



# Accountability Report 2021–22

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Public Service Commission

  
**NOVA SCOTIA**

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Accountability Report 2021–2022

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## 1.0 Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Nova Scotia (NS) Public Service Commission (PSC) for the year ended March 31, 2022, is prepared pursuant to the Finance Act and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the NS Public Service Commission Business Plan for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the NS Public Service Commission outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgements, and opinions by NS Public Service Commission management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of NS Public Service Commission management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the NS Public Service Commission 2021-2022 Business Plan.

*Original Signed By:*

The Honourable Colton LeBlanc,  
Minister of the Public Service Commission

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Andrea Anderson,  
Public Service Commissioner

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## 2.0 Message from the Minister and Public Service Commissioner

Thank you for taking the time to read the Public Service Commission's 2021-22 Accountability Report. We are pleased to highlight the PSC's achievements from the past year that have reinforced our commitment to developing a diverse and engaged workforce that supports government's priorities and leading innovation in human resources and employee relations solutions with a client-centric focus.

We remain committed to becoming a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive public service. Over the past year, the number of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) learning modules completed by public service employees has more than doubled from the previous year. Through these learning modules, employees have increased awareness of topics like Identifying Microaggressions, Unpacking Privilege, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Identifying and Addressing Unconscious Bias, and Allyship in Action.

We continue to focus efforts on improving the participation and selection of candidates from employment equity groups in our applicant pool and have been working on recruitment and selection tools to improve our approaches. We also continue to recruit and retain younger workers and are pleased to report that during the 2021-2022 fiscal year, there were 1,149 young workers hired or rehired. Young workers now make up 21% of provincial employees, an increase over the previous fiscal year.

This fiscal year, the PSC updated the [jobs.novascotia.ca](https://jobs.novascotia.ca) website to make it more accessible and inclusive.

In 2021, a new strategic plan that focuses on four priority areas was launched. The priority areas are people, service, workplace agility and inclusion. Outcomes have been identified and will be used to track the department's progress over the strategic plan.

As all public service employees continued to support Nova Scotians through COVID-19, the PSC staff developed a digital vaccination attestation solution, a new flexible working arrangements (FWA) framework, the introduction of hybrid corporate learning courses and the implementation of new services for employees and their families to support their needs related to mental and physical health.

We are proud of our employees at the PSC who work to support government employees and departments to create a public service that represents all Nova Scotians.

Hon. Colton LeBlanc  
Minister of the Public Service Commission

Andrea Anderson  
Public Service Commissioner

## 3.0 Introduction

This year's accountability report is based on the PSC's 2021-2022 Business Plan, which is available at: <https://novascotia.ca/government/accountability>.

### 3.1 Interesting Facts about the Public Service Commission

Each day, PSC employees work to ensure that the province has the human resources required to manage, create, and deliver excellent, high-quality programs and services to Nova Scotians. We regularly report on the following data to provide insight into how the public service in Nova Scotia continues to shift and evolve as a workforce.

Here are some interesting facts about Nova Scotia's public service and the PSC:

- At the end of this fiscal year (March 31, 2022), **11,889** people were employed with the Province of Nova Scotia. Due to seasonal demands, employee numbers fluctuate throughout the year. The average number of employees for the 2021-2022 fiscal year was **11,713** people, including provincial employees who are a part of the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union (NSGEU), the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), and those in Excluded Classification positions.
- Within the last fiscal year there were **1,149** instances of younger workers being hired or re-hired with the help of the PSC for full-time, part-time, casual, and seasonal employment. At fiscal year-end, younger workers made up **21%** of provincial employees, an increase over the previous fiscal year.
- Between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022 there were over **2,800** job competitions in departments across the public service. When multiple job offers for a single competition were considered, this equated in over **3,100** job offers accepted in permanent, seasonal, and casual employment positions (excluding hiring pools).
- Lifelong learning and professional development remain important values within the PSC. The Corporate Learning Centre facilitated **374** courses during the 2021-2022 fiscal year where **4,410** participants were trained in employee development programs.

- The Corporate Learning Calendar offered *53* distinct courses (excluding the courses offered within the Leadership Development Programs for Supervisors, Middle Managers, and Executives). *400* employees also participated in Leadership Development, Administrative Professional, Manager Fundamentals, and What's Next in You Career programs.
- The PSC connected with potential employees, current employees, and other users close to *1.7 million* times through the jobs.novascotia.ca website during the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Over *97,000* applications were processed through the website, furthering the PSC's commitment to adopting digital, client-centred approaches to recruitment and client satisfaction.

