



Public Service Commission  
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du Canada

## **New Hires Survey Technical Paper #3**

# **Retaining New Hires in the Federal Public Service**

**The future career plans of new hires with  
a focus on those already intending to  
leave within five years**

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## Executive Summary

In response to an increasingly competitive labour market and changes in the demographic profile of the Canadian population, the Federal Public Service (FPS) is pursuing new strategies to recruit and retain employees. In support of the latter aim, this report focuses on the retention of newly hired employees. It is based on research conducted by the Research Directorate of the Public Service Commission in a survey of recently hired indeterminate public servants in January and February 2001.

The New Hires Survey examined the recruitment experiences, job satisfaction and career plans of a representative sample of the 8743 people hired into the indeterminate core of the FPS during the 12 month period between July 1, 1999 and June 30, 2000.

Several important issues regarding retention are revealed in this report. Most importantly, over one quarter (27%) of newly hired respondents indicate an intention to leave within five years. A greater proportion of men (30%) than women (24%) indicated this intention. Particularly at risk of intending to leave are those in the scientific and professional (34%), administrative and foreign service (31%) and operational (30%) categories.

Differences were also found between those who were internally versus externally recruited. Recruits from the external labour market were much more likely to indicate an intention to leave overall and within a short period of time (1-3 years).

Level of educational attainment is associated with intentions to leave the FPS. Those with university degree qualifications are much more likely to indicate that they intend to leave within five years. For example, 31% of those with a bachelor's degree indicate an intention to leave compared to 26% of those with a university diploma or certificate below the bachelor's level.

Many respondents were concerned about the use of their educational qualifications in their jobs and this was associated with intentions to leave the FPS within three years. Similarly, concerns with promotional opportunities, having a say in decisions which impact on one's job and support of career development were related to leaving intentions.

There are significant differences between the extent of Internet usage and intentions to remain in the FPS. Those who did not have access to the Internet are much less likely to indicate an intention to leave within five years.

The top four reasons for intending to leave are the following: to make better use of their skills and abilities, to earn more money, to find a job where the impact of their work is visible, and to increase opportunities for advancement.

This detailed report provides useful insights into the issues influencing retention among newly hired employees and as such, highlights key areas for improvement.

## 1.0 Background

In March 2000 a preliminary report was released on findings from a survey of newly hired indeterminate employees in the federal Public Service (FPS).<sup>1</sup> The current report explores in further detail the issue of retention among those survey participants. Questions that are addressed include, how long do employees intend to remain in the FPS? Do intentions vary by age, educational attainment levels or employment equity groups? And what are the reasons for wanting to leave the FPS?

The New Hires Survey (NHS) examined the recruitment experiences, job satisfaction and career plans of a representative sample of the 8743 people hired into the federal Public Service's indeterminate workforce between July 1, 1999 and June 30, 2000.<sup>2</sup>

Individuals are recruited into the FPS indeterminate workforce from the external labour market or internally from the term population.<sup>3</sup> During the one year period under investigation 3135 individuals or 37% were recruited from the external labour market and the remaining 5608 individuals or 63% were recruited from the term population.

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<sup>1</sup> McDougall, Brian; Nehme, Micheline and van Gaalen, Rolina (March 2001) *Joining the Core Workforce: A Preliminary Report on the Survey of Newly Hired Indeterminate Employees in the Federal Public Service* (<http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/research>).

<sup>2</sup> Although this survey focused on the FPS as defined in the *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA), those who were new hires (N=724) at the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) during that time period were also invited to participate in the study.

<sup>3</sup> Those holding term appointments prior to becoming part of the indeterminate workforce are referred to as being a part of the term population, or sometimes as 'term conversions'.

## 2.0 Methodology

Results from the New Hires Survey are based on an analysis of responses to a questionnaire by 990 public servants during a three-week period in January and February 2001. The questionnaire consisted of about 100 items covering a wide range of issues related to the recruitment and retention of people newly hired into the indeterminate workforce.

Although designed by the Research Directorate of the Public Service Commission (PSC), the survey was administered via the Internet by the Ipsos-Reid polling company. Each respondent received a letter of invitation to participate in the study by E-mail, a unique personal identification number, and the Internet address of the survey. Subjects were sent several reminder notices encouraging them to participate in the study.

## 2.1 Population and Sample

The study population consisted of 8743 people recruited into the core workforce between July 1, 1999 and June 30, 2000, and 1867 people recruited into the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) during this period. Table 1 summarizes the population profile.

