

Ethics in the BC Public Service

Annual Report 2024



Where ideas work



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Executive Message

As Head of the BC Public Service, I am inspired by the integrity and commitment of BC Public Service employees who have chosen to dedicate their careers in service to people in British Columbia. The Oath of Employment and Standards of Conduct are the foundation of this commitment and set us apart from other organizations. The Oath reinforces the trust placed in us by the people in British Columbia, and highlights the importance of honesty, integrity and ethics in all we do. Our ethical behaviours guide us in how we choose to be responsive, flexible, inclusive and forward thinking in the ways we adapt our services to the changing needs of the province and its people.

Inherent in remaining an employer of choice is our focus on improving our workplace culture while we grow and evolve as an organization. We are committed to ensuring a safe, inclusive and ethical workplace where everyone feels empowered to speak up. As leaders, it is our responsibility to nurture a culture of ethical integrity and psychological safety within our organization. We must lead by example, demonstrating our commitment to honesty, transparency and respect in all our interactions. By fostering an environment where employees feel valued, heard and empowered, we can cultivate a culture of trust and collaboration that drives our organization's success.

We must continue to prioritize this important work while being transparent with our plans, learning and successes to ensure we maintain public trust and confidence. I invite you to join me in doing so by reviewing the 2024 Ethics in the BC Public Service Annual Report. This annual report on ethics and integrity in the BC Public Service is part

of that transparency and accountability process. It is framed by our shared approach to upholding an ethical framework as an organization and is enabled by the commitment and daily choices we all make as BC Public Service employees.

In this report, we highlight corporate ethics program metrics and share improvements and innovation from across the BC Public Service. I hope you see reflected here our collective efforts and dedication to championing an ethical and socially responsible BC Public Service.



Shannon Salter

Deputy Minister to the Premier,
Cabinet Secretary and Head of the BC Public Service

Ethics in the BC Public Service

Ethics and integrity have always been important to the BC Public Service, and they remain even more important today. They also feature prominently in the [2023 Corporate HR Plan \(PDF, 1.3MB\)](#). We continue to promote and share their importance in communications, outreach and training activities across the BC Public Service. But how do we define them in the BC Public Service?



Ethics at Work

Ethics is defined as the moral principles that guide a person's behaviour or activity. Conversations about ethics raise topics such as equity, fairness and justice. In the BC Public Service context, we are guided by our Corporate Values, Oath of Employment and the Standards of Conduct.

Employees begin their journey with the BC Public Service by swearing or affirming the Oath of Employment and confirming they have read the Standards of Conduct. This sets the foundation for their ethical conduct in the BC Public Service by affirming they understand the expectations guiding their day-to-day work and their interactions with colleagues and the public.



Integrity and Corporate Values at Work

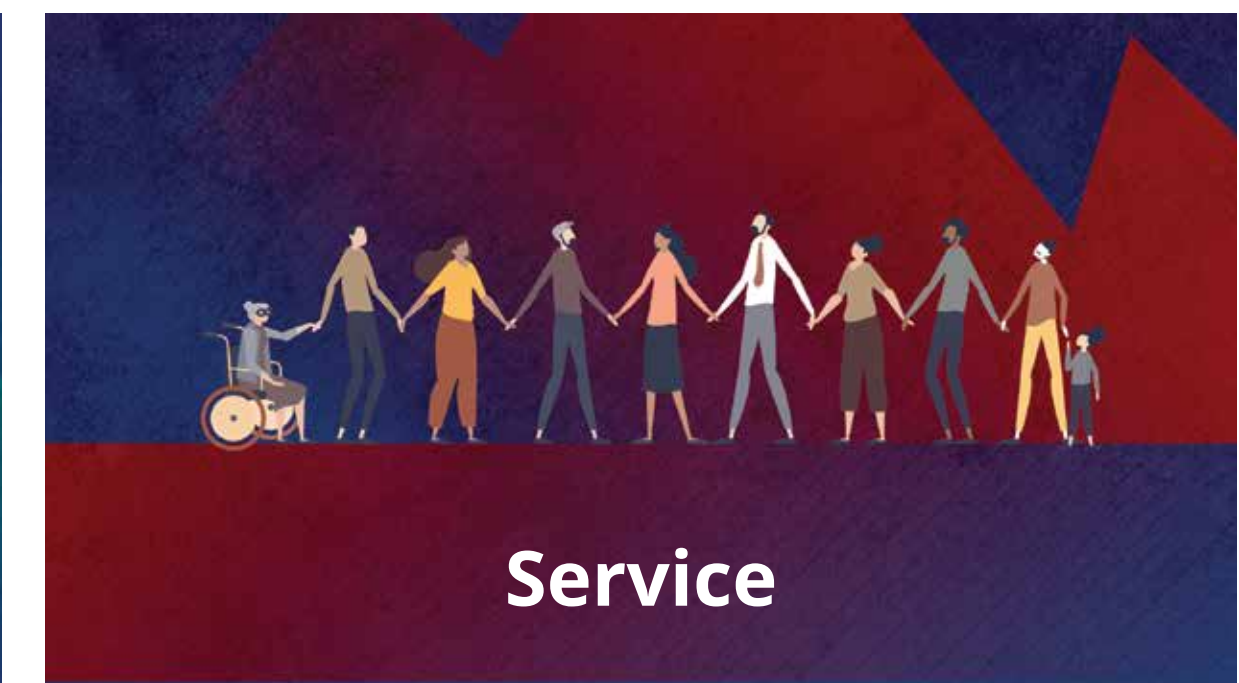
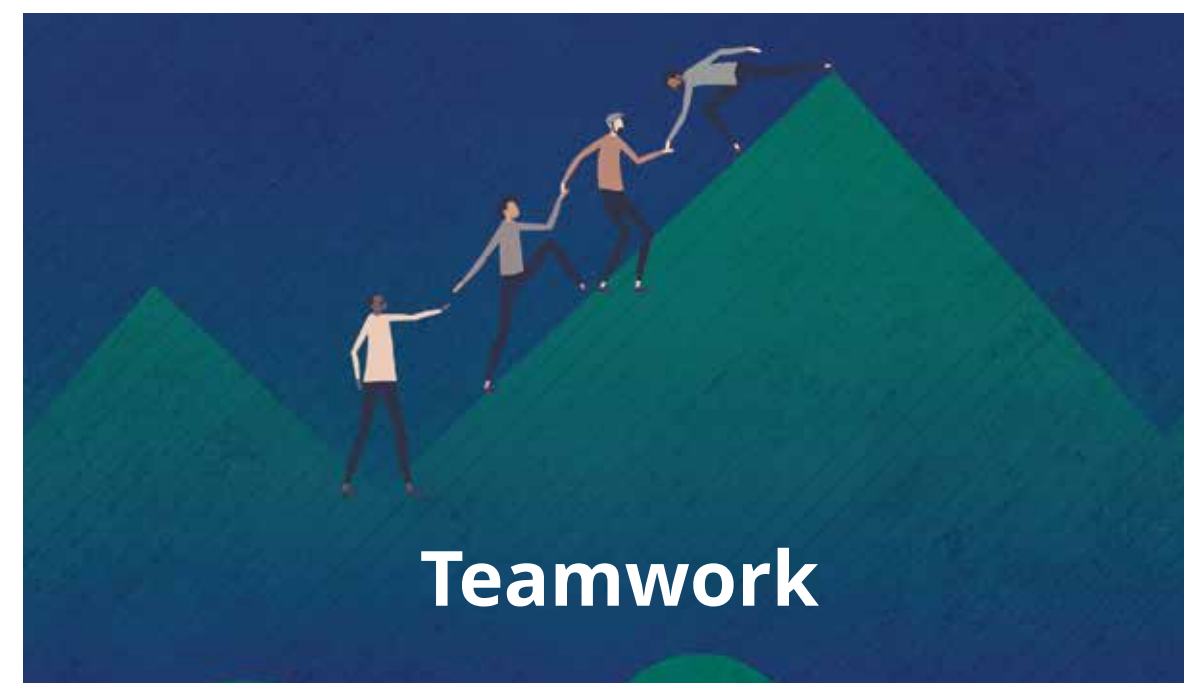
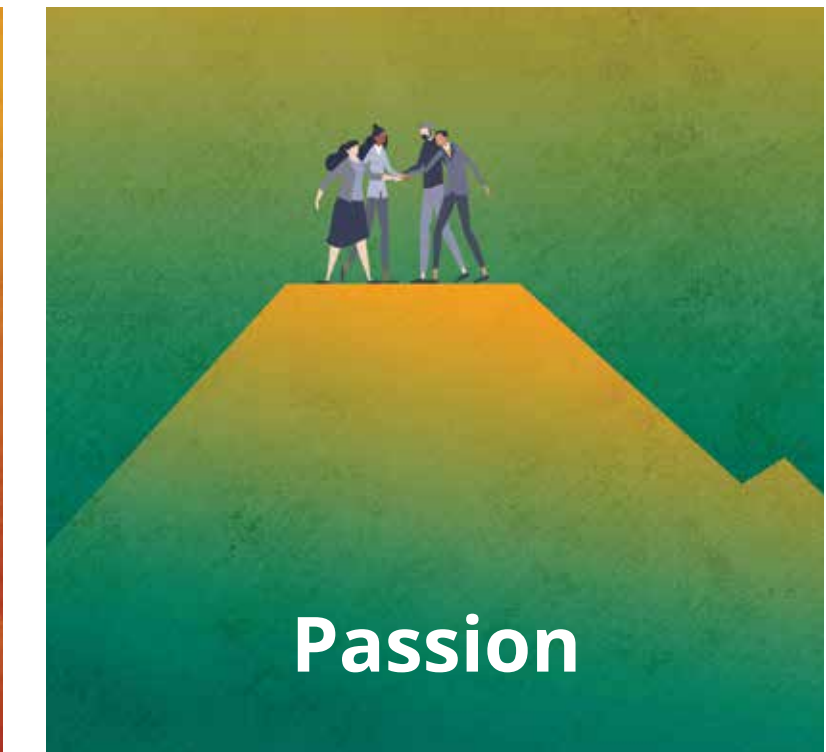
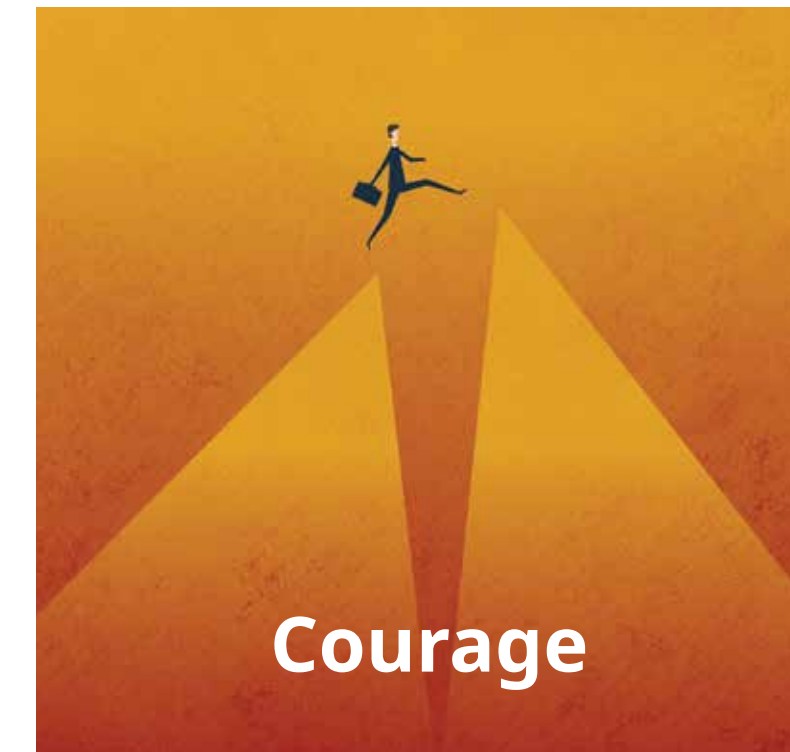
Who we are as a public service, how we approach our work, how we work together and treat one another and the culture that creates all come from daily choices in our words and actions. Our corporate values describe the qualities we value in our colleagues and in our organization and provide the foundation for how we can uphold and strengthen ethics in the BC Public Service.

