

WHERE IDEAS WORK

2020 Corporate Plan FOR THE BC PUBLIC SERVICE



Where ideas work



The BC Public Service exists to serve the needs of more than five million British Columbians through a wider and more diverse set of programs and services than any other organization in the province.

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MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY MINISTERS' COUNCIL



Thank you. To all members of the BC Public Service: thank you for all you do on behalf of the people of British Columbia and their elected government. As Deputy Ministers, every one of us is conscious of how lucky we are to lead an organization comprised of so many talented, committed and passionate public service colleagues.

Your dedication to your work has never been more evident than in the public service's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is inspiring to see how quickly you adapted to ensure continued services to the people of B.C., while also adopting entirely new ways of working. We have seen the very best of what it means to be a public servant, and the impact of the pandemic validates the direction set out in this plan.

**We consistently strive to uphold the trust
placed in us by government and the people of B.C.**

What all of us in the public service do is more important than ever, and so is how we do it. It matters that we all take an oath to put the public interest ahead of our own when we come to work every day. It matters that we remain an organization grounded in ideas like integrity, loyalty, and service. It matters that we consistently strive to uphold the trust placed in us by government and the people of B.C., delivering the services people depend on and providing the objective, honest and impartial advice government needs. It's not always easy work. And in a sense, it shouldn't be easy – because it's too important. It matters too much.

The BC Public Service continues to be looked to by other jurisdictions for its leadership in adapting to the changing context in which we all pursue our important work. As an employer, we continue to be ranked one of the best not only in B.C. but across Canada. And that continues to attract thousands upon thousands of people seeking to join us and build their careers with one of the leading public service jurisdictions in the country.

We need to respond to the priorities of the government we serve and to the economic and social context around us.

This edition of our corporate plan sets out how we will continue supporting you in your work, whether you are established in your career here or just joining us. As always, we need to respond to the priorities of the government we serve and to the economic and social context around us. Where that requires us to apply different perspectives to our work – like GBA+ or the principles of reconciliation – you'll have continued support in doing so. Where it requires us to adjust to evolving fiscal pressures and changing priorities, you will have our commitment to manage that as thoughtfully and transparently as possible. Where it requires us to listen and adapt, you can expect us to be open to your ideas and input. That is our job: to provide the direction, conditions and support you need to do your job as effectively as possible.

We know that the more effectively you are supported to do your work, the better the public service will be in meeting the needs, expectations and aspirations of British Columbians. As always, we welcome the opportunity to explore that path together with you.

INTRODUCTION



“As a member of the BC Public Service, I do solemnly swear that I will loyally serve the people of British Columbia through their democratically elected government.” – BC Public Service Oath of Employment

This is why we’re here. This is what sets us apart from every other employer in the province. This is the commitment we make as public servants. The BC Public Service exists to serve the needs of more than five million British Columbians through a wider and more diverse set of programs and services than any other organization in the province. As one of the pillars of the executive branch of government, we provide an enduring thread of continuity in times of change. At the same time, we are constantly evolving in response to the needs of the public, the priorities of their government, and the shifting social and economic dynamics of the province and the world. We are a source of stability, while also helping to shape the future.

Our ability to recruit, retain and develop a diverse, inclusive and professional public service underpins everything we do.

The corporate plan for the BC Public Service has always been about precisely that: how do we ensure the public service continues to adapt to our changing world so we can continue to serve the needs of citizens in pursuing their aspirations for themselves, their families and their communities? This edition of the plan maintains that course, continuing to set the strategic vision and guiding direction for the BC Public Service as it continues to evolve.

As you will see from the updated demographic profile included in this plan, the public service workforce is in the midst of a long-anticipated generational shift. This presents some profound issues as we lose the experience and expertise of thousands of dedicated, committed and long-serving employees now entering retirement. But it also creates a unique window of opportunity to refresh and renew the culture of the public service with the influx of a new generation and the continued growth and development of those who still have long careers ahead of them.

Navigating this transition isn't just important for us internally. It's important for the good of the province. Every effort we make to be a better employer is, above all else, because we know that makes us a better public service that is better able to serve British Columbians. Our ability to recruit, retain and develop a diverse, inclusive and professional public service underpins everything we do. At the same time, rethinking how we do our work also requires us to rethink the talent, skillsets and mindsets the public service needs to attract and develop.