**Table 1:**  
New Hires in the Indeterminate Workforce of the FPS, July 1999 – June 2000

	External Recruits	Term Conversions	Total
<b>Occupational Categories</b>			
Executive	29	3	32
Scientific and Professional	505	770	1275
Administrative and Foreign Service	1221	1746	2967
Technical	378	347	725
Administrative Support	474	1973	2447
Operations	527	168	1295
Others	1	1	2
<b>Regions</b>			
Atlantic	231	422	653
Quebec (except NCR)	210	464	674
National Capital Region (except NCR)	1282	2479	3761
Ontario (except NCR)	234	861	1095
Prairies	517	456	973
Alberta	252	361	613
British Columbia	340	506	846
Territories	69	57	126
<b>Employment Equity Groups</b>			
Women	991	2690	3681
Persons with Disabilities	50	183	233
Visible Minorities	228	391	619
Aboriginal Peoples	117	270	387
<b>Agencies outside the PSEA</b>			
Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA)	783	1074	1867
<b>Totals</b>			
Without CCRA	3135	5608	8743
With CCRA	3928	6682	10610
Source: Data supplied by the Information Management Division of the Public Service Commission			

The sampling procedure was as follows. For new hires in the FPS subject to the PSEA, a representative sample of 4328 people was randomly selected to participate in the study. To facilitate our analysis of the experiences of new hires from the various Employment Equity (EE) groups, we over-sampled by inviting all those who identified themselves as Aboriginal peoples, visible minorities and persons with disabilities to participate.

## **2.2 Survey Respondent Profile**

The 990 respondents in this study obtained their indeterminate jobs in the FPS through two channels of recruitment: over half (52%) were external hires, while the remainder (48%) were recruited from the term population. English was the first language of 67% of all respondents and French for 28% of respondents. The average age of respondents was 36 years of age. This is significantly younger than the overall average for those in the FPS which at the time of the survey was 45 years of age.

More women respondents came from the ranks of the term conversions than the external recruits. Among the new hires from the term population, two thirds (67%) were women. In contrast, only 46% of respondents who were recruited externally were women.

One-third (33%) of all respondents had a bachelor's degree, while 26% had a post-graduate degree (e.g. a master's, professional or doctoral degree). A further 25% had a college/technical certificate or diploma. Only 15% had either high school/apprentice or trade credentials. A larger proportion of university trained new hires entered the core workforce through external recruitment (68%) than from the term population (50%).

The strategy of oversampling Employment Equity (EE) groups resulted in a large representation of Aboriginal peoples (8%), persons with disabilities (4%) and visible minorities (19%) among the respondents.

## **2.3 Distribution of Respondents by Department/Agency and by Region**

Survey respondents were working in numerous departments and agencies. Among those departments and agencies with especially large representations were Human Resources Development Canada (15%), the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (11%) and Public Works and Government Services (7%). Additionally, respondents employed at Statistics Canada accounted for 6% of the responses, while four other departments (i.e. Environment Canada, Justice, Health Canada and Transport Canada) accounted for 5% of the total.

Almost two thirds (68%) of respondents were employed in one of the following two occupational categories: scientific and professional (20%), administrative and foreign service (48%). Only two respondents employed as executives completed the survey. The proportions of the other three occupational categories are as follows: technical (10%), administrative support (20%) and operational (2%). The low response rate among those in the operational category is due to technical constraints such as not having access to E-mail or to the Internet in the workplace.

### 3.0 Survey Results

#### 3.1 Intentions to Remain or Leave

Fully 73% of respondents intend to remain in the federal Public Service for more than five years, whereas 27% of them intend to leave within this period. Among those who plan to leave, more than half (55%, n=145) plan to do so in three to five years, over one third (38%, n=102) intend to stay for one to three years and less than one tenth (7%, n=18) indicate remaining for less than one year.

There is considerable variation in the extent to which those intending to leave were engaged in searching for work. Those who indicated that they would remain for three to five years were not asked to respond to the question regarding their search behavior. Half of those who indicated that they were searching for work were doing so on a casual basis that is, less than three times a week, 43% were not searching for work at all, and only 6% were actively searching for work at least three times a week.

Statistically significant differences were found between how long respondents planned to remain in the FPS and the intensity of their searches. Among those who were planning to remain for less than a year 56% were searching on a casual basis and 22% were actively searching for work. In contrast, those planning to remain for between one and three years were almost equally divided between casually searching (50%) and not currently searching for work (48%).

#### 3.2 Retention and Recruitment into FPS

There were also differences in intentions to remain between employees who were internally versus externally recruited. Those who were recruited from the external labour market were much more likely to indicate an intention to leave overall and within a short period of time (1-3 years) (see Table 2).