The BC Public Service has one overarching corporate value, **Integrity**, and six core corporate values: **Curiosity, Service, Passion, Teamwork, Accountability, and Courage.**

Integrity is above all the other values as a quality that affirms the Standards of Conduct for the BC Public Service.

Integrity, curiosity, service, passion, teamwork, accountability and courage shape our culture and help to:

- Foster practices that build a positive work culture
- Establish a single-employer identity
- Define shared expectations
- Maintain consistency of management practices
- Improve organizational performance



Ethical Leadership

The BC Public Service has established clear roles and responsibilities for providing ethical leadership across the organization.



Governance
Structure

Corporate Ethics
Governance
Council

Corporate Ethics
Lead Role and
Function

Governance Structure

In February 2018, the Deputy Ministers' Council (DMC) assigned the role of corporate ethics lead to the Deputy Minister of the BC Public Service Agency (PSA). The Corporate Ethics Lead provides overall leadership and direction for ethics in partnership with two other central agency deputy ministers (Finance and Citizens' Services) aligned with the BC Public Service integrated ethics management framework.

Corporate Ethics Governance Council

The deputy ministers representing three central agencies comprise the Corporate Ethics Governance Council. The Council has an overarching mandate for ethics and compliance management in the BC Public Service. It is responsible for the coordination, management and oversight of the integrated ethics framework to ensure government is meeting its core human resources policy objective that "all public service employees will exhibit the highest standards of conduct."

Corporate Ethics Lead Role and Function

The Deputy Minister of the PSA is the Corporate Ethics Lead in the BC Public Service. The lead is a member of the Corporate Ethics Governance Council and is responsible for the duties and functions described in the section above. However, the lead also has additional unique responsibilities and functions as the corporate ethics program team reports through the PSA.

The corporate ethics program team is responsible for the ethics management framework in operations, supporting the Corporate Ethics Governance Council and ministry ethics advisors, developing and delivering outreach, training and communications and monitoring and reporting.

Ethics Management Framework

Within the BC Public Service, our approach to ethics management is integrated and shared across multiple lines of business and ultimately upheld by each individual employee.¹ Ethics is integral to BC Public Service workplace culture. Together we work to improve coordination and to better monitor, evaluate and report the results of our efforts to support ethical behaviour. The framework represents an integrated approach, highlighting the roles and ethics-related responsibilities which come together to demonstrate integrity and build a culture of ethics within our organization.

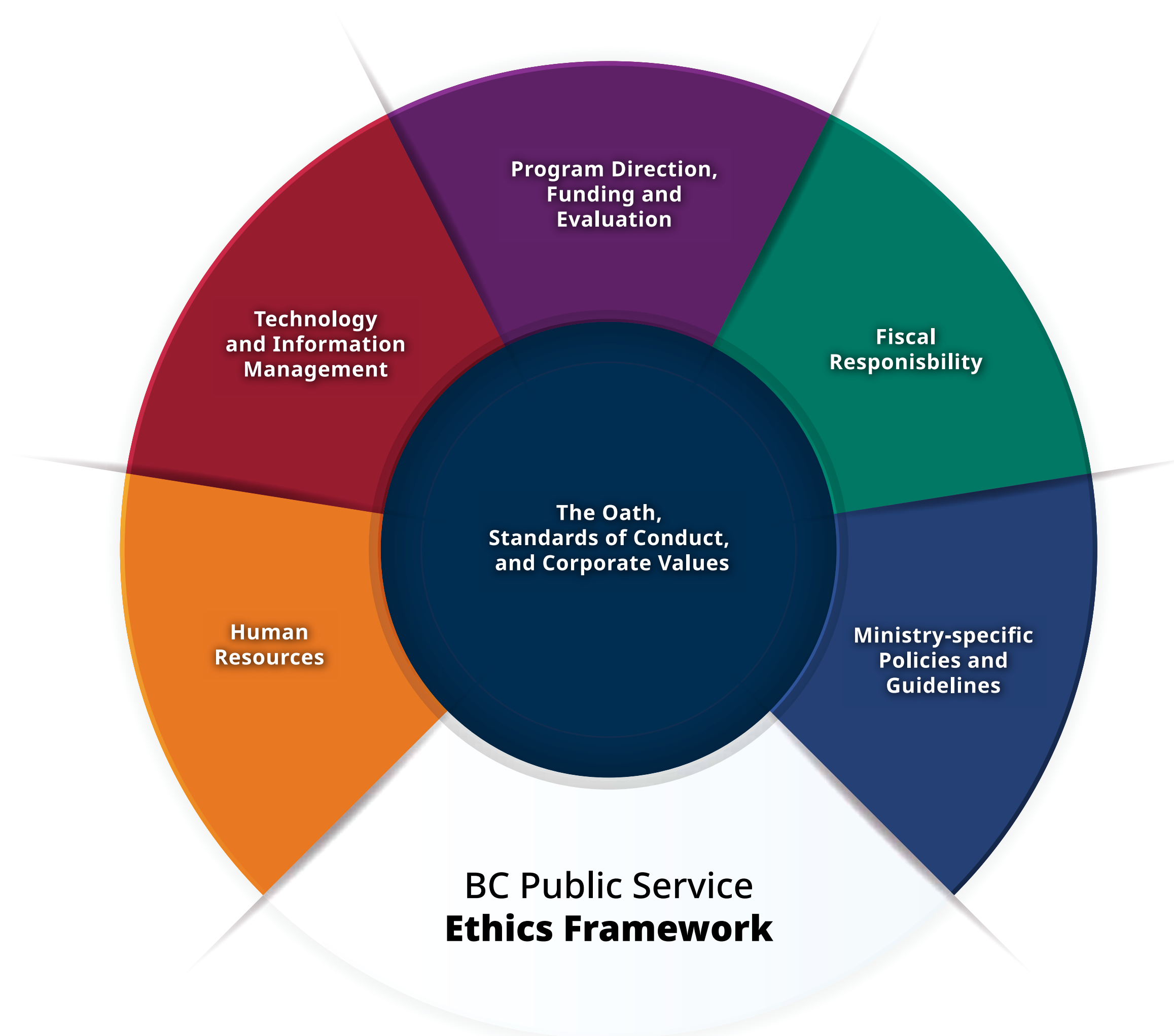
Under the ethics management framework, central agencies like the Office of the Comptroller General, Treasury Board, Chief Risk Office, Corporate Information and Records Management, Office of the Chief Information Officer² and the PSA work together to provide coordinated ethics management to set expectations of ethical behaviour and actively communicate and reinforce that behaviour, including how to support employees in making informed decisions.