Being a better public service requires us to be a more agile and responsive organization. We are expected to solve more complex problems than ever, against a backdrop of a society where everything moves faster and we are expected to keep pace. The tension between a public service designed to be thoughtful and deliberative in solving difficult problems and the expectation of quick and simple solutions is up to us to manage. Yet, while we pursue innovation and adapt to our changing context, we can't lose sight of the true understanding of what it means to be a public servant.

The foundational purpose of serving the public interest has not and will not change. Ensuring our shared understanding of that purpose is more important than ever. With the significant influx of new talent in recent years, in a very real and tangible way the public service is being renewed. It is incumbent on us to ensure all those new public servants clearly understand the purpose, role and values of the public service.

Individually, we have the privilege of pursuing our varied and rewarding careers because the people of B.C. trust us to keep our commitment to put them first. Collectively, we are stronger as an organization when we strive to remember that every step we take must somehow improve life for the people we each pledged to serve.

With all these factors in mind, this edition of the corporate plan is built around three themes outlining the type of public service we are striving to be for British Columbians:

- 1. A TRUSTED PUBLIC SERVICE:** a highly professional institution trusted by citizens, elected government and its employees.
- 2. A TALENTED PUBLIC SERVICE:** an inclusive employer that attracts, develops and retains the people we need to meet the current and future needs and expectations of British Columbians and their government.
- 3. A MODERN PUBLIC SERVICE:** an organization with the policies, practices and tools needed to effectively and nimbly respond to the evolving needs of the province and its people.

Under each of these themes, you will find a series of commitments we will pursue over the next three years to ensure we are and remain the trusted, talented and modern public service British Columbians expect and deserve.

We are constantly evolving in response to the needs of the public, the priorities of their government, and the shifting social and economic dynamics of the province.



PROFILE OF A CHANGING BC PUBLIC SERVICE¹

Smithers

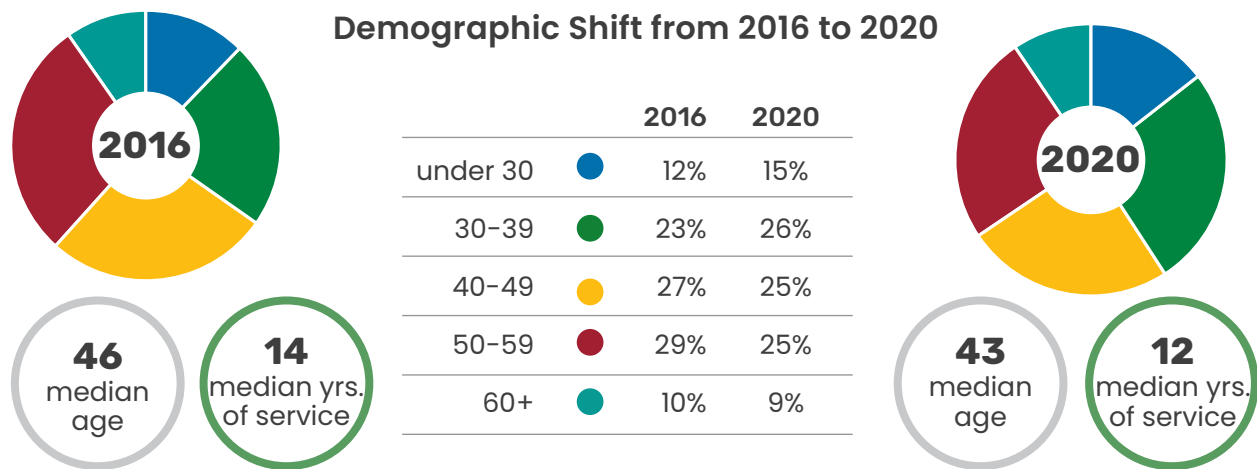
With approximately 35,000 regular and auxiliary employees, the BC Public Service is the largest single employer in the province.² The number of employees has increased over the last five years to support the priorities of government, but we remain one of the leanest public services in Canada.

The BC Public Service workforce is also in the midst of a profound demographic shift. We anticipated this transition as the Baby Boomer generation's participation in the workforce eventually declined. That has now come to pass, and the number of Boomer employees has declined by more than half since 2010, now representing less than one third of the workforce. Generation X employees surpassed Boomers to be the largest generation in the public service in 2015.