**Table 2:**  
Intentions to Remain in the Federal Public Service By Mechanism of Recruitment

How long do you intend to remain in the federal public service?	Mechanism by which respondents were recruited		Total
	Internal Recruit (%)	External Recruit (%)	%
Less than one year	1	3	2
1-3 years	7	13	10
3-5 years	13	16	15
5 or more years	79	68	73
Total Percent	100	100	100
Total Number	478	512	990

#### 3.3 Gender

Respondents’ intentions regarding remaining in the FPS varied by gender with 70% of men compared to 76% of women indicating that they would stay for more than five years. The largest differences on this indicator between the sexes was among those who indicated remaining between 1-3 years, with 13% of men versus 8% of women indicating this duration.

In examining the relationship between how respondents were recruited and their intentions to leave or stay, the gender differences reported above hold true for females only. Specifically, 81% of women who were internally recruited indicated remaining for more than five years, whereas 68% of women who were externally recruited indicated this.

### 3.4 Age

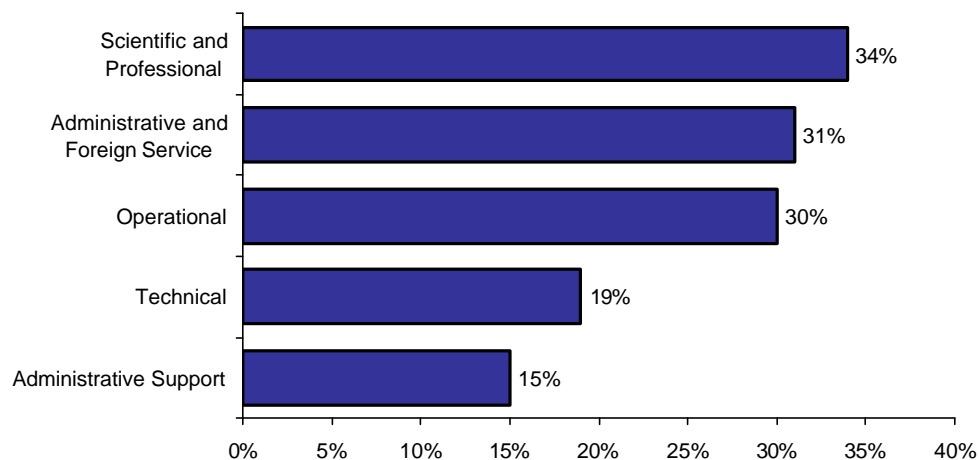
The average age among those who plan on staying in the FPS for five or more years is 37. In contrast, the overall average age of those who intend to leave within five years is 34. Respondents who intend to leave in one to three years have the lowest average age (33), whereas those who plan to leave within one year or in three to five years have an average age of 34. These results indicate that new hires who are older are more likely to remain in the FPS, while those who are younger are already intending to leave.

### 3.5 Employment Equity Group

Differences across Employment Equity groups regarding intentions to remain were found for the visible minority group, but not for recruits who identified themselves as Aboriginal peoples or persons with disabilities. Over one third (34%) of visible minority versus one quarter (25%) of other respondents indicated an intention to leave within five years. No statistically significant differences in leaving intentions were found based on first official language identified by respondents.

### 3.6 Occupational Categories

**Graph 1: Intentions to Leave by Occupational Groups  
(n=979)**



In comparing occupational categories significant differences are revealed. Those most likely to stay in the FPS for five or more years include respondents in the administrative support (85%) and technical (82%) categories (see Graph 1). In contrast, approximately one third of those in the scientific and professional (34%), administrative and foreign service (31%) and operational (30%)



categories are intending to leave within five years. These findings suggest that newly hired knowledge and operational workers are at risk of leaving the FPS. These two categories represent two polar opposites in terms of work content and conditions. This finding warrants further investigation.

Level of educational attainment is strongly associated with intentions to leave within five years. Those with university qualifications at the bachelor level and above are much more likely to indicate this intention. For example, of those with a bachelor's degree 31% indicate an intention to leave compared to 26% of those with a university diploma or certificate below the bachelor's level. In contrast, only 18% of those with college, CEGEP or technical qualifications are intending to leave.

### **3.7 Experiences prior to joining the Federal Public Service**

There are notable differences between respondents depending on their main activity twelve months prior to entering the FPS. Specifically, 36% of those who were going to school compared to 25% of those who were working indicated an intention to leave within five years. In contrast, among those who had been looking for work in the previous year, only 20% indicated an intention to leave. The lowest likelihood of leaving (9%) was indicated by those who had been taking care of family in the previous year.