## 3.2 COVID-19 Considerations

Before proceeding with updates on the commitments made in the 2021-2022 Business Plan, it is important to note shifts in service and innovations developed in response to COVID-19 during the previous fiscal year. Across the PSC staff mobilized to support the province's workforce, as all public service employees worked hard to support Nova Scotians during this challenging time.

The PSC's COVID-19 response included:

- The development of a digital vaccination attestation solution. This innovative solution went from idea to reality in eight days, and featured email notifications to employees requesting them to attest to their vaccination status, a portal for managers where the employee attestation could be confirmed, and a portal for analytics staff to review and report on associated data.
- The development of a new flexible working arrangements framework to support departments with workplace transitions during the 2021-2022 fiscal year.
- The re-introduction of in-person corporate learning courses, including hybrid options for leadership development programs.
- Ongoing virtual delivery of learning and development courses to effectively engage learners and avoid disruptions to employee development services.
- Implementation of new services for employees and their families through the LifeSpeak platform, which offers mental health and physical health education and resources.

- Regular updates to employee resources such as frequently asked questions related to COVID-19 and notifications about briefings from the Premier and Chief Medical Officer of Health.

In addition to creating new services and adapting existing programs, the PSC also adjusted the timeline for the Moving Toward Equity report to ensure accurate and meaningful reporting on departmental progress with equity, diversity, and inclusion.



## 4.0 Measuring our Performance

This section of the accountability report restates the priorities and performance measures outlined in the PSC's 2021-2022 Business Plan, a full list of strategic actions and progress on those actions can be found in Appendix A.

### 4.1 Ministerial Mandate: Anti-Racism & Social Equity

#### **Progress on Performance Measures:**

*Increased awareness and utilization of anti-racist resources by public service employees.*

During the 2021-2022 fiscal year, 18,936 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) learning modules were completed by public service employees through the Corporate Learning and Development System. This more than doubles the number of 7,935 EDI learning modules completed during the 2020-2021, and increased awareness of important EDI topics like Identifying Microaggressions, Unpacking Privilege, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Identifying and Addressing Unconscious Bias, and Allyship in Action.

*Improved transparency and reporting on All Together (the diversity and inclusion strategy) implementation by most departments.*

In 2021-2022, the PSC took steps to ensure all future reporting on progress and implementation of the All Together, the diversity and inclusion strategy will capture concrete, strategy-focused efforts for reducing barriers, leadership development, senior leadership accountability, and measurement of progress. The updated Moving Toward Equity Reporting Template has been provided to departments in June 2022, for completion over the summer.

*The integration of social equity analysis as a necessary step in the review and development of all corporate policies.*

During the 2021-2022 fiscal year, the PSC partnered with the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women to co-develop Gender Based Analysis (GBA+) training to support social equity analysis of programming and policies. Over the course of the year, social equity analysis was incorporated into the major policy reviews of the Fair Hiring and Employment Equity policies. The review of these policies continues into the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

## 4.2 Ministerial Mandate: Inclusive Talent Acquisition

### **Progress on Performance Measures:**

*Continued hiring and retention of younger workers.*

Within the last fiscal year there were 1,149 instances of younger workers being hired or re-hired with the help of the PSC for full-time, part-time, casual, and seasonal employment. At year-end, March 31, 2022, younger workers made up almost 21% of provincial employees, an increase over the previous fiscal year.

*Improved participation and selection of employment equity groups in our applicant pool.*

In response to data that indicated an increase in Employment Equity candidates reached through community listservs, the Talent Acquisition team created a database to circulate job postings through these channels within the province.

Of the younger workers who were hired by the end of this fiscal, 3% identified as Indigenous, 6% identified as African Nova Scotian, 5% identified as persons with a disability, and 10% as racially visible persons.

*More inclusive and accessible outreach for filling open positions within the public service.*

In 2021-2022 the PSC updated the jobs.novascotia.ca website to be more compatible with digital standards for accessibility, making the site more accessible to people who experience colour vision deficiencies.

## 4.3 Ministerial Mandate: Future of Work and Employee Well-being

### **Progress on Performance Measures:**

*Enhanced tracking of departmental and corporate statistics for workplace safety.*

Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) continues to be a priority at the PSC, including the development of new reports covering topics such as investigation status, injury severity, and safety observations. These reports and other ongoing WHS activities support departments in creating physically and psychologically safe workplaces.