At a minimum, all leaders in our organization require an awareness of this framework and an understanding of who to go to for advice or refer employees to when questions arise.

¹ Our individual responsibility to uphold ethics in the BC Public Service includes the expectation that regulated professionals working in the BC Public Service will act in accordance with their specific obligations under their professional designation.

² For full information on these central agencies, please visit the [Ethics Management Framework page on Careers & MyHR](#)

Figure 1: BC Public Service Ethics Management Framework



Building an Ethical Culture in the BC Public Service

Making ethical decisions in organizations has seldom been simple. It has become even more challenging as society becomes increasingly complex. With more people needing to collaborate more quickly, multiple competing interests and ever-changing priorities, it can be daunting to make the right ethical decision.

The following section describes the activities underway to promote awareness, knowledge and discussions of ethics and compliance in the BC Public Service. These activities empower employees to handle ethical dilemmas they encounter in everyday work.



Establishing the Foundation

The foundation of ethics in the BC Public Service is defined and outlined in our Corporate Values, the Oath of Employment and Standards of Conduct. Employees are expected to swear or affirm that they have reviewed and agree to abide by these terms and conditions when they begin their career in the BC Public Service.

Oath of Employment

The Oath obligates employees to act with integrity, putting the interests of the public service above their own personal interests and avoiding all conflicts of interest.

The Oath also requires employees to safeguard confidential information, serve the government impartially, honestly and ethically, and to honour and faithfully abide by the Standards of Conduct for BC Public Service employees.

Standards of Conduct for BC Public Service Employees

The Standards of Conduct establish expectations for all employees in the public service to support the core policy objective that “public service employees exhibit the highest standards of conduct.” The requirement to comply with the standards is a condition of employment and employees who fail to comply with the standards may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Under the Standards of Conduct, the Deputy Minister of the PSA is responsible for coordinating the development of awareness, training and communication programs in support of the Standards of Conduct. This includes orientation for senior executives and training for ministry ethics advisors regarding the application of the standards. The standards also establish the key responsibilities of the deputy ministers, ethics advisors, managers and employees in relation to ensuring conduct and expectations are observed and upheld.³

New Welcome to the BC Public Service and Oath of Employment ceremonies have been offered regularly in a virtual environment since 2020. The virtual environment has allowed employees throughout B.C. to participate. Technology change has improved accessibility and consistency for all participants.

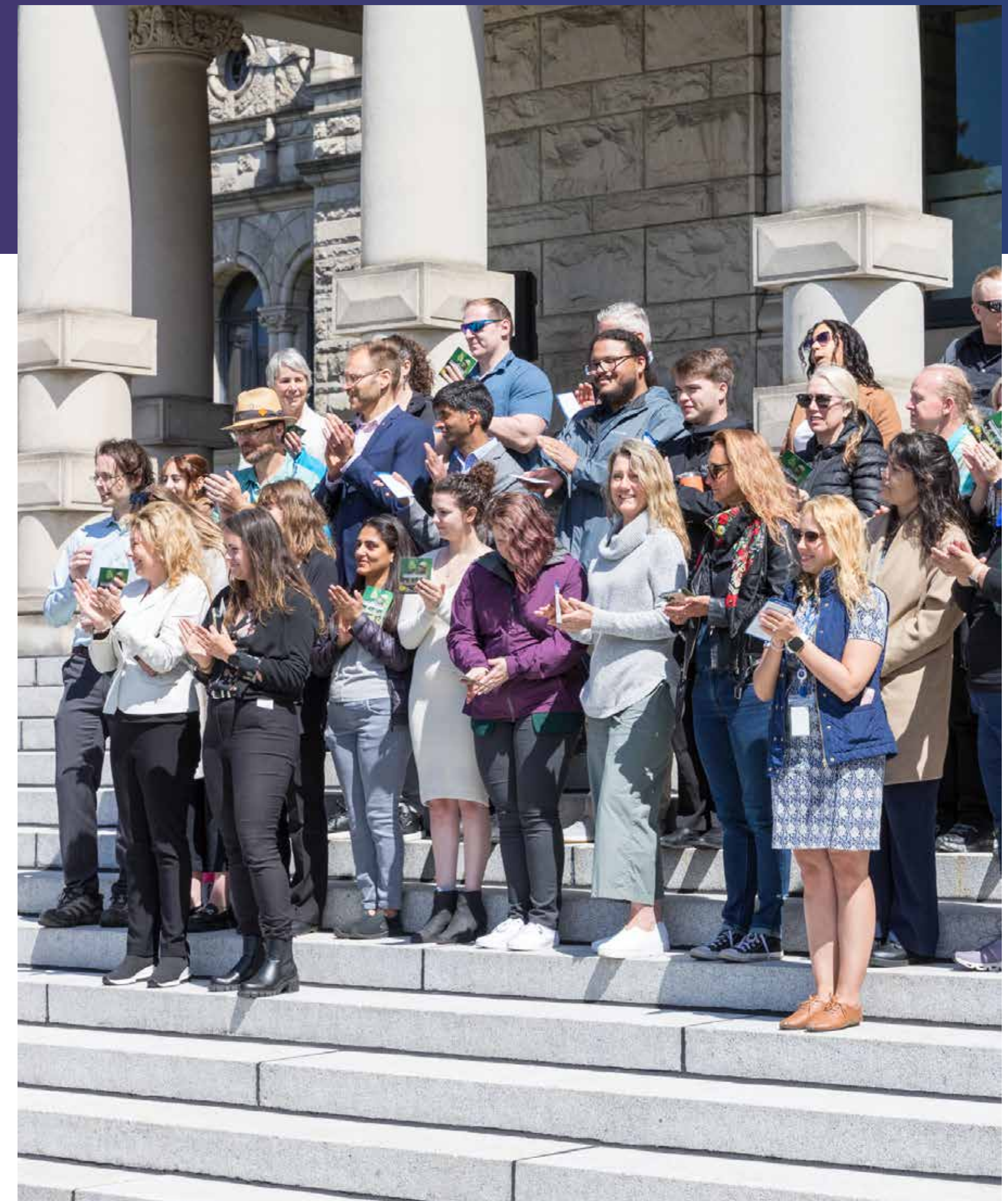
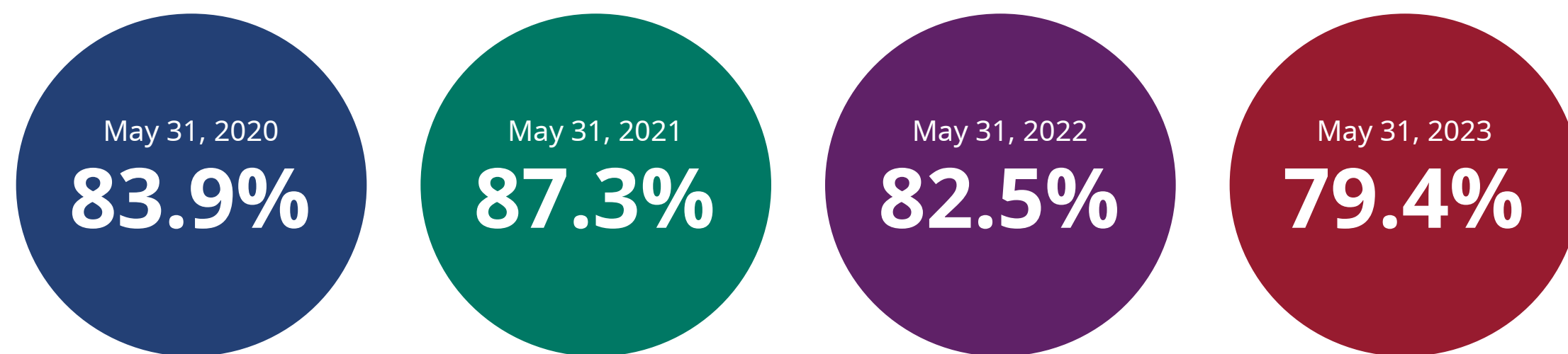
³ There are some segments of the BC Public Service where employees have a unique Standards of Conduct (for example, BC Sherriff Service, BC Corrections) based on duties and responsibilities related to their organizations. In these instances, these bodies have embedded the Standards of Conduct for BC Public Service Employees in their organization-specific codes of conduct and undertake activities to bring awareness of employment expectations and also complete their own annual review process.