Surprisingly, there were no statistically significant differences between those who had been previously employed in the private versus public and not-for-profit sectors in terms of intentions to leave the federal Public Service. Examining this indicator in finer detail, no differences were found between those in the various sectors including the private sector, federal employers outside the public service, other public service employers, the broader public service, not-for-profit employers, federal public service and other categories. Moreover, those who had been in permanent positions were not anymore likely to intend on leaving than those who were not previously permanently employed.

The match between respondents' field of study and their previous main job prior to entering the Public Service is associated with their intentions to leave. Specifically, a larger proportion (29%) of those who were in jobs which were completely related or related to their fields of study or long term career plans are more likely to indicate leaving within five years than their counterparts (22%) who were in jobs that were unrelated or completely unrelated to their educational backgrounds. This finding is clearly counter-intuitive because other findings indicate that when employees feel that their educational qualifications are not being utilized they are more likely to plan on leaving. One possibility regarding this finding is that those who feel that their qualifications are matched to their job would be easily able to find a similar job outside the FPS. Whereas, those who are not as well matched may believe that it is difficult to find a job that is related to their fields and thus, intend on staying in the FPS for other reasons, such as the variety of work available.

### **3.8 Job searches**

The intensity with which respondents searched for their jobs previous to joining the FPS is associated with whether or not they intend to remain. Of those who searched for work on a casual

basis (less than three times a week) one third (33%) had an intention to leave within five years compared to those who searched on an active basis (three or more times a week) (21%) or were not searching for work (22%).

Respondents were more likely to indicate an intention to leave within five years if they had searched for work on other job websites. Over one fifth (22%) of respondents who had placed their names on an inventory for a FPS job compared to almost one third (31%) of those who had not submitted their names indicated an intention to leave. The differences on these two indicators suggest that those with exposure to opportunities available more broadly as advertised on the Internet are more likely to leave within five years. Similarly, those who are more familiar with FPS recruitment methods, such as the inventory of jobs, are more likely to indicate an intention to stay for five or more years.

In reference to the job search that brought them into the FPS, respondents were asked which sector of the economy was their first choice to work in. Notably, as Table 3 shows, among those who indicated that the private sector was their first choice 51% intended to leave within five years. This means that an equally large proportion (49%) of those whose first choice was the private sector indicated that they would stay in the FPS. In contrast, as one would expect, those whose first choice was the FPS had a high likelihood (86%) of indicating an intention to stay for five years or more, while only 14% of these individuals were planning to leave within this time frame.

**Table 3:**  
Intentions to leave or stay in the FPS according to first choice of sector

Intentions	Sector of first choice during job search (selected sectors only)	
	Private Sector (%)	Federal Public Service (%)
Leave within 5 years	51	14
Stay for 5 or more years	49	86
Total	100 (n=195)	100 (n=383)

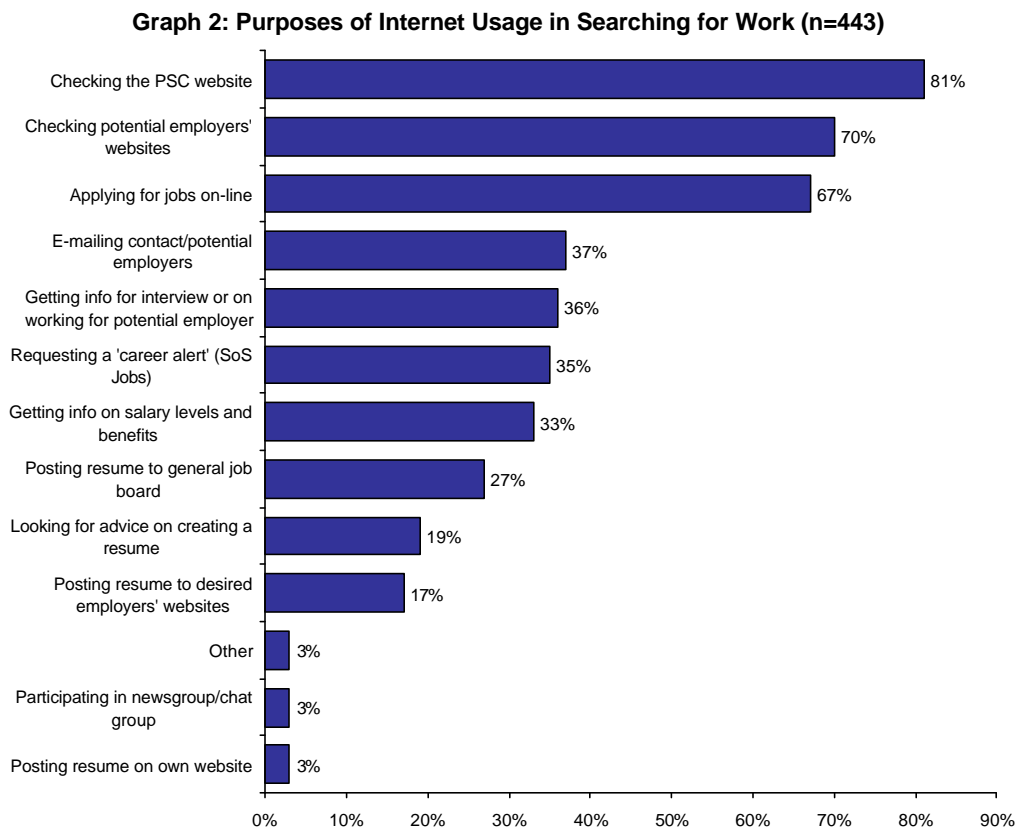
The average number of job offers from external employers was 1.5. However, as Table 4 indicates, almost two thirds (65%) of respondents had one or fewer job offers. There were no differences in intentions to stay or leave according to the number of offers respondents received from external employers.