*Improved performance standards for external absence management service providers to better support employees.*

The administration of absence management services to provincial employees involves partnerships with external service providers who provide services when employees experience an extended absence. These partnerships can only be successful with clear standards and expectations. In the 2021-2022 fiscal year, the PSC identified some new reporting requirements, and continued regular discussions with external service providers to ensure responsive, client-centred service for employees, and the collection of timely accurate data for leaders across the public service.

*More engaged employees.*

For the second year, Public Service Week engaged employees in celebration and information sharing. The week included a six person Deputy Minister panel attended by 2,000+ employees and featured more than 30 events on various subjects of interest to Nova Scotia public service employees that were attended by 400+ employees. The Public Service Commissioner attended 15 virtual and in-person events across the province, meeting with employees and learning about what they do. Along with the regular engagement of employees via the Internal Communications Network, this annual event is an intentional opportunity to bring public service employees together.

#### 4.4 Ministerial Mandate: Innovative & Evidence-Informed Strategies, Programs, and Policies

##### **Progress on Performance Measures:**

*Improved service delivery and internal communications for workforce surveys.*

A corporate survey strategy is in development. A new survey tool has been purchased, and is in use, to support mobile survey completion. *How's Work Going?* survey now includes more rigorous accountabilities, including a Project Sponsor panel, a Project Team, a Project Manager, Communities of Practice, a dedicated Communications Lead, and an internal communication plan supported by the government-wide, Internal Communications Network. The next *How's Work Going?* survey is scheduled to launch in November 2022.

*Enhanced performance measures and metrics to aid in analyzing strategies, internal policies, programs, and procedures.*

In 2021, the PSC launched a new strategic plan focusing on four priority areas (People, Service, Workplace Agility, and Inclusion). During the 2021-2022 fiscal year, teams began the process of identifying indicators and outcomes in alignment with those priorities. The outcomes will be used to track the department's progress over the course of the strategic plan.

In 2021, the PSC also launched a new Talent Acquisition Strategy that focuses on building a flexible, equitable, and transparent talent acquisition system. With the release of the strategy, the PSC made available to departments a centralized reference point for talent acquisition metrics related to younger workers, job competition statistics, and information about how applicants are interacting with provincial job postings.

*Improved data literacy that considers privacy and confidentiality of information.*

The data literacy roadmap for the PSC was paused as the vaccination directive took precedence. The data literacy work has since resumed, and internal consultations will begin in Fall 2022.

*Increased evidence-informed decision-making.*

The PSC has undertaken several initiatives to foster evidence-informed decision-making within the PSC and for clients. This work includes:

- A new project to improve equity data collection that began in summer 2021 with the goal of improving how employees self-identify as members of employment equity groups. This self-identification project will provide broad, corporate statistics that demonstrates our progress with equity recruitment and retention over time, while providing a demographic profile of all public service employees.
- The PSC also continues to develop infographics and improved visualizations of aggregate level corporate and departmental information, including younger worker statistics, student recruitment, designated positions, workforce size, average age and service, gender distribution, unionization and employment type groupings, and retirement eligibility.

The data literacy roadmap mentioned in the previous update will also assist with increasing capabilities to support evidence informed decision making.

## 5.0 Financial Results

	2021-2022 Estimate	2021-2022 Actual	2021-2022 Variance
<b>Program &amp; Service Area</b>	(\$ thousands)		
<b>Departmental Expenses</b>			
Client Service Delivery	6,436	6,174	(262)
Employee Relations	3,025	3,295	270
Office of the Commissioner	501	1,033	532
People and Culture	4,373	4,386	13
Corporate Services	5,797	8,387	2,590
<b>Total: Departmental Expenses<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>20,132</b>	<b>23,275</b>	<b>3,143</b>
<b>Additional Information</b>			
Ordinary Revenue	0	0	0
Fees and Other Charges	0	0	0
Ordinary Recoveries	0	138	138
<b>Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>0</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>TCA Purchase Requirements</b>	-	-	-
<b>Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>186.4</b>	<b>179.5</b>	<b>(6.9)</b>

<sup>1</sup> **Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:** Variance due to salary pressures resulting from the change in government.

<sup>2</sup> **Revenue, Fees, and Recoveries Variance Explanation:** Variance due to recoverable salary.

<sup>3</sup> **Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:** Variance due to vacancy savings.

## 6.0 Report on Disclosure of Wrongdoing

### Annual Report under Section 18 of the *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act*

The Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011.

The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith.

The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labour Board.

A Wrongdoing for the purposes of this Act is:

- a. A contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations
- b. A misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets
- c. An act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment, or
- d. Directing or counseling someone to commit a wrongdoing

During fiscal year 2021-2022, the Public Service Commission did not receive any disclosures of wrongdoing.