Between April 1, 2023, and March 31, 2024, 3,928 new employees have participated in Oath of Employment ceremonies.

Annual Review of the Oath of Employment and Standards of Conduct

Each year, BC Public Service employees are expected to complete the Annual Review (Oath of Employment, Standards of Conduct and the Appropriate Use Policy). This is to ensure employees are familiar with any changes made to these core policies and foster understanding of the expectations and responsibilities of all employees to create a respectful workplace and ethical culture. The compliance rates of the Annual Review for the first four years of the program are provided below. Work continues to develop awareness of the annual review and improve reporting capabilities for ministries.

Annual Review Compliance Rates



Communications, Outreach and Training

Beyond the Annual Review, the BC Public Service has emphasized communications, outreach and training to build an ethical culture across the organization. By putting time and energy into establishing familiarity with ethics and encouraging employees to speak up when they have concerns, the BC Public Service’s goal is to prevent misconduct and wrongdoing from occurring.

Ethics Communications and Resources

To ensure there are constant and consistent communications about ethics across the BC Public Service, there is an overarching communications strategy with plans in

place for distinct events such as the Annual Review and new enhancements or changes. The corporate ethics program continued to focus on conflict of interest in 2023/24, particularly since the number of queries received by ethics advisors and through the AskMyHR portal continues to increase year over year. The new conflict of interest course available via the Learning Centre was created to better support employees to understand what a conflict of interest is, and how best to approach disclosing and mitigating it whether real, perceived or potential.

Updates were also made to the [Social Media Guidelines for Personal Use](#) to ensure they were in alignment with modern best practices. These updates include improved accessibility, new scenarios that cover a broader range of social media topics and increased clarity around political expression and public dialogue.

Figure 2: Number of Visits to Ethics and Standards of Conduct on MyHR Website in 2022 to 2024

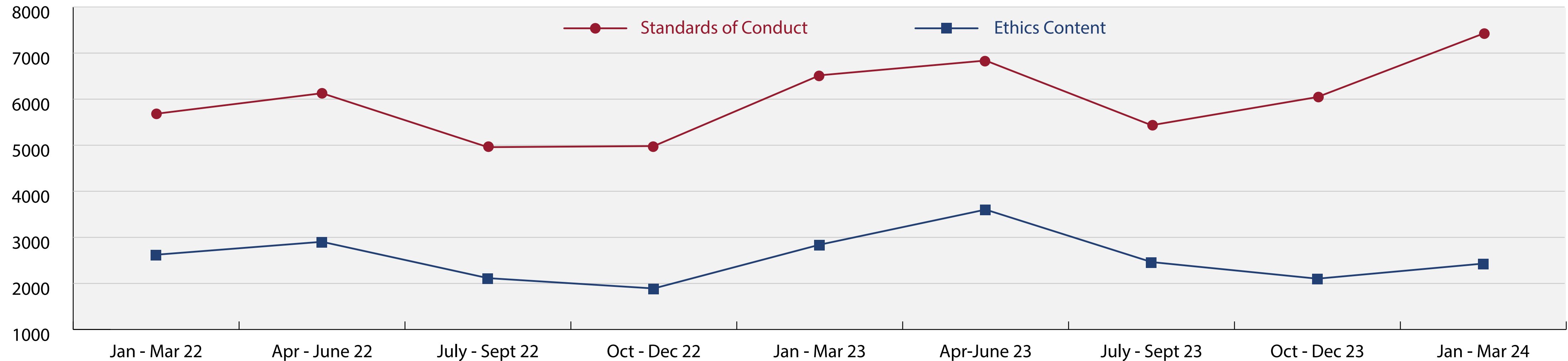
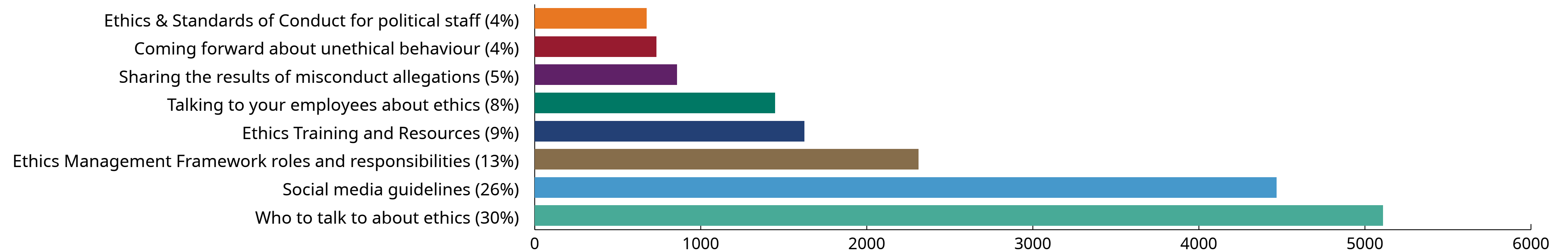


Figure 3: Breakdown of Visits for Ethics Content on MyHR Website in FY 2023 / 2024



Ethics Outreach

In addition to the communications and corporate training available to BC Public Service employees, there are also outreach sessions delivered by ministry ethics advisors and the PSA’s corporate ethics team. Outreach can take many forms, from email correspondence to online sessions and can focus on any number of topics including ethics in the BC Public Service, the Standards of Conduct, Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA), conflict of interest, speaking-up, social media guidelines and respectful workplaces. Hundreds of sessions have been held since 2018 and are available upon request by contacting a ministry ethics advisor or the corporate ethics team at ethics@gov.bc.ca. For this annual report period the corporate ethics team held 17 sessions reaching 1100+ employees spanning all lines of business and roles in the BC Public Service.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) initiated a Supervisor Learning Series in 2023. The Corporate Ethics team developed three ethics related sessions for this series including Ethics 101, Conflicts of Interest for Employees, and Speaking Up & Raising Concerns of Wrongdoing. Throughout the year, eight sessions were held with over 700 participants. In all eight sessions more than 76 percent of participants who provided feedback reported the session increased their knowledge of the topic and over 90 percent reported that they would recommend the session to their friend/colleague. Furthermore, many of the participants reported that they attended at least one of the previous sessions, either on the other two ethics topics, or on the same topic.

Ethics Training

In addition to the Annual Review (Oath of Employment, Standards of Conduct and the Appropriate Use Policy) the corporate ethics team designs and delivers a variety of ethics training. Some of this training is available to all employees through the learning catalogue, including Ethics for Everyone and Conflicts of Interest for Employees. In addition, the corporate ethics team delivers various ethics orientation training for new co-op students, ethics advisors and corporate executives. We also provide ethics advisor training twice per year, and general corporate executive training which offers opportunities to engage and support senior leaders in building their confidence and understanding their unique role in ethical leadership and culture building. The intention is to offer these focused courses on a regular basis to strengthen ethical leadership and contribute to the ethical culture of the BC Public Service.

Compliance Courses

In addition to the annual review, BC Public Service employees are expected to complete three courses that further describe the expectations in the workplace. One course, Diversity and Inclusion Essentials, builds on the expectations set out in the Standards of Conduct and the responsibility BC Public Service employees share in fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace. Information Management 117 outlines our shared accountabilities and conduct when using information and technology at work. As with the Annual Review, work continues to develop awareness of the compliance courses and improve reporting capabilities for ministries.