¹ B.C. demographic data based on employee headcount as of June 30, 2020 unless otherwise noted.

² Defined as number of employees per 1,000 population. B.C. is tied with Alberta at 7/1000, with only Ontario lower at 5/1000, according to 2019 data from the Public Service Commissioners of Canada.

Soon Generation X will be surpassed by Millennials, whose representation in the BC Public Service has quadrupled since 2010. As a result, after years of increasing, the average age of the BC Public Service is now the youngest it has been in at least a decade. This is partly shaped by a significant increase in the number of employees under age 30, a cohort that has grown by over 50 per cent in the past five years.



This generational turnover was inevitable, and it has profound implications for the public service as an employer. With the influx of new talent, the average years of service has declined by 14 per cent since 2015. In the same timeframe, the average years an employee has been in their current role has dropped by one quarter. Five years ago, about one in four employees had been in their current position less than one year. Today that has jumped to one in three current employees, as we recruit new talent and more employees seek out new opportunities across government.

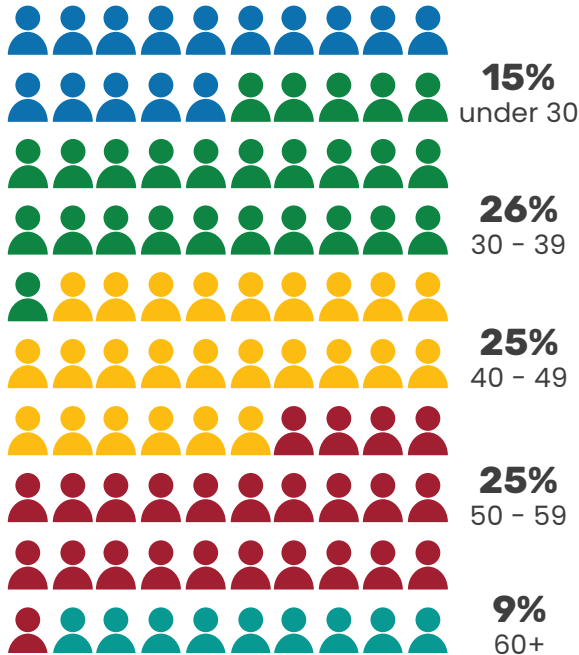
Mobility and the addition of new employees bring the benefit of fresh perspectives and opportunities. But it also requires the public service to pay attention to knowledge transfer as long-serving employees retire and take their experience and expertise with them. Shorter job tenures also require increased attention to employee development, especially in management and leadership roles. A growing number of employees are advancing into leadership roles earlier in their public service careers, requiring accelerated support to ensure they are ready to both lead teams and effectively manage their administrative responsibilities.

 **35,000+**
employees

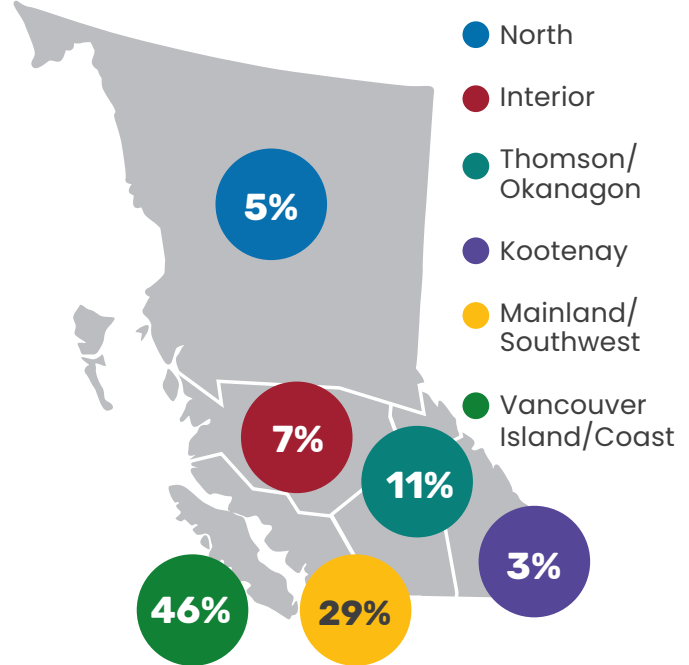
 **200+**
occupations

 **280+**
communities

Demographic Breakdown



Where BCPS Employees Work



Diversity remains a focus for the BC Public Service, building on the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan approved by Cabinet in the fall of 2017. From a gender perspective, 61 per cent of the BC Public Service are women. But this distribution is not consistent across different employee groups. For example, women have significantly higher representation in administrative roles but are significantly under-represented in enforcement, technology and technical roles.

