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NEWS RELEASE

Current Federal Public Service Recruitment Strategy Needs Overhaul

Smart Recruitment Means Including Community College and Institute Graduates to Meet the Challenges of the 21st century

Ottawa – To ensure that it has the right people with the right skill sets to serve Canadians in the future, the federal public service must expand its recruitment strategy to include community college and institute graduates. A smart public service needs smart recruitment. That is the basic finding of the most recent report by the Public Policy Forum on public sector renewal.

Based on a survey of some 6000 current community college and institute students from across Canada, the Public Policy Forum analysed their views on career prospects and their skills, and compared the results with information on the current make-up and future needs of the federal public service.

The conclusions and implications for the public service are clear:

By 2012, 40 percent of federal public servants will be eligible for retirement. Within the technical and operational support services categories, such as information, program and administrative services, that number climbs to 68 percent. But it's not a matter of simple replacement. These jobs will be different. New lines of business, such as Government-on-Line, require a public service with new technical and communication skills to serve Canadians 24/7. Community college and institute graduates, along with graduates of universities, have the skills needed for this 21st century public service.

In the 2002 survey of all public servants, 29 percent of public servants listed a diploma or certificate from a college, institute or trade school as their highest level of education completed – a number that climbs to anywhere from 39 to 73 percent in the technical and operational support services categories. Clearly, college graduates are a significant portion of the public service workforce – and an even more significant portion of those categories of employees who are more likely to retire within 10 years.



What's more, current college students *want* to work in the public service. Sixty-one percent of those surveyed would prefer to work in the public sector rather than the private sector. Almost 83 percent felt it important that their career choice contribute to the betterment of society. The Government of Canada was also seen as desirable employer: one that offers a variety of career choices (76 percent), fair hiring practices (52 percent) and opportunities for advancement (69 percent).

In sum, college graduates are needed in the federal public service, and favour a career in the public sector. *Yet, the current federal public service post-secondary recruitment strategy does not include community colleges or institute graduates.*

The report therefore calls on the federal government to:

- Expand its post-secondary recruitment programs to include graduates of community colleges and institutes;
- Expand student co-op recruitment programs to include community college and institute students;
- Lead by example in promoting lifelong learning; and,
- Arrange for federal human resource managers and senior officials to visit community college and institute campuses across the country to witness first-hand what colleges can provide.

“In a workplace characterized by changing personnel and rapidly evolving technology delivering round-the-clock service, modernizing public sector management can only be achieved with a skilled and committed public sector workforce,” concluded Nancy Averill, Director of Research and Methodology at the Public Policy Forum and author of the report. “Future federal government post-secondary recruitment strategies should include community college and institute graduates, who possess the essential skills needed in that workforce, and who clearly want to work in the public sector.”

Smart Recruitment is now available on the Public Policy Forum website at www.ppforum.ca. For more information, or to schedule an interview with the author, please contact the Public Policy Forum.

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