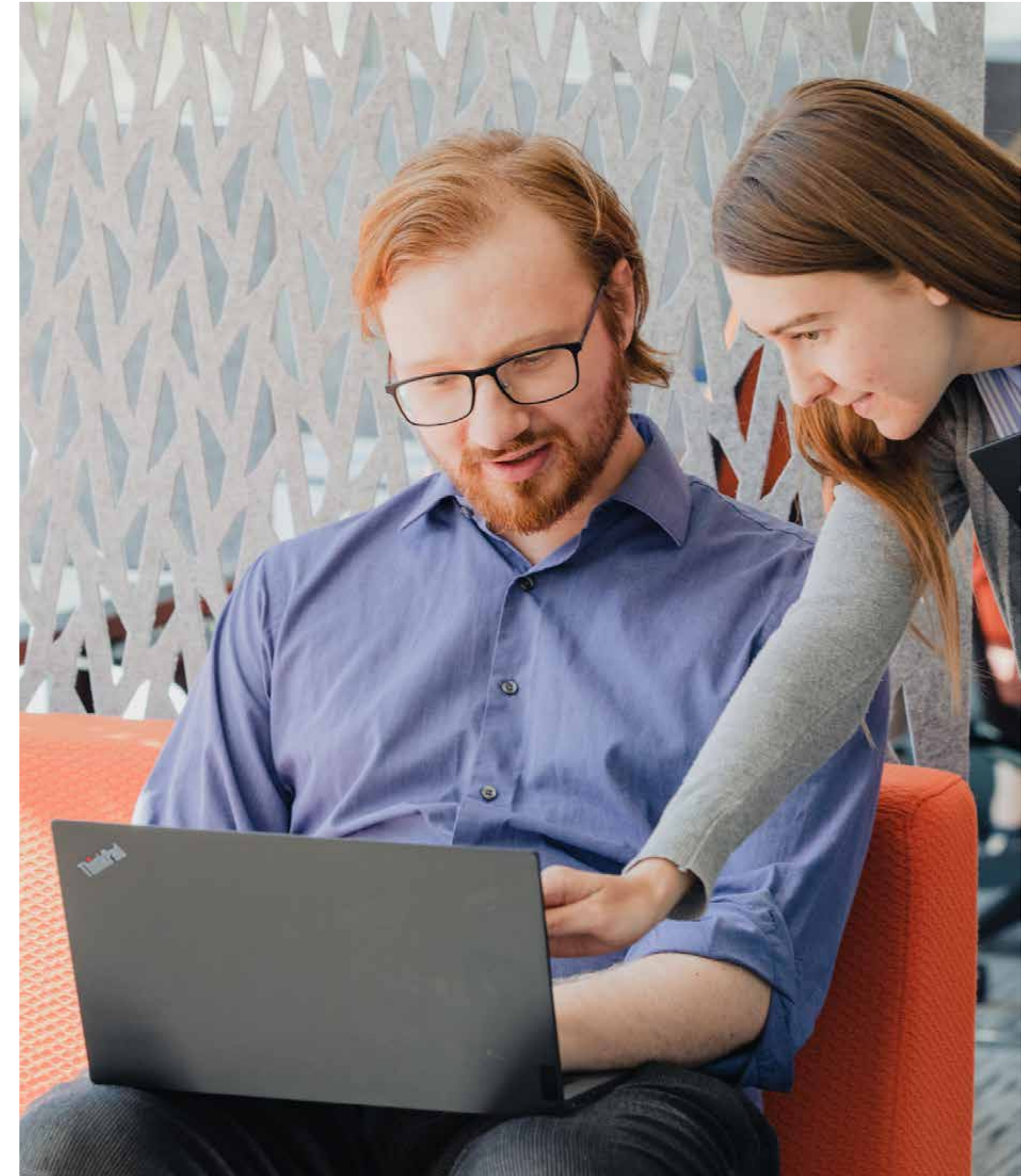
Compliance Rates (as of March 31, 2024)



Ethics Partners Beyond PSA

Cooperative work continues between the Ministries of Finance and Attorney General to develop an updated form of contribution/transfer agreement for all ministries providing contributions/grants to third parties. The new form of agreement includes language that incorporates some best practices in areas such as avoidance of conflict of interest and where appropriate. This requires recipients to carry out obligations in a manner consistent with best practices for Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles. This work is intended to help build accountable and responsible governance and fiscal management in government's third-party contribution arrangements.

In December 2023, the Ministry of Citizens' Services' BC Data Service Division launched the Introduction to Anti-racism in Research course to provide an ethical framework for anti-racism data research under the [Anti-Racism Data Act](#). This training provides strategies to prevent community harm that could arise from research using demographic information. It covers a wide range of topics in the context of research using demographic information including principles of anti-racism and data justice, cultural safety, consideration of community harm, intersectionality and transparency and data accessibility in anti-racism research. The course is mandatory for all research team members (including government researchers and external researchers) using information from the BC Demographic Survey housed in the Data Innovation Program.



Work Environment Survey (WES)

To determine the degree of success in building an ethical culture, the Work Environment Survey is a key source of information.

The survey was introduced in 2006 and is conducted every two years. In 2015, four ethics-related questions were added to WES. These questions assess employees' perceptions of ethics in the workplace (related to the respectful workplace driver) and supervisory-level management. In advance of the 2022 Work Environment Survey, the ethics-related questions were reviewed and revised for the purpose of simplifying language and clarifying the intent of the questions. One new question was introduced focusing on employees' perception of BC Public Service executives. The ethics-related questions and the percentile summary of scores for the overall BC Public Service are included below:

Question: Employees in my work unit are clear on the ethical values expected in performing their work.

2015	2018	2020	2022	2024
77	80	80	82	83

Question: If I experience or learn about an ethical issue at work, I know where I can go for help.*

2015	2018	2020	2022	2024
78	81	82	80	80

* Note for the 2015, 2018 and 2020 WES Survey, this question read "If I am faced with an ethical question or concern, I know where to go for help to resolve the situation."

Question: The person I report to supports me and my coworkers in conducting our work in an ethical manner.

2015	2018	2020	2022	2024
79	81	82	84	85

Question: Executives in my organization act ethically (e.g., demonstrate honesty and integrity in their work).

2015	2018	2020	2022	2024
N/A	N/A	N/A	72	74

Ethics Risk Assessment

In the 2017 audit into ethics management in the BC Public Service, the Office of the BC Auditor General recommended that ministries should undertake an assessment of ethics risk. This is consistent with the [BC Public Service Core Policy and Procedures Manual \(CPPM\) Chapter 14 \(Risk Management\)](#) which notes that ministries are responsible for risk identification, prioritization and mitigation, implementation performance and risk management maturity. Ministries must also compile and maintain ministry-level risk registers. This includes identifying and addressing ethics risks where applicable.

Consultation and work were undertaken to define ethics risk in the BC Public Service. The following definition was developed and embedded in ministry risk registers in December 2021:

In the BC Public Service, ethics risk is the potential for harm resulting from behaviour or conduct that contravenes the Oath of Employment or Standards of Conduct. The harms may be real, perceived or potential in nature and may affect the reputation or operations of the ministry and BC Public Service in a negative way.

The purpose of identifying ethics risk in the ministry risk registers is to not only highlight the importance of ethics in the BC Public Service, but also to have ministries discuss, identify and mitigate ethical risks that may arise in their unique work environment (like corrections, compliance inspection and permitting). Work continues to be undertaken by the corporate ethics team to ensure enhancements are made to onboarding, communication and training to respond to new and emergent risks in the BC Public Service.

Ethics Advisory Service

The BC Public Service uses multiple channels to communicate expectations for conduct in the workplace and prevent misconduct from occurring. However, it is important for employees to have a place to turn if they have questions or concerns about ethics issues.

Every ministry has an appointed ethics advisor. Ethics advisors act as points of contact for ethics-related queries, assist with ministry-specific follow-ups for ethics-related matters where necessary and participate in outreach activities in their ministries. Upon appointment, ethics advisors attend an orientation session within 30 days and have access to ongoing support and regular training to ensure they can fulfill the responsibilities of the role.

The role of the ethics advisor is assigned to an assistant deputy minister or executive lead position, reflecting their important role in communicating expectations, setting the tone for behaviour and shaping the organizational culture. They are also decision-makers who can act on most issues brought to their attention. Ethics advisors provide advice only to employees appointed under the Public Service Act.