According to the 2019 Diversity and Inclusion Survey, of the almost 49 per cent of employees who responded:

- 27.4 per cent identified as a visible minority.
- 16.5 per cent identified as having a disability.
- 7.3 per cent identified as LGBTQ2S+.
- 5.0 per cent identified as Indigenous.
- 1.1 per cent identified as trans or gender diverse.

27%
Visible minorities

17%
Persons with a disability

7%
LGBTQ2S+

5%
Indigenous peoples

1%
Trans or gender diverse

**We believe in the value of every individual.
Believing anything less is incompatible with the
values and responsibilities of the public service.**

The results of the survey provide insight into both the progress made to build a more inclusive workplace and the areas where substantive improvement is still required. That information, combined with extensive research and engagement with representative employees, will inform a new and more comprehensive Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to help achieve the BC Public Service's commitment to be an employer where every employee is welcome and where citizens see themselves reflected.

The BC Public Service believes diversity and inclusion are fundamental to our role in society. There is no place for racism or any other form of discrimination within the public service, whether in our interactions with each other or with the public we serve. What does that mean? It means nobody who works alongside us or interacts with the public service should ever be thought of, talked about or treated as less than anyone else because of who they are – not less valued, less worthy, less respected, less capable, or less entitled to opportunity, or less filled with potential. We believe in the value of every individual. Believing anything less is incompatible with the values and responsibilities of the public service.

The path to addressing systemic barriers and building greater inclusion is complex to navigate and requires openness, empathy, leadership and a lasting commitment from all of us, but it is essential to make us a better public service.

**There is no place for racism or any other form of discrimination
within the public service, whether in our interactions
with each other or with the public we serve.**



A TRUSTED PUBLIC SERVICE

Prince Rupert

Without the trust placed in us by citizens, by elected government and by our employees, we wouldn't be able to do the work we do. In many ways, our performance can be measured in the social and economic prosperity of our province, its communities and its citizens. We can't be successful in any of those measures if we don't start from a place of trust.

Every one of us is bound by a promise not just to do our jobs, but to do them in ways that maintain and enhance the public's trust in the public service. This is reflected in the Standards of Conduct that govern our work, setting out our responsibilities to work impartially, honestly and respectfully in our relationships with the public and with each other. It is reflected in the values of the public service: courage, passion, teamwork, service, accountability, curiosity and, above all, integrity.

That commitment to integrity is essential to who we are as a public service. It isn't optional. As an employer, we trust and expect our employees to act with integrity at all times. We provide the guidance, resources and training to ensure they can.

Acting with integrity means we do our utmost to make the right choice and do the right thing even in the most difficult of circumstances. It's not always easy. Public servants can face a myriad of competing and compelling interests and pressures, and they need to make countless difficult decisions every day. Some of those decisions will directly affect the lives of citizens, families and communities. Some will influence the long-term future of our province, its environment, its economy and its prosperity. Some will force us to set aside our own personal convictions in favour of supporting the public interest. But whether the choices we face are big or small, they are governed by the ethical compass of integrity. It doesn't mean we never make mistakes. But it means that even when we do, we act with the right intent, we learn, and we improve. Because we know that is what is expected of us, and because we know it is essential to maintaining the trust placed in us by British Columbians.

To further enhance the trust of citizens, government and our employees, we will provide:

- New public-facing online resources to support transparency, awareness and understanding of the role and work of the professional public service.

- New engagement and awareness resources to help all employees understand the ethical framework and obligations of professional public servants.

- Continued enhancements to onboarding and orientation for new employees, including executives, to ensure they get the best possible start to their public service careers and understand their professional responsibilities.

- Continued support and enhancement of the ethics advisory service, to ensure all employees can access advice to help them navigate ethical decisions such as conflicts of interest.

- Policy enhancements and improved training and resources to address systemic barriers and to foster a more inclusive and respectful work environment that is free from discrimination, harassment and bullying.

