-declared as members of visible minorities, as Indigenous people or as persons with disabilities.

The CCO is actively managing several other pools at both the IS-03 level and the IS-04 level. It also maintains, for hiring managers, a list of over 130 communications professionals of all levels and in departments from across the country who are seeking at-level opportunities.

To maximize hiring of qualified IS candidates, the CCO also manages a departmental pools list of candidates who have qualified in other departmental staffing processes to share with hiring managers across the public service.

Government of Canada Communications Awards of Excellence



John Hannaford, Clerk of the Privy Council, delivering opening remarks at the 2024 Communications Awards of Excellence ceremony

The 2024 Government of Canada Communications Awards of Excellence, held March 27, 2024 recognized high-impact initiatives, exceptional contributions and best practices in communications in the federal public

service. We received 61 nominations, representing 800 people, from over 25 departments and agencies.

Recommendations from the Career Development Initiative

The Career Development Initiative was created to support Indigenous, Black and racialized communicators in advancing their careers in the federal public service. The CCO held three community dialogues with over 300 Indigenous, Black, and racialized employees to gather information about their professional and lived experiences to help identify issues and potential opportunities for career advancement. Advisory groups, including one made up of Indigenous employees, were created to support the community. A What We Heard report and a set of recommendations are currently in development and will be shared with Heads of Communications.

The way forward

In the coming year, the CCO will undoubtedly continue collaborating with the communications community. It will listen to diverse voices that will help shape government programs and policies, in line with the operational plan we will develop for 2024 to 2027.

In our current world of increasingly fragmented and polarized public discourse, the work of communications specialists will be key in preserving the integrity of our democracy.

It will therefore be even more important for the CCO to provide the communications community with the training, learning opportunities and resources it needs to play this role to the absolute best of our abilities.

More than ever, communicators will need to listen. The public's concerns and expectations will require communicators to reach much more targeted audiences.

They will need to coordinate their efforts within and across departments to multiply the reach and impact of their messages.

They will need to collaborate to thwart increasingly sophisticated misinformation and disinformation and make the most of emerging technologies.

They will need to redouble their efforts in championing and demonstrating the values of openness, respect, diversity, and inclusion that lie at the heart of the Canadian identity. They will need to find ways of coping with the growing complexity of this ever-changing environment.

On April 2, 2024, the CCO moved from the Privy Council Office to the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS). Under the guidance of TBS, and with the support and advice of the Steering Committee, the CCO will continue its work to engage the community to ensure we provide the support communicators need now and for the future. We look forward to working together to support communicators in providing expert support and leadership to their organizations.

Annual funding for 2023–24

The CCO had negotiated multi-year funding agreements with departments and agencies for the period from April 1, 2021, to March 31, 2024.

Currently, there are 48 departments and agencies participating in the multi-year funding agreements. The funding formula is based on the number of IS employees in each contributing department and agency.

Funding by departments and agencies

Departments or Agencies	Funding (\$)
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	41,250
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	22,500
Canada Border Services Agency	41,250

Departments or Agencies	Funding (\$)
Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions (Quebec)	22,500
Canada Food Inspection Agency	41,250
Canada Revenue Agency	41,250
Canada School of the Public Service	22,500
Canadian Heritage	41,250
Canadian Institute for Health Research	7,500
Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency	7,500
Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission	7,500
Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission	22,500
Canadian Space Agency	22,500
Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS)	22,500
Communications Security Establishment	22,500
Correctional Services Canada	22,500
Elections Canada	22,500
Employment and Social Development Canada	41,250
Environment and Climate Change Canada	41,250
Federal Development Agency for Southern Ontario	7,500
Finance Canada	22,500
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	41,250
Global Affairs	41,250
Health Canada	41,250
Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada	41,250
Impact Assessment Agency of Canada	7,500
Indigenous Services Canada	41,250

Departments or Agencies	Funding (\$)
Infrastructure Canada	22,500
Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada	41,250
Justice Canada	41,250
Library and Archives Canada	22,500
National Defence	41,250
National Security and Intelligence Review Agency (NSIRA)	7,500
Natural Resources Canada	41,250
Pacific Economic Development Canada	7,500
Parks Canada	22,500
Public Safety	41,250
Public Service Commission of Canada	22,500
Public Services and Procurement Canada	41,250
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	41,250
Shared Services	41,250
Statistics Canada	41,250
Transport Canada	41,250
Transportation Safety Board of Canada	7,500
Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat	41,250
Veterans Affairs Canada	22,500
Western Economic Diversification Canada	7,500
Women and Gender Equality	22,500
Total Contributions	1,376,250

Financial results for 2023-24

Funding	Amount (\$)
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Funding	Amount (\$)
Funding received from Communications branches of Government of Canada departments and agencies	1,376,250
Expenditures	
Salaries, administration, and corporate support	1,193,708
Translation	47,188
Recruitment, learning and training	96,005
Community building	29,994
Secretariat support to Government of Canada heads of communications	9,355
Total expenditures	1,376,250

Feedback

We want to hear from you.

Let us know how we can support you better. Send us your ideas for the future.

Email us at info@cco-bcc.gc.ca.

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