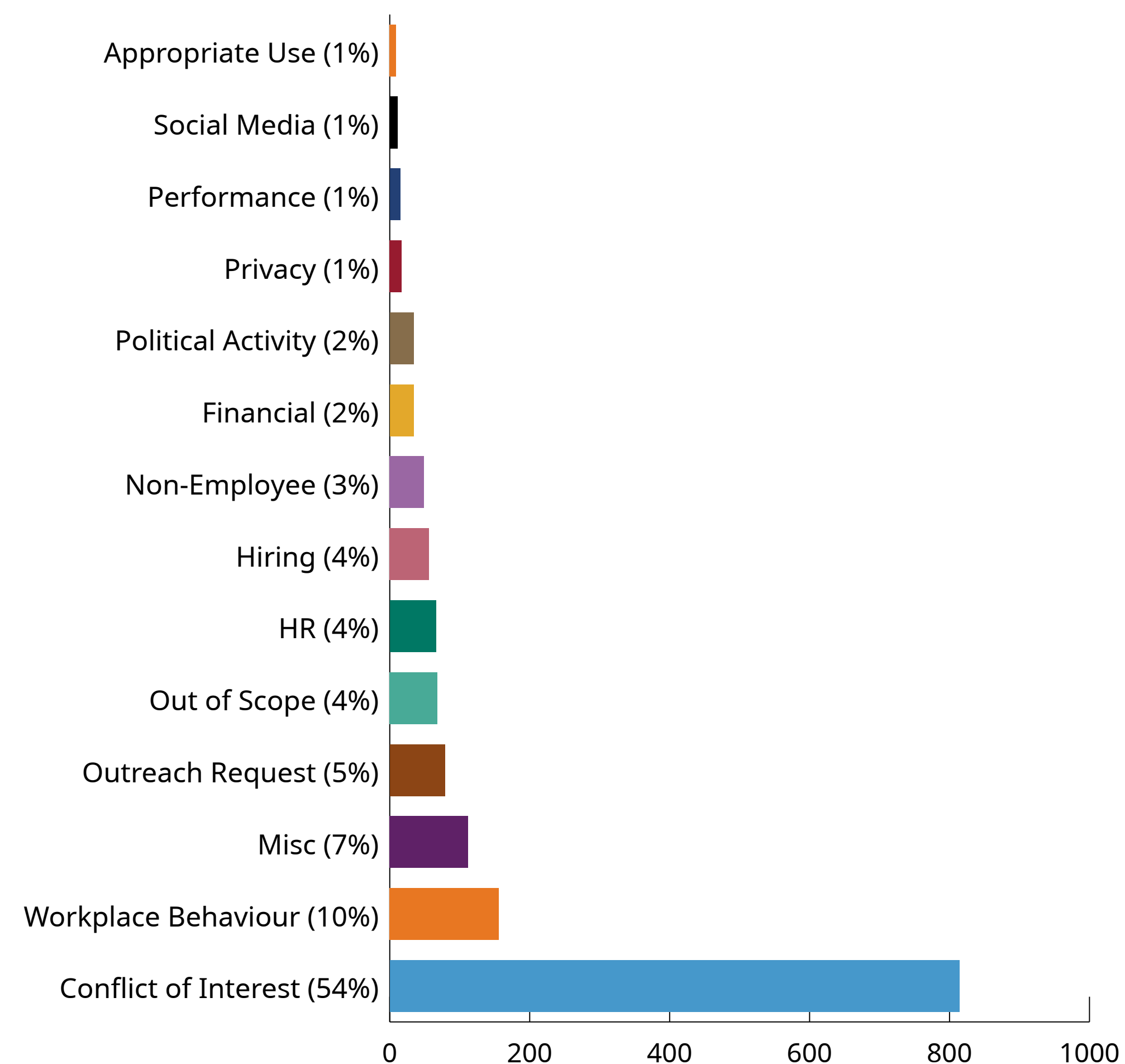
Any BC Public Service employee is encouraged to contact their ministry ethics advisor if they have a concern or question related to the Standards of Conduct that they cannot take to their immediate supervisor, or if they wish to seek expert and impartial advice. Employees do not require permission from their supervisor or chain of command to contact the ethics advisor. Each advisor has a unique email address that only they can access, to ensure inquiries are kept confidential. If you reach out, the ethics advisor will contact you to follow up on your request and will work with you to connect you with the appropriate resources or help resolve your issue or question.

Inquiries and Trends

Since their introduction in 2018, the ethics advisors have received hundreds of inquiries from BC Public Service employees each year. In fiscal year 23/24 the ethics advisory service (all ethics advisors, the corporate ethics advisor and other lines of business within the PSA) received 363 requests for support.

Based on the data, the inquiries received through the ethics advisory service fall into several categories identified in Figure 4.

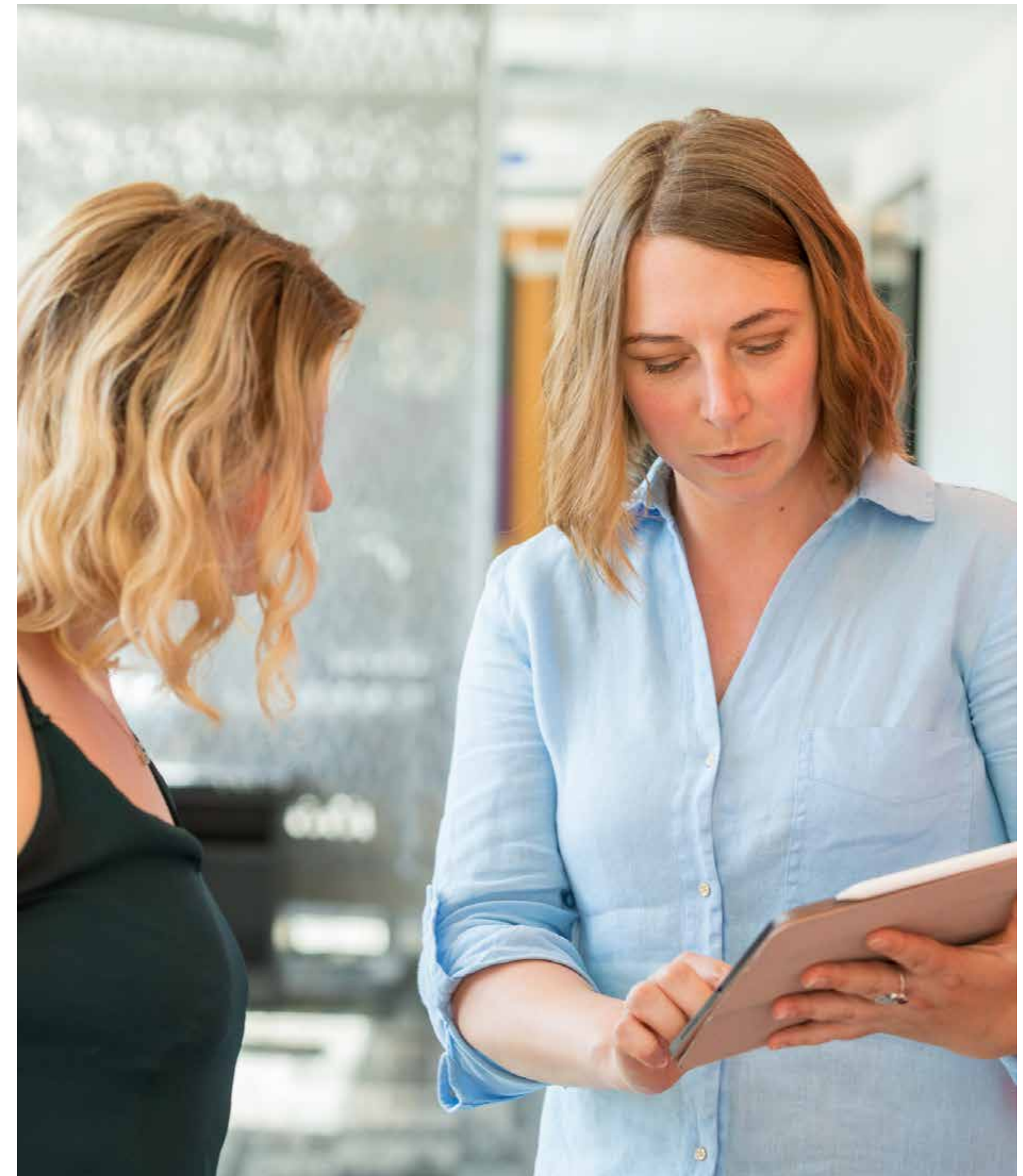
Figure 4: Ethics Inquiries (2019 to 2024) by Category



As noted in Figure 4, inquiries about real, perceived and potential conflicts of interest continue to be the most common request.⁴ These include general inquiries about disclosing a conflict of interest, where to find the guidelines and disclosure form and advice on specific situations.