A TALENTED PUBLIC SERVICE



Kelowna

The BC Public Service is made up of over 35,000 trusted professionals – individuals who chose to make a career in service to the province. A career in the public service isn't for everyone. But it is for you if you're someone who wants work that matters. It's for you if you want work that makes an impact and makes British Columbia better. It's for you if you want a place to build a career that gives you hundreds of different opportunities all with the same employer. It's for you if you want to work with colleagues and an employer that value the full diversity of ideas, perspectives, experiences and identities that define our province and its people.

**Working here, we get to build careers that
build our province in real, meaningful ways.**

Working here, we get to build careers that build our province in real, meaningful ways. The context in which we work today requires a level of collaboration, innovation and dedication that constantly pushes us to rethink how we do our jobs. It requires us to work differently, and to recruit for and develop talented people with different perspectives, skillsets and mindsets. Whether you are currently an employee or are interested in building a career with us, this is the most dynamic and creative period in the long history of the BC Public Service.

To ensure we can continue to attract, develop and retain the talented people we need, over the next three years we will:

- Take a more active outreach approach with applicants to build awareness of positions that are in demand or support government's mandate.

- Ensure educational and experiential requirements are clearly and appropriately aligned with the accountabilities of a job, so we can recruit the best possible candidates.

- Cultivate an inclusive recruitment environment that results in a more diverse BC Public Service, including promotion of more inclusive hiring practices and updating HR systems and forms to reflect gender diversity.

- Enhance the Pacific Leaders Employee Scholarship Program to improve the employee experience by simplifying the eligibility criteria and modernizing the application process.

- Develop a new Corporate Learning Framework to clearly articulate corporate and ministry learning and development roles and responsibilities.

- Enhance our commitment to Indigenous reconciliation by partnering with ministries to expand the House of Indigenous Learning resources.

- Improve and expand learning opportunities for employees by piloting new approaches to self-directed learning and development.

- Establish a corporate leadership development framework that provides a consistent approach to supporting aspiring leaders and helping current leaders refresh their skills.

- Enhancing the performance management experience by encouraging a strengths-based, engagement-focused, developmental approach.

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- Support ongoing capacity-building of supervisors, managers and leaders through corporate learning and development programs so they can confidently engage and develop employees.
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- Establish a diversity and inclusion resource centre and develop a resource toolkit to support ministries, divisions and branches.
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- Create a “conflict-competent” culture by developing and facilitating training and services that expand conflict management knowledge, skills and abilities.
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- Work with ministries to build safety-oriented cultures that support psychological health and employee well-being in the workplace.
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- Implement a robust, data-driven workforce planning process to identify and address current and future talent needs for the BC Public Service.
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- Strengthen knowledge transfer practices to ensure we retain the knowledge of our employees as they move in and out of the workforce.
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A MODERN PUBLIC SERVICE



The context in which we work is changing more rapidly than ever. Citizens look to government to solve increasingly complex problems – problems that reach beyond the boundaries of our province and beyond the responsibility of any one government ministry’s mandate. In addition, we face the rapidly shifting impact of technology, greater expectations of transparency and citizen input, and the need to maintain and improve existing services and programs.

Harnessing the potential of emerging technologies and the wealth of data and information available to us is part of how we continue to meet this challenge. It means being a public service that understands its role and relevance in a digitally-enabled and rapidly changing world. But being a modern public service is more than just applying this or that technology. It means being a public service that is able to respond to how the society we serve is changing – and finding the right balance in how we deliver that service, whether digitally or in person.

A modern public service means we're exploring different ways of working.

A modern public service means we're exploring different ways of working. It's a public service that is better able to anticipate and respond to emerging issues and opportunities, and not being perceived as a barrier to innovation and progress. We need to become a more nimble public service so we can quickly deploy new solutions and effectively adapt as the social, economic and technological landscape continues to shift. Our ability to do this was proven during the pandemic response. The challenge is to make this agility more of the regular operational DNA of the public service and not something deployed only in times of crisis.

A modern public service designs and develops services, policies and programs through experimentation and data-informed research and analysis. A modern public service is one that can balance the potential of technology without sacrificing the priorities of service, privacy and security. Above all, a modern public service is actually much more human – using innovative methods, tools and approaches to better understand, respond to and even anticipate the diverse needs and expectations of citizens.