**Table 4:**  
Number of Job Offers from External Employers

Number of Offers	Percent
0	40
1	25
2	21
3	11
4	3
5	3
6+	2
Total	100 (n=591)

### 3.9 Use of the Internet in job searches

Internet usage varied among respondents. Over one fifth (22%) of respondents did not have access to the Internet, 17% had access but did not use it in their job searches and 61% had access and did use the Internet. There are significant differences between the extent of Internet usage and intentions to remain in the FPS. Those who did not have access to the Internet are much less likely – only 13% – to indicate an intention to leave within five years. This may be due to having less of an awareness of opportunities available in both public and private sectors. Alternatively, it may be the case that those in jobs which do not have access to the Internet are less accustomed to searching for work via the Internet.



In contrast, 36% and 31% of those with Internet access who did not and did use it in their searches, respectively, indicated an intention to leave. This higher likelihood of planning to leave suggests that individuals who have access – whether they use it or not – have a more developed awareness of career opportunities. Again, as above, it may be also the case that these individuals are in jobs which rely on electronic communication to a greater extent and thus utilized this medium in their job searches.

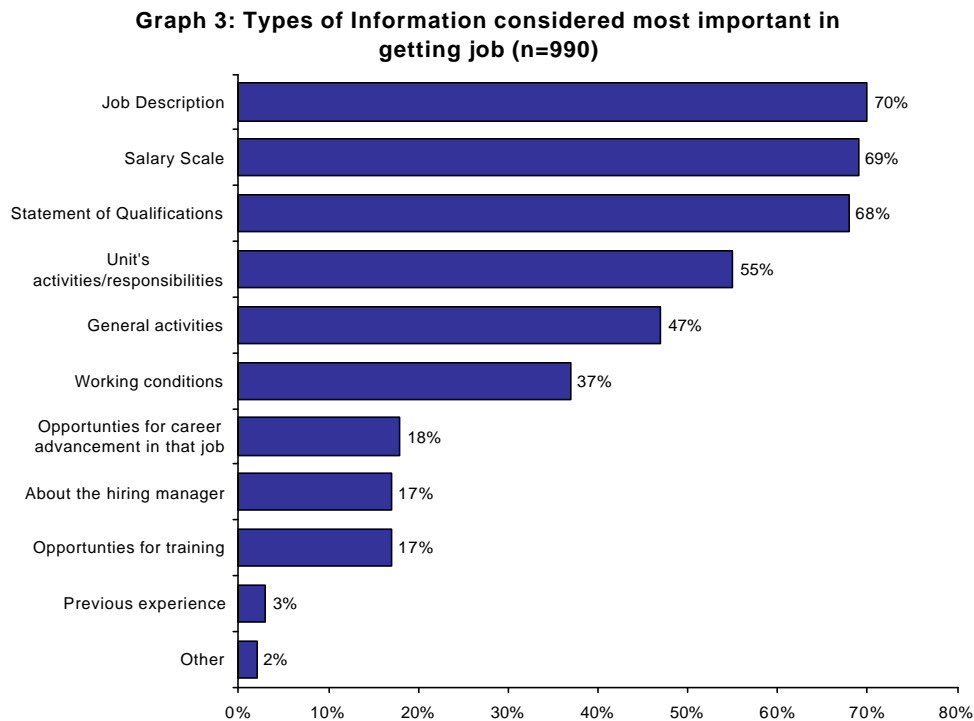
Examining the differences in leaving intentions by simply whether or not respondents used the Internet in their job searches reveals that significantly fewer individuals (22%) who did not use the Internet had an intention to leave within five years compared to those who did use the Internet (31%). However, among those who did use the Internet, the extent to which they did is not related to their intentions to leave or stay in the FPS.