Other categories of inquiries include workplace behaviour (concerns about conduct in the workplace), human resources (questions about human resource policies) and hiring (questions about hiring policies and practices). The miscellaneous requests include general questions about ethics, research inquiries and notes about the Annual Review. Inquiries are also received from non-employees, or individuals who work outside of the BC Public Service.

⁴ This tracker reflects types of inquiries received across all ministries through ethics advisors and the corporate ethics advisor service. Numbers provided by the Office of the Premier do not include reports made to the designated officer for political staff. No advice/consultations were reported for the period above.



Public Interest Disclosure Act

Speaking up when things aren't right demonstrates our public service values. Employees and People Leaders have obligations under the Standards of Conduct to report and investigate concerns of wrongdoing and inappropriate conduct. The ethics advisory service was created to ensure employees have another avenue to ask questions or raise concerns if they cannot approach their supervisor or next level of excluded management. The Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) provides another option for employees of the BC Public Service to choose to report serious wrongdoing. The Act came into effect for employees in the BC Public Service on December 1, 2019.

Public Interest Disclosure Act Day

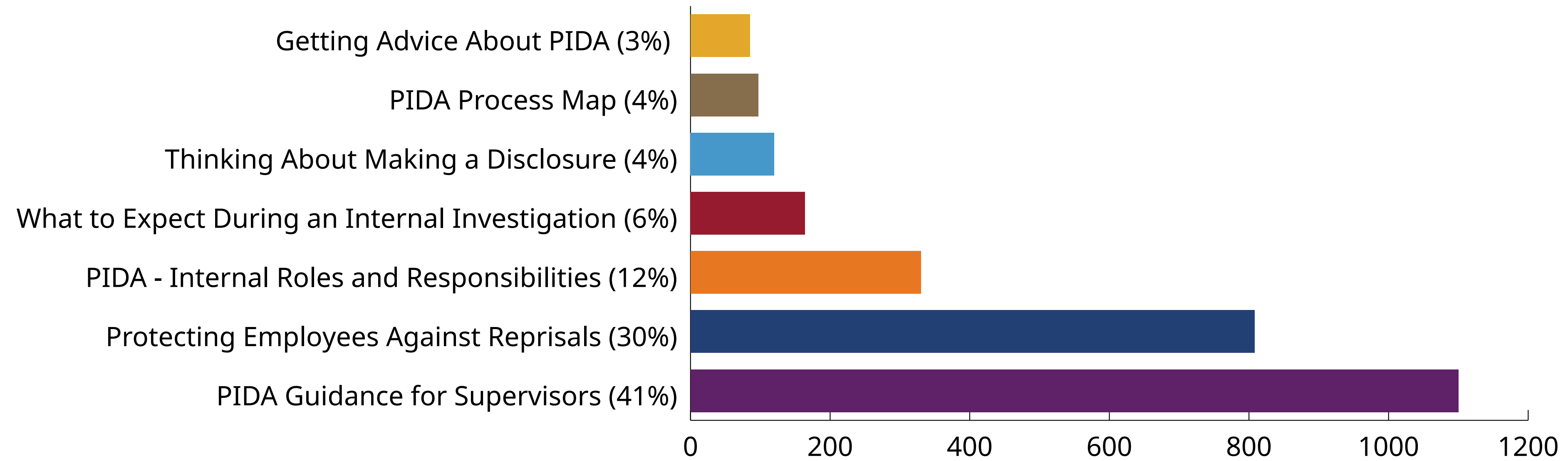
In November 2023, several members of the PSA attended the 2023 PIDA Day conference. The corporate ethics team provided a research paper on ethical leadership and its impact on fostering speak-up cultures in public sector organizations. The Deputy Minister of the BC Public Service Agency sat on the Public Interest Disclosure and Ethical Leadership panel along with the Chair of the BC Human Rights Tribunal and the Chair of Providence Health. The panel discussed the necessary conditions within the workplace for speak-up culture to flourish, a culture amenable to appropriate public interest disclosure and provided their own experiences fostering ethical leadership in their organizations.

Accessing Online Content

Extensive information and resources were created and made available online (see Appendix A for links) for all current and former employees. The web analytics reveals that the landing page for PIDA averages 291 views and 336 visits monthly.⁵ Consistent traffic to this page since the implementation of PIDA in 2019, indicates that employee awareness of the legislation and its protections are growing and employees continue to find value in the supports and content available on Careers and MyHR.

⁵ There are limitations of measuring website analytics. For example, these numbers may include multiple visits by the same user or include visits by non-public service employees. We have chosen to use the number of visits which indicate that the visitor stayed and clicked on content or links.

Figure 5: PIDA Awareness-Building Quarterly Access Data from Careers & MyHR webpages April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024



The analytics for individual pages further reveal that employees are accessing this information to learn more, as evident in Figure 5 (above). Additionally, all current BC Public Service employees receive information on PIDA through the Annual Review and must answer a question about PIDA as part of the annual review to demonstrate basic understanding and awareness of the legislation.

Public Interest Disclosure Act Annual Reporting

Section 38 of PIDA articulates the annual reporting requirements related to public interest disclosures in the BC Public Service. This report does not contain any information that could lead to the identification of individuals who have made a disclosure or participated in a PIDA investigation. No personal information is disclosed as part of any public reports issued about PIDA.

Agency Designated Officer Responsibilities

Under PIDA, the BC Public Service introduced a centralized model for managing and investigating disclosures. This model ensures that there is a consistent process in place for employees to report serious wrongdoing. The investigations into disclosures of wrongdoing are led by the agency designated officer, a new role created with the implementation of PIDA. The Assistant Deputy Minister of Employee Relations at the PSA has been designated as the agency designated officer for the BC Public Service. The designated officer for political staff (as defined in the Standards of Conduct for Political Staff) is the Chief of Staff, Office of the Premier.⁶

The agency designated officer has received numerous inquiries since the implementation of PIDA on December 1, 2019. These inquiries have ranged from general requests for more information about PIDA and how it works, to specific inquiries about how to make a disclosure. Further work will be undertaken in the upcoming year to increase awareness about PIDA and share information across the BC Public Service.

⁶ The designated officer for political staff received no disclosures from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022 and April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023.

PIDA Disclosures

Table 1: Number of Disclosures Received April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024

Ministry	Disclosures Received	Ministry	Disclosures Received
Agriculture and Food	0	Indigenous Relations & Reconciliation	0
Attorney General	0	Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation	0
Children and Family Development	0	Labour	0
Citizens' Services	1	Mental Health and Addictions	0
Education and Child Care	0	Municipal Affairs	0
Emergency Management and Climate Readiness	0	Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills	0
Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation	0	Public Safety and Solicitor General	0
Environment and Climate Change Strategy	0	Social Development and Poverty Reduction	0
Finance ⁷	3	Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport	0
Forests	1	Transportation and Infrastructure	1
Health	2	Water, Land and Resource Stewardship	0
Housing	0		
		TOTAL	8

⁷ The data for the Ministry of Finance includes disclosures from the following organizations that report through the Minister of Finance: BC Public Service Agency, Crown Agencies Secretariat, Government Communications and Public Engagement, Liquor Distribution Branch and Public Sector Employees' Council.

Disclosures from 2019 to 2020

For the period of December 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020, four disclosures were received by the agency designated officer. The following table (Table 3) depicts the status or outcome of these disclosures.

Table 2: Summary of Disclosures December 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020

Disclosures Received	Initial Assessment Completed	Investigations Initiated	Investigations Concluded
4	4	0	0

Disclosures from 2020 to 2021

For the period of April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021, nine disclosures were received by the agency designated officer. The following table (Table 4) depicts the status or outcome of these disclosures.

Table 3: Summary of Disclosures April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021

Disclosures Received	Initial Assessment Completed	Investigations Initiated	Investigations Concluded
9	9	2	2

Disclosures from 2021 to 2022

For the period of April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022, three disclosures were received by the agency designated officer. Table 5 reveals the status of the disclosures made in that fiscal year.

Table 4: Summary of Disclosures April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022

Disclosures Received	Initial Assessment Completed	Investigations Initiated	Investigations Concluded
3	3	1	0

Disclosures from 2022 to 2023

For the period of April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023, four disclosures were received by the agency designated officer. Table 6 reveals the status of the disclosures made in the past fiscal year.

Table 5: Summary of Disclosures April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023

Disclosures Received	Initial Assessment Completed	Investigations Initiated	Investigations Concluded
5	3	0	0

Disclosures from 2023 to 2024

For the period of April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, eight disclosures were received by the agency designated officer. Table 6 reveals the status of the disclosures made in the past fiscal year.