To continue to build a more responsive, adaptable and modern public service, we will:

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- Provide new and enhanced employee tools, training and resources to support greater collaboration and more effective ways of working across the public service and with partners.
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- Enhance our capability to deliver quality policy advice and outcomes with targeted initiatives to identify and develop policy professionals and by fostering a public service culture that values policy excellence.
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- Expand the adoption and application of behavioural insights, strategic foresight and other data-driven, evidence-based approaches to policy and program design.
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- Introduce a new Framework for Change and supporting resources to continue advancing the shift to a more innovative and experimental public service culture.
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- Enable employees to safely, reliably and efficiently access the data they need to understand complex issues.
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- Pilot an integrated HR delivery model that introduces a more holistic and coordinated approach to delivering human resource services within the BC Public Service.
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- Develop new self-service applications and automated forms so employees can access the HR information, programs or services they need quickly and easily.
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- Update our careers website to make it easier to find and apply for public service jobs online.
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- Encourage and enable public servants to use active transportation to commute to and from work by providing convenient end-of-trip facilities at government buildings for all newly constructed office spaces or those undergoing a major renovation. Planning and installation will be informed with baseline data and consultation with employees.
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- Provide employees with modern workspaces that provide choice and flexibility through a more effective mix of technology, space and culture.
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- Pilot shared workspace options with a 10,000 square-foot building in Langford and at the Capital Park-2 location in the Legislative Precinct in Victoria.
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- Expand the use of the BC Services Card to support access to a wider range of government services, both in-person and online.
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- Support companies to quickly and securely share trusted and verifiable business information with other levels of government, suppliers, banks and partners.
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- Make it easier for people to access the government services they count on, no matter where they live in the province by expanding their options beyond online, in-person and phone to include verify-by-video, SMS/text, co-browsing and web chat.
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- Transform our approach to engaging British Columbians in dialogue about improving the policies and services that affect them.
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We need to become a more nimble public service so we can quickly deploy new solutions and effectively adapt as the social, economic and technological landscape continues to shift.

REMAINING TRUE TO OUR VALUES



Being a trusted, talented and modern public service requires us to constantly adapt to the world around us. We need to be responsive to the emerging issues and opportunities that present themselves. At the same time, there are many aspects of our work that endure and need not change. One of these is the set of BC Public Service Corporate Values defined by our employees: courage, passion, teamwork, service, accountability, curiosity and, above all, integrity.

These values were mapped out more than a decade ago, but they are increasingly relevant in today's world as we face ever more complex challenges to our work and how we do it. By fully embracing these values in how we approach our jobs as individual professionals and how we reimagine our collective role, we can evolve while remaining true to who and what we are as a public service.



Integrity

Above all else, uphold the Standards of Conduct by working impartially, ethically, and respectfully.



Service

Serve the needs, interests and expectations of the public and each other.



Curiosity

Ask questions. Learn different ways to do things. Be open to new ideas. Work with creativity and imagination.



Accountability

Be responsible. Show tenacity to overcome obstacles. Focus on outcomes. Take ownership of decisions and actions.



Teamwork

Collaborate. Seek out and value new ideas and different perspectives. Cultivate trust and respect others.



Passion

Take pride in our work. Lead by example. Motivate others to succeed.



Courage

Take thoughtful risks. Speak up and empower others to do their best.

How do we each apply our passion, curiosity, courage and sense of teamwork, service and accountability in a way that upholds the integrity required of us as impartial public servants?

We cannot be a more creative, effective and innovative public service without living these values – and living these values compels us to be all those things. To harness the full potential and richness of a more diverse and inclusive public service, we need to unleash the true spirit of these values. And being true to that spirit will also inevitably make us a more inclusive place to work. Our values compel us to always strive to be better, and at the same time they are an integral part of what makes us better.

One of the unique challenges of being a public servant is that it requires each of us to set aside our own personal perspectives, opinions and interests in favour of the public interest as represented by a democratically elected government. That is the frame of reference in which we apply the public service values – how do we each apply our passion, curiosity, courage and sense of teamwork, service and accountability in a way that upholds the integrity required of us as impartial public servants?

In an ever-changing and often uncertain context, that can be all the more challenging. But these values are stars by which we can navigate even when our journey takes us beyond what is familiar and comfortable. They help us remain true to our enduring purpose even as we explore the full promise and potential of the public service that lies on the horizon.



Where ideas work