The Internet was used for a number of purposes in respondents' job searches including: E-mail communication with contacts and potential employers; applying for jobs on-line; checking the PSC website (jobs.gc.ca); and requesting a career alert (SoS jobs). Graph 2 illustrates the frequency with which respondents used the Internet for a range of purposes.

Only one type of Internet use was associated with intentions to leave or stay. Specifically, 42% of those who used E-mail to communicate with contacts or potential employers compared to 25% of those who did not, indicated an intention to leave within five years.

### 3.10 Information prior to joining the FPS

Respondents were asked to indicate and rank the three most important sources of information in finding their first job in the FPS. Graph 3 clearly shows that the majority of respondents identified having a job description, salary scale, statement of qualifications and information on the unit's activities and responsibilities were all important to them.



A relationship between having information and intentions to leave or stay was found for two of the indicators. Those respondents who had a general description of the work unit's activities and responsibilities were more likely to remain than those who did not have such a description. However, having a general description of the department or agency's activities did not increase respondents' likelihood of staying. In fact, 70% of those who had a description compared to 75% of those who did not, indicated an intention to stay for five or more years. The difference, therefore, is that having information at the more detailed level, that of the unit, increases the chances of one remaining, while having information at a more general level, that of the department, has the opposite effect.

Respondents were asked to indicate, in order of importance, their top three reasons for deciding to accept their first job in the FPS. The reasons most frequently cited as important are the following: to make use of knowledge, skills and abilities (40%); opportunity to get into the FPS (40%); job security (35%); and opportunity to work in one's field of study (32%).

Respondents were less likely to indicate an intention to leave within five years if they indicated they valued job security (21% versus 30%), and opportunities for advancement (21% versus 29%). In contrast, those who were more likely to have intentions of leaving within five years considered the following reasons important: to gain experience in this type of work (44% versus 22%); the opportunity to work in their field of study (35% versus 23%); and if it was the only job offer they received (39% versus 25%).

### **3.11 Methods of recruitment and intentions to remain**

Respondents' employment status prior to entering the FPS is related to their intentions to leave. Over half (56%) of those who were consultants from external firms indicated an intention to leave within five years. Over one quarter of those who were not working for the FPS in any capacity (29%) and exactly one quarter of those who were temporary workers from an outside agency intended to leave within five years. In contrast, smaller proportions of those who had been working as casual employees (20%) or as students (FSWEP/CO-OP) (23%) planned on leaving.

Statistically significant differences were also found between whether or not one was recruited through the public service recruitment program and intentions to leave or stay. Almost half (44%) of those who had been recruited through this program indicated an intention to leave within five years; whereas only about one quarter (23%) of those who had not been recruited this way indicated this intention. Information regarding the hiring manager, for example when one met him/her for the first time, was not related to intentions to leave or stay.

### **3.12 Retention and Job Satisfaction**

Overall, respondents were satisfied with many aspects of working in the FPS. Large proportions of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the following: the FPS offers a wide variety of jobs (87%); has excellent benefits (87%); offers sufficient flexibility to balance work and personal life (87%); is committed to diversity in the workplace (86%); does really interesting work (86%); and has a good quality work environment (76%). Half or more of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the FPS values employees (64%), encourages independent thinking (51%), and has good employee morale (50%). However, there was strong disagreement or disagreement with three statements: the FPS makes hiring decisions in a reasonable period (75%), has competitive salaries compared to the private sector (53%), and is open to change (52%).

Closely examining the indicators for which there was high disagreement reveals relationships between these attitudes and leaving intentions (Table 5). As one would expect, those respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed that hiring decisions are made in a reasonable time were much more likely to indicate an intention to leave within five years. This was also the case among those who disagreed or strongly disagreed that the FPS has competitive salaries and is open to change.

