

AUDIT ON THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION DATA ISSUE IMPACTING VETERAN HIRING

*President of the King's Privy Council for Canada Harjit S. Sajjan is the lead Minister to respond to questions regarding the Data Issue and the Audit.

- Canada's Veterans and Canadian Armed Forces members possess valuable knowledge, skills and experience that are highly beneficial to Canada's labour market. Their demonstrated commitment and contribution to Canada is valued, and the government continues to support their employment in the public service.

Employment for Veterans

- On June 28, 2024, Veterans Affairs Canada officially launched and published the National Veterans Employment Strategy in response to the Government of Canada's commitment to facilitate rewarding employment opportunities for Veterans transitioning out of the Canadian Armed Forces. The development of this strategy marked a significant milestone in our efforts to support Veterans in finding meaningful employment.
- The strategy was a culmination of over two years of research and consultation with Veterans, stakeholders, and partners across the public and

private sectors. Their input and perspectives informed the development of the National Veterans Employment Strategy and will continue to influence programs and services for Veteran employment.

- The National Veterans Employment Strategy focuses on four main objectives: improving services and expanding programs for Veterans, creating and recognizing Veteran-ready employers, positioning the public service as a leader in Veteran employment, and building trusted partnerships.

WHEN PRESSED (Employment for Veterans):

Q1 – How is Veterans Affairs Canada supporting the employment of Veterans in the Public Service?

In 2015, the *Public Service Employment Act* was amended by the *Veterans Hiring Act* to help eligible Canadian Armed Forces members find federal public service jobs. This act provides priority hiring status to medically released Veterans, ensuring they have access to public service positions.

Veterans Affairs Canada established a unit specifically to support Veterans seeking careers in the public service. This unit educates hiring managers about the valuable skills and experience that Veterans bring to the workforce and promotes Veterans as a skilled and talented workforce.

Veterans Affairs Canada works closely with the Public Service Commission, the Department of National Defence, and the Canadian Armed Forces to implement the recommendations from the Joint Evaluation of the Implementation of the Veterans Hiring Act of 2020. This collaboration ensures that the hiring process is streamlined and effective for Veterans. As of October 2024, 164 Veterans are employed at Veterans Affairs Canada.

Launched in June 2024, the National Veterans Employment Strategy aims to enhance employment opportunities for Veterans across all levels of public administration. This strategy focuses on improving services, expanding programs, creating Veteran-ready employers, and building trusted partnerships with various organizations to support Veteran employment.

These efforts are part of Veterans Affairs Canada's commitment to ensuring that Veterans have the support they need to transition successfully into civilian careers, particularly within the public service.

WHEN PRESSED (The Public Service Commission (PSC) Data Transfer Issue):

An issue was discovered with the data transfer process between the Department of National Defence and the Public Service Commission (PSC) of Canada from November 13, 2020, to January 19, 2024, which resulted in a number of Veterans and Canadian Armed Forces members not being properly identified for preference and mobility entitlements. The data transfer process has been re-established as of January 19, 2024.

Audit on the PSC Data Issue Impacting Veteran Hiring
Source: CFOCS and Service Delivery | Date: 2024/11/20

The PSC published audit results examining the impact of a technical issue related to the data transfer process that occurred between 13 November 2020, and 19 January 2024. The issue led to some Veterans not being properly identified for preference in the Public Service Resourcing System.

- Canada's Veterans and Canadian Armed Forces members possess valuable knowledge, skills and experience that are highly beneficial to Canada's labour market. Their demonstrated commitment and contribution to Canada is valued, and the government continues to support their employment in the public service. Currently, over 900 Veterans are employed in the Government of Canada.
- The Public Service Commission has contacted Veterans who may have been implicated to confirm their interest in public service employment. The Public Service Commission is working directly with departments and agencies to explore potential placements of qualified Veterans to help them secure public service employment.
- The Public Service Commission has already taken steps, in collaboration with the Department of National Defence, to review and confirm the proper functioning of the data transfer process, and have put in place a series of controls and new processes to detect and help prevent reoccurrence of the outage.
- The Public Service Commission determined that this technical issue had no impact on the priority entitlements of medically released Veterans, as these entitlements are captured in a different system.

The PSC has communicated in writing with those who may have been affected and information sessions have been held.

PSC is exploring a range of options for affected Veterans and Canadian Armed Forces members and they are committed to communicating directly with those affected on a regular basis.

Once the analysis is more advanced, PSC will confirm which options are the most appropriate.

We have been assured that the PSC will have new measures to ensure that the risk of reoccurrence is minimized and that the required controls are in place.

BACKGROUND – EMPLOYMENT FOR VETERANS

Using a Veteran-centric approach, the National Veterans Employment Strategy responds to the Government of Canada's commitment to launch a comprehensive strategy aimed at facilitating rewarding employment opportunities for all Veterans transitioning out of the CAF. Veterans Affairs Canada undertook an analysis of existing research and consulted with Veterans and stakeholders. The strategy is designed to address existing gaps and leverage opportunities that may exist for new and improved supports for Veterans. It highlights plans to connect Veterans with employers looking to hire Veterans, and it outlines roles for government, the private sector and non-governmental organizations to promote and increase opportunities for Veterans to find civilian employment.

The strategy is built upon four foundational strategic objectives:

- Improving Services and Expanding Programs for Veterans
- Creating and Recognizing Veteran Ready Employers
- Positioning the Public Service as a Leader for Veteran Employment
- Building Trusted Partnerships

The consultations highlighted several important points, including the need for ongoing collaboration with the Canadian Armed Forces to encourage serving members to plan for their transition earlier in their careers. Additionally, there is a need to improve awareness of Veterans Affairs Canada's programs and supports and to continue highlighting the successes of Veterans who transition into civilian careers.

Veterans Affairs Canada offers Career Transition Services to help Canadian Armed Forces members, Veterans, Survivors, and their spouses/common-law partners with career counselling and related services delivered by qualified employment coaches. Veterans Affairs Canada also works closely with numerous Canadian not-for-profit organizations and third parties interested in promoting Veteran-friendly hiring programs and special initiatives designed to advocate for greater Veteran employment.

Research from Veterans Affairs Canada's Life after Service Studies shows that many Veterans seek employment in public administration as they transition to the civilian labour market. At the same time, the Public Service is looking for the skills and experience that Veterans can offer. The Public Service Employment Act was amended by the Veterans Hiring Act of 2015, aimed at helping eligible Canadian Armed Forces members find federal public service jobs. Soon after, Veterans Affairs Canada established a unit focused on supporting Veterans seeking public service careers, educating hiring managers, and promoting Veterans as a talent pool.

A Joint Evaluation of the Implementation of the Veterans Hiring Act was published in 2020, and Veterans Affairs Canada continues to work with its partners in the Public Service Commission, the Department of National Defence, and the Canadian Armed Forces to carry out the recommendations from the evaluation. In addition, the National

Veterans Employment Strategy, launched in June 2024, will guide decision-making and action to enable improved Veteran hiring outcomes across the public service. The highlights of the Strategy's implementation plan can be found on VAC's external website here: [The National Veterans Employment Strategy Roadmap](#).