

**April, 2005**

**To: All Employment Insurance Board of Referees Chairpersons and Members**

**Subject: Employment Insurance Board of Referees Training – Survey Results**

We would like to thank the Board of Referees Chairpersons and members who participated in the recent Employment Insurance Board of Referees Training Survey.

This is the first time we have surveyed all Board of Referees members and we were very pleased with the high response rate.

Ipsos-Reid, an independent polling firm, conducted the survey in order to assist the Board of Referees Training Curriculum Steering Committee to develop recommendations to improve the training and development curriculum.

In addition, the survey was also designed to provide insights on how to update and strengthen the training curriculum and continuing information for the Board of Referees at all stages and to help identify ongoing training needs.

Ipsos-Reid mailed out a printed copy of a questionnaire to 939 potential survey respondents (all active BOR members in September, 2004). A total of 637 completed surveys were returned to Ipsos-Reid, a response rate of 68%.

A summary of the survey results follows:

#### Orientation

- Most respondents acknowledge that it would be helpful to be able to consult with Chairpersons and members who have had a longer tenure with the Board.

#### Technical Training

- There is a strong consensus among respondents that the observation of a Board of Referees hearing was a useful experience. Respondents were divided as to whether the observation should occur before or after the classroom training; general comments strongly suggest that new board members and Chairpersons should be allowed to observe more than one day of hearings.

### Hearing Skills Training

- There is a strong recognition as to the value of receiving refresher training on hearing skills previously acquired. Most respondents indicated that training refreshers should be held separately from the annual information sessions.

### Decision Writing Skills Training

- Employer and worker members expressed high levels of interest in participating in a decision writing course. Most members would prefer to attend the decision writing course jointly with Chairpersons, in order to benefit from the same training foundation as their colleagues.

### Annual Information Session

- Respondents (excluding Chairpersons and members from Lower Mainland British Columbia, Toronto and Montreal who were not polled given the size of these centres) tend to agree that they would prefer that annual information sessions be held jointly with Chairpersons and members of other board centres.

### Other Areas of Inquiry

In addition to the expressed interest in ongoing training or continuous learning, the survey revealed:

- a strong interest in receiving regular updates on new jurisprudence and other Board of Referees issues;
- that respondents would appreciate a help line and web-based resource for appeals related questions as well as a reference guide;
- a strong interest in diversity training (70% of respondents); and
- that Board of Referees Chairpersons and members are clearly familiar with computers. Fully nine in ten respondents acknowledged having computer access with a slightly smaller proportion (83%) saying they actually use a computer.

### Next Steps

As previously reported, the Steering Committee, comprising two Board of Referees members and one Chairperson, both Commissioners, the Director of Appeals, the Chief of Appeals Policy and a regional appeals manager, has been established to move the review forward.

The Steering Committee met in January 2005 to review the survey results. A working group has now been created to develop recommendations for an integrated national curriculum that examines content, methodology and evaluation with the focus on ongoing learning. This working group met during the first week of March 2005 to begin its work.

Attached is a copy of the survey questions as well as an extract of the survey report outlining the research objectives, methodology, key findings and the executive summary which will be posted on the Board of Referees web site shortly.

We look forward to your continued support and input as we move forward with improvements to the Board of Referees Training Curriculum.

*Original signed by*

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