**Table 5:**  
Satisfaction with aspects of working in the FPS by intentions to remain

Intentions to remain	Makes hiring decision in reasonable time		Has competitive salaries		Open to change	
	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Leave	24	35	31	41	35	40
Stay	76	66	69	59	65	60
Total	100(n=366)	100 (n=371)	100 (n=338)	100 (n=187)	100(n=394)	100(n=117))

In terms of overall satisfaction, 64% of respondents agreed and 20% strongly agreed with the statement, ‘I would recommend the FPS to my family members or friends as a good place to work’. Not surprisingly, those who disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement were much more likely, 62% and 68% respectively, to indicate an intention to leave within five years. In contrast, only 7% of those who strongly agreed and 25% of those who agreed with this statement indicated an intention to leave within this period.

Taking a closer look at satisfaction by focusing on respondents’ actual jobs done, there is a high degree of agreement on several indicators. A large proportion of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements: in my work unit my colleagues treat me with respect (95%); individuals are treated as part of the team regardless of differences (89%); my department/agency is a good place to work (87%); I know what my manager expects from me (82%); and I get adequate recognition from my manager when I do a good job (78%). There was a high level of disagreement on eight statements: my present job makes full use of my education (36%); I have a good opportunity to get a promotion (36%); I can complete my workload during my regular working hours (35%); my department/agency does a good job in supporting employee career development (32%); I have a say in decisions and actions that impact on my work (31%); in my work unit, the process of selecting a person for a position is done fairly (27%); I get the training I need to do my job (25%); I have the resources necessary to do my job (24%); and I am satisfied with my career with the FPS (23%).

These results warrant a more detailed analysis of the five most problematic areas, which are: utilization of respondents’ educational qualifications; opportunities for promotion; input regarding decisions affecting respondents’ work; and support of career development. All of these indicators are associated with intentions to leave the FPS, except for the one regarding workload issues. Table 6 below summarizes these results.

**Table 6:**  
Satisfaction with job on various indicators and intentions to remain in FPS

Intentions to remain in FPS	Job makes use of education		Good opportunity for promotion		Have say in decisions which impact on work		Dept/Agency supports career development	
	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Leave	32	51	33	45	27	40	34	37
Stay	68	49	67	55	73	60	66	63
Total	100 (n=290)	100 (n=70)	100 (n=292)	100 (n=65)	100 (n=259)	100 (n=48)	100 (n=253)	100 (n=60)

Clearly, many respondents were concerned with the use of their educational qualifications in their jobs and this was associated to their intentions to remain in the FPS. Similarly, concerns with promotional opportunities, having a say in decisions which impact on one’s job and support of career development in their department or agency were related to leaving intentions.

Since we know that respondents with higher educational attainment are more likely to indicate an intention to leave within five years, the four indicators above were cross- tabulated with educational attainment to determine if there is a correlation. Satisfaction with two of these indicators and leaving behavior vary by educational group (Table 7). For example, among those who disagreed or strongly disagreed that their job makes full use of their educational qualifications, those with high school, CEGEP or college credentials were less likely to indicate an intention to leave within five years compared to those with a bachelor or post-graduate degree. Given these results, closer attention needs to be paid to making use of individuals’ educational qualifications and highlighting or even creating opportunities for promotion overall, and specifically for the more highly educated segment of the FPS workforce.

**Table 7:**  
Satisfaction with job on various indicators and intentions to remain in FPS by educational group

Intentions to remain in FPS	Job makes use of education		Good opportunity for promotion	
	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Leave -- H.S. & College	25	38	25	38
-- B.A. & Post-Grad	36	57	40	52
Stay -- H.S. & College	76	62	75	62
-- B.A. & Post-Grad	64	43	60	49
Total -- H.S. & College	100 (n=102)	100 (n=21)	100 (n=134)	100 (n=29)
Total -- B.A. & Post-Grad	100 (n=183)	100 (n=49)	100 (n=134)	100 (n=33)