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2021-2022
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing	N/A

## 7.0 Appendices

### 7.1 Appendix A – Detailed Progress for each Strategic Action

This section of the accountability report restates the strategic actions and measures listed in the 2021-2022 Business Plan, along with the progress the PSC has made in fulfilling the Minister’s mandate and addressing our department’s priorities.

Ministerial Mandate	Strategic Action	Accomplishments and Progress
<b>1. Anti-Racism and Social Equity</b> <i>In 2021-22, the PSC will use innovative methods to eliminate racism, promote equity and inclusion, and integrate analysis of barriers faced by equity seeking groups into decision making for provincial policies and programs.</i>	1a. Anti-Racism Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2021-2022, the PSC partnered closely with the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism (OEA) as the Dismantling Racism and Hate Act was drafted. OEA will lead the development of an Anti-Racism and Equity Strategy in the 2022-2023 fiscal year, which the PSC will support with respect to client departments and civil service employees.</li> </ul>
	1b. GBA+ analysis and social equity supports for policy and program development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During the 2021-2022 fiscal year, the PSC partnered with the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women to co-develop Gender Based Analysis (GBA+) training to support social equity analysis of programming and policies. The training was then piloted with the Policy and Planning Team at the PSC.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Inclusive Talent Acquisition</b> <i>In 2021-22, the PSC will advance an inclusive, flexible, and transparent talent acquisition system; monitor hiring; and institute recruitment innovations to address systemic racism and discrimination within the hiring process.</i>	2a. Developing and preparing to launch an equity recruitment strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our talent acquisition strategy has EDI embedded in the guiding principles (Flexible, Equitable, &amp; Transparent). One of our five priority areas is “outreach” and it focused on marketing and diversifying our audience.</li> <li>We are currently working on an EDI toolkit in the recruitment process.</li> </ul>
	2b. Adapting the Recruitment Service Delivery Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Talent Acquisition process review is currently ongoing, trying to simplify some practices and change others to align with PSC’s strategic plan. This review is taking into consideration clients’ needs as well as the employment systems review recommendations.</li> </ul>
	2c. Continuing to work on incorporating the LEADS framework into leadership hiring practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PSC has developed an interview guide for leadership competitions geared to EC11 positions and above. The guide went through a small pilot and will be rolled out to managers in the Fall. LEADS framework for evaluating leadership capabilities will also be incorporated into leadership job postings as implementation of the framework continues.</li> </ul>

	<p>2d. Implementing a rigorous approach to internal communications as a critical element to engaging and retaining employees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Providing communication support and engagement opportunities is ongoing for the Workplace Employee Communication and Experience unit. This year, activities included a networking event attended by 20 departmental Internal Communication Leads to workshop best practices for communications within departments, and a National Internal Communications Network launch including 15 members from seven provinces from across Canada. The second annual Public Service Week was attended by 2,000+ public service employees and included opportunities for senior leadership engagement – Deputy Minister Panel, All-Staff kick-off event, along with more than 30 events attended by 400+ employees. A virtual and in-person roadshow with the Public Service Commissioner engaged both leadership and employees across the province. TheHUB, employee intranet, continues to be the source for engagement and employee information. The site has seen on average 40,000 site visits per month.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Future of Work &amp; Employee Well-Being</b>  <i>In 2021-22, the PSC will support employees across the public service through a people-centered approach that prioritizes and promotes physical &amp; psychological wellbeing, and occupational health &amp; safety (OH&amp;S).</i></p>	<p>3a. Future of Work Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Initial consultations have begun within the PSC and some departments, during the 2021-2022 fiscal year to identify initiatives that are already responding to future of work trends.</li> </ul>
	<p>3b. Continued work to develop, implement and evolve programs that support flexible working arrangements to modernize provincial workplaces and leadership practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In the Fall of 2021, the PSC released a Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA) Framework to support the development of departmental FWA programs. These new programs embraced the “no one size fits all” solutions to flexible working arrangements and replaced the adapted FlexNS program that was launched early in the pandemic.</li> </ul>
	<p>3c. Office of Workplace Mental Health (OWMH) supports/programming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Since opening in 2018, the OWMH has conducted 1,682 navigation appointments. There was a 138% increase in number of navigation requests in the 2021-2022 fiscal year compared to 2020-2021. To increase accessibility to the navigation service, individuals can select their preference of navigator who is a man or woman, from the 2SLGBTQ community or has first voice knowledge as an African Nova Scotian.</li> <li>○ In addition to supporting individuals, the OWMH also supported mental health awareness, anti-stigma education and psychologically safer workplaces through a variety of activities and initiatives during the 2021-2022 fiscal year, including but not limited to: a Peer Support Program at Central Nova Correctional Facility in partnership with NSGEU and the Department of Justice, a province wide SharePoint site with mental health resources, and the Working Mind/Working Mind First Responders training program, which trained more than 300 provincial employees in the 2021-2022 fiscal year.</li> </ul>
	<p>3d. OH&amp;S information sharing automation and advancements in case management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Implementation of the online incident reporting system, Environmental Health &amp; Safety Management (EHSM) system, is ongoing and in use by almost all departments. The PSC can currently generate departmental and corporate safety statistics and reports, including Key Indicator statistics to highlight areas of success and areas requiring additional focus.</li> </ul>