Table 6: Summary of Disclosures April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024

Disclosures Received	Initial Assessment Completed	Investigations Initiated	Investigations Concluded
8	8	2	1

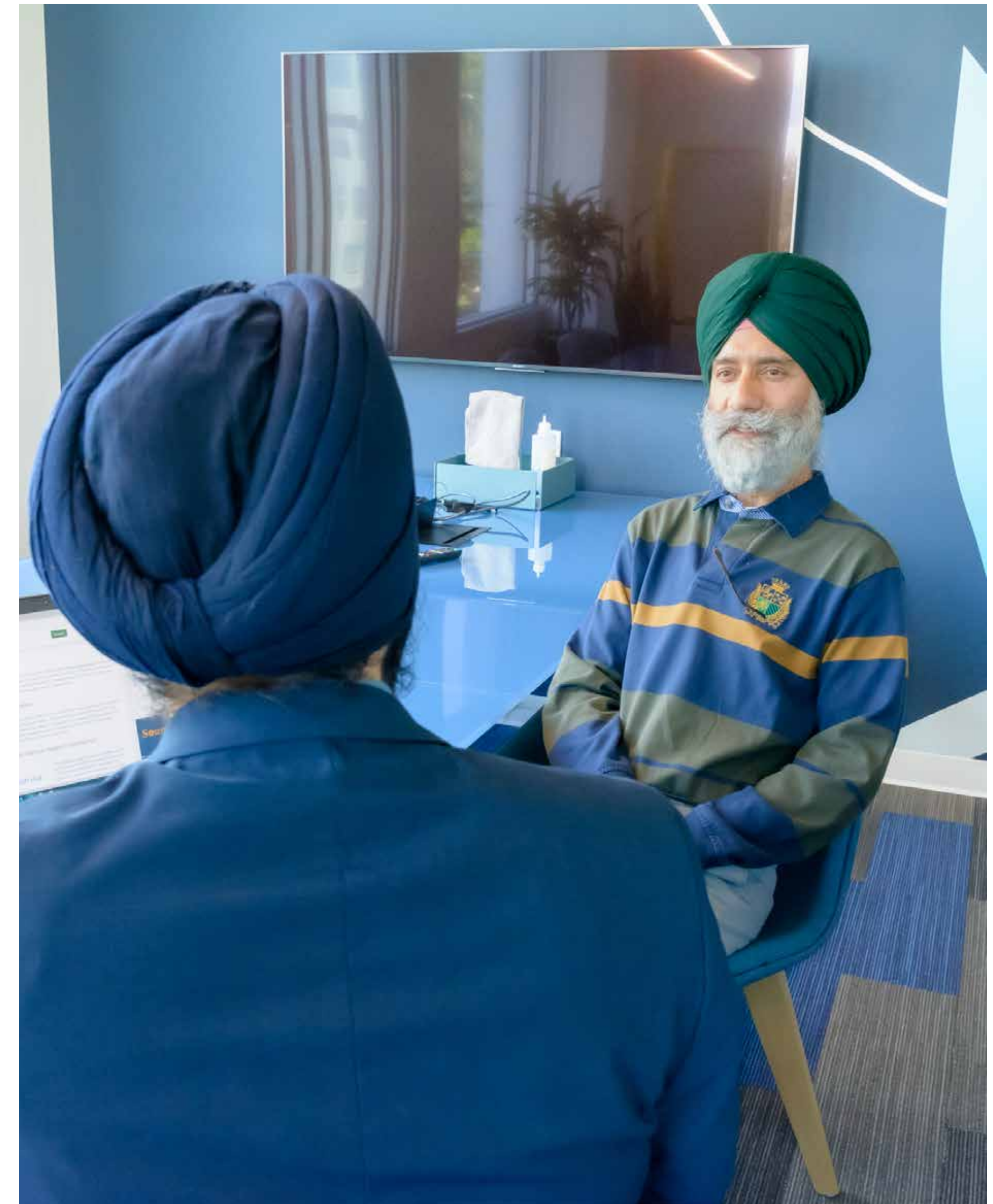
Emerging Themes and Future Activities

The majority of PIDA disclosures made to the PSA from April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, were considered under the category of gross or systemic mismanagement. Disclosures related to systemic issues have led to positive improvements for the BC public service such as initiatives to improve workplace processes and policies.

The PSA continues to build on existing practices and procedures to ensure the identity of disclosers are protected to the fullest extent possible. This includes:

- Monitoring and reviewing processes for securely collecting information via the online reporting form
- Training investigative staff on best practices for investigating a PIDA disclosure
- Reviewing resources to ensure current or former employees fully understand the protections provided to them under PIDA

Section 50 of the Public Interest Disclosure Act outlines the requirement for a special committee of the Legislative Assembly to begin a comprehensive review of this Act and submit a report respecting this Act to the Legislative Assembly within one year after the date of the appointment of the special committee. The PSA will be conducting research on best practices in the implementation of public interest disclosure legislation and will be providing a submission for the special committee's consideration in their review.



BC Ombudsperson PIDA Recommendations and Findings

Section 38 of PIDA, requires the BC Public Service to report annually on the disclosures and investigations, including any Ombudsperson led investigations under PIDA. This report must include a description of any wrongdoings that are found, recommendations made by the Ombudsperson and any corrective actions taken to address the wrongdoing or recommendations.

From April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024, the BC Ombudsperson notified the chief executive⁸ of three new disclosures of wrongdoing and one new reprisal complaint investigated under PIDA. The BC Ombudsperson completed investigations of four disclosures including one of the disclosures received in the fiscal year. One investigation resulted in a finding of wrongdoing, two resulted in no findings of wrongdoing and one was stopped as it was determined not to deal with a wrongdoing.

The BC Ombudsperson also completed an investigation into a reprisal complaint the office received the previous fiscal year. This investigation resulted in no finding of reprisal.

⁸ The Ombudsperson notified the chief executives (Deputy Ministers) of ministries and not other public bodies.

Ethics in the BC Public Service: Next Steps

This report provides all BC Public Service employees with a snapshot of ethics in the workplace. The work is ongoing and continuously adapting to meet changing circumstances. The following outlines some of the key work to be undertaken in the next year:⁹

- Continued integration and alignment of corporate ethics management with current and emerging corporate priorities (like respectful workplace, artificial intelligence in the workplace, accessibility, anti-racism and psychological safety).
- Continued communications, outreach and engagement including PIDA and respectful workplace.
- Review of the Public Interest Disclosure Act.
- New additions to the ethics reporting, measurement and evaluation framework.
- Updated ethics training, including a refreshed version of the Annual Review (Oath of Employment, Standards of Conduct and Appropriate Use Policy) course.

⁹ It is also important to note that this report focuses predominantly on the prevention of misconduct and inappropriate behaviour. Future reports will expand over time on the policies and processes in place across the BC Public Service that help to monitor and respond to ethical issues, and build a strong, ethical culture across the organization.

Appendix A: Ethics and PIDA Resources and Links

Key references and resources related to ethics and PIDA in the BC Public Service.

Legislation

[Anti-racism Data Act](#)

[Public Interest Disclosure Act](#)

Ethics Information and Advisory Service

[Oath of Employment Regulation](#)

[Ethics and Standards of Conduct](#)

[Talking to Your Employees About Ethics & the Standards of Conduct](#)

[Who to Talk to About BC Public Service Employee Ethics](#)

[Ethics & Standards of Conduct for Political Staff](#)

[Standards of Conduct for BC Public Service Employees](#)

[Standards of Conduct for Political Staff](#)

[Corporate Values](#)

[Where Ideas Work 2023 Corporate Plan for the BC Public Service \(PDF, 1.3MB\)](#)

[Conflicts of interest in the BC Public Service](#)

[Social Media Guidelines](#)

[Addressing a Respectful Workplace Issue](#)

[Policies, Procedures and Guidelines](#)

PIDA Information and Resources

[Making a Public Interest Disclosure](#)

[Human Resources Policy 24 – Public Interest Disclosure \(PDF, 144KB\)](#)

[PIDA FAQs for Employees and Supervisors \(PDF, 136KB\)](#)

[PIDA Procedures for BC Government Ministries \(PDF, 439KB\)](#)

[PIDA Procedures for Political Staff \(PDF, 324KB\)](#)

[Public Interest Disclosure Act Guidance for Ministry](#)

[Supervisors](#)

[Office of the Ombudsperson | Public Interest Disclosure - Office of the Ombudsperson](#)

Independent Office Reports

[An Audit of BC Public Service Ethics Management \(PDF, 2.7MB\)](#)

[Misfire The 2012 Ministry of Health Employment Terminations and Related Matters \(PDF, 8.19MB\)](#)