### 3.13 Reasons for New Hires planning to leave

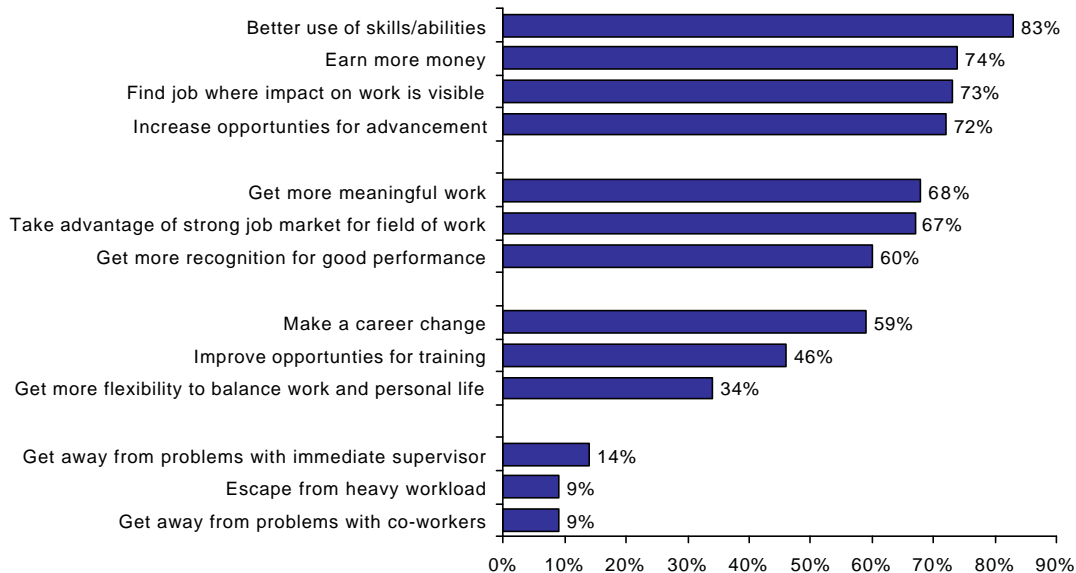
Among those with an intention to leave the FPS within three years a number of reasons were indicated as important or very important regarding this decision (Graph 4). The top four reasons are the following: to make better use of their skills and abilities (84%); to earn more money (74%); to find a job where the impact of their work is visible (73%); and to increase opportunities for advancement (72%). Obviously, there is a fair amount of overlap between responses to this question and the one regarding satisfaction with one’s job. Approximately two thirds of those respondents who intend to leave the FPS do so because they want to get more meaningful work (68%); take advantage of a strong job market for their field of work (67%); and get more recognition for good performance (60%).

One half or less of those intending to leave the FPS considered the following three reasons important or very important to their decision: finding a job in their field of study (48%); improving opportunities for training (46%); and getting more flexibility in order to balance work and personal time (34%).

Concerns regarding problems with immediate supervisors were seen as important or very important to their decisions to leave among 14% of these respondents. A smaller proportion of

these respondents identified that problems with co-workers (9%) or wanting to escape from a heavy workload (9%) were important or very important to them.

**Graph 4: Reasons considered important or very important to intention to leave FPS (n=120)**



Cross-tabulating reasons for intending to leave by educational groups reveals interesting results. For example, wanting to leave in order to make better use of their skills was more frequently indicated by those with a bachelor or post-graduate degree (89%) than those with high school, CEGEP or college qualifications (69%). This result is as one would expect given that those with higher qualifications are probably working in jobs with a greater degree of intrinsic satisfaction.

In contrast, those with university credentials (69%) are less likely than those with high school or college diplomas (78%) to indicate that their reason for planning to leave is that they want increased opportunities for advancement. One reason for this surprising result may be that those without university qualifications perceive their opportunities for career advancement to be limited because intermediate and senior positions frequently require a university degree. There is a similar difference between these two educational groups in regards to the importance placed on wanting to leave so that they can earn more money. Over three quarters (78%) of those with high school or college credentials consider compensation important or very important in their decision to leave compared to 70% of those with Bachelor's or post-graduate qualifications. Again, this is counter-intuitive since those with university degrees could probably earn higher salaries outside of the FPS. As mentioned above, those with high school or college credentials may be limited in their career advancement in the FPS and thus, could also be limited in their earnings potential.



## **4.0 Conclusions: Some lessons for retaining new hires in the FPS**

This report has highlighted several areas of concern regarding retaining newly hired employees. Although almost three quarters (73%) of new hires intend to stay for more than five years a significant proportion (27%) intend on leaving within five years. This presents a serious problem in terms of replacing these workers, especially at a time when the size of labour force is decreasing.

Areas worth pursuing in terms of increasing retention are the better use of employees' skills and abilities, compensation, making a connection between the work people do and the visibility of results, and increasing opportunities for advancement. Strategies for improving the use of employees' skills and abilities would not only benefit employees, but also contribute to creating a more effective and productive workforce. Moreover, as the demographic profile of the FPS continues to change and positions become available, employees, with guidance from managers and other staff, need to be prepared to seize these opportunities. As such, greater assistance can and needs to be provided to newly hired employees in developing their career plans.

The New Hires Survey only accessed those individuals who were still with the FPS in January/February 2001. Therefore, we do not know the characteristics, attitudes, and intentions of those who were newly hired between June 1999 and July 2000, but had already left the FPS by the time the survey was conducted. Their reasons may have been different than those who remained; however such an inquiry requires a separate investigation. Implementing an exit survey for those who do leave would provide this information.