	<p>3e. Development and negotiation of a contract with Worker's Compensation Board (WCB), as well as the development of a new calculation model for our WCB Administrative Fees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The body of the draft contract is complete, with some additional work on the three appendices required before meeting with WCB to discuss next steps.</li> </ul>
	<p>3f. Employee Communication Digital Toolkit, Public Service Commissioner campaign</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Employee Communication Digital Toolkit launched March 2022. It is hosted on a SharePoint platform and features tools and tips for best practice employee communication to support their engagement and experience. The tools include information on accessibility and tips for newsletters, e-digests, using infographics, and recording videos. Employees have direct access to the site but are encouraged to engage their department's Internal Communication Lead to assist with using a tool. Since its launch, there have been more than 1,400 page views and it averages 300 visits a month.</li> <li>○ During Public Service Week, a virtual and in-person roadshow with the Public Service Commissioner engaged both leadership and employees across the province.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Innovative &amp; Evidence-Informed Strategies, Programs, and Policies</b>  <i>In 2021-22, the PSC will take a sustainable and evidence-informed approach to the development, analysis, and evaluation of human resource strategies, policies, programs, and procedures.</i></p>	<p>4a. Development of evaluation or accountability frameworks for corporate strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A Strategic Measurement Framework is underway at the PSC with an initial focus on measuring the outcomes associated with the PSC's Ministerial Mandate set in the Fall of 2021. Future work will focus on expanding the framework to encompass the entire PSC Strategic Plan.</li> <li>○ Key outcomes measured within the framework also connect directly to the implementation of All Together, the diversity and inclusion strategy.</li> </ul>
	<p>4b. Records digitization and tracking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In July 2020, the PSC implemented the ability to digitize employee records, which comprised approximately 2.4 million pages of paper documents. The digitization of the paper employee records is approximately 50% complete as of June 30, 2022. This work will be ongoing until all paper is digitized. We will continue to look for opportunities to digitize paper records.</li> </ul>
	<p>4c. Advancements in data literacy for the PSC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The data literacy strategy was paused to focus on the vaccination attestation tracking requirement in the winter of 2021-22. A data literacy training needs assessment is currently being conducted with the Client Service Delivery division. The work on the data literacy strategy is in development and senior leadership and executive consultations will begin in the Fall of 2022.</li> <li>○ A new HR analytics platform (Tableau Server) is in development and is expected to be deployed in fiscal year 2022-23. This new platform will enable access to information assets such as younger worker updates, talent acquisition updates, self-identification progress, demographic updates, and absenteeism. Current reports are delivered in portable document format (.pdf) and this new server-based platform will allow users to obtain data directly and in .pdf format.</li> </ul>
	<p>4d. Further collaboration with clients to pursue innovative human resource solutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The PSC works closely with senior leaders and employees across the public service to identify opportunities for improvement. In 2021-2022, PSC and Nova Scotia Digital Services partnered to develop HR strategies in response to the needs of a more agile digital organization.</li> </ul>

## 7.2 Appendix B – Public Service Commission Commonly Used Acronyms

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
CNS	Communications Nova Scotia
CUPE	Canadian Union of Public Employees
EDI	Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
EHSM	Environmental Health and Safety Management
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
FWA	Flexible Work Arrangements
GBA	Gender Based Analysis
NS	Nova Scotia
NSGEU	Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union
OEA	Office of Equity and Anti-Racism
OH&S	Occupational Health and Safety
OWMH	Office of Workplace Mental Health
PSC	Public Service Commission
TCA	Total Cost of Acquisition
WCB	Workers' Compensation Board
WHS	Workplace Health and Safety