

PAY EQUITY HEARINGS TRIBUNAL



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PEHT BUSINESS PLAN 2016 - 2019

Table of Contents

Mandate and Statutory Authority..... 1

Overview of Agency Programs and Key Activities..... 1

Adjudication..... 1

Mediation 2

Administration 2

Environmental Scan..... 2

Strategic Implementation and Key Risk Assessment..... 3

Key Activities with Stakeholders 3

Human Resources Plan 3

Information Technology Plan..... 4

Communications Plan..... 4

Appendix A - Financial Resources..... 5

Appendix B - FTE limit..... 6

Appendix C - Performance Measures 8

PAY EQUITY HEARINGS TRIBUNAL BUSINESS PLAN 2016-2019

Mandate and Statutory Authority

Under the Pay Equity Act, the Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal is empowered to hear and decide pay equity disputes. Its decisions are final and conclusive for all purposes, and the Tribunal has exclusive jurisdiction to determine all questions of fact or law that arise in any matter before it.

The Tribunal's effective delivery of adjudicative services regarding pay equity matters supports fair and harmonious workplaces, enabling employers to attract and retain workers, contributing to a business environment that attracts jobs and investment to Ontario's economy

Overview of Agency Programs & Key Activities:

The Tribunal has two key activities:

- Adjudication
- Mediation

Adjudication

The Tribunal is tripartite in nature, comprised of neutral presiding officers and member representatives of employers and employees/trade unions. The members are expected to bring the perspective and concerns of their community to the task of adjudication. All of the presiding officers have cross-appointments with at least one other adjudicative agency. The Tribunal holds hearings where evidence is presented and oral arguments are made. Pay equity issues are often complex; hearings can take multiple days to complete. Tribunal decisions are issued in writing and posted on accessible websites (www.canlii.org). Parties are encouraged to seek independent legal advice before coming to the Tribunal.

Mediation

Almost every case is scheduled for a pre-hearing consultation before a presiding officer, other than the one who will hear the case. The goal of the pre-hearing is to identify and narrow the issues in dispute, organize the litigation to ensure that it is ready for hearing, and look for opportunities to settle some or all of the issues. Pre-hearings are more informal than a hearing and provide an opportunity for parties to ask questions about the Tribunal's hearing procedures. Pre-hearings reduce hearing time, saving both parties and the Tribunal time and expense.

Outside of the pre-hearing process contemplated by the Act, the Tribunal panel assigned to hear a case, with the consent of the parties, sometimes engages in a form of mediation/adjudication. Of late, the members have been involved in mediating settlements in at least two cases that would otherwise have consumed a significant number of hearing days. Hopefully their success may encourage other parties to pursue this form of alternative dispute resolution.

Administration

The Tribunal receives administrative and other support from the Ontario Labour Relations Board. The Board provides a range of services including case processing, scheduling, budgeting, human resource functions, information and information technology services, library and research, and legal services. The benefits of the Board providing these services include an efficient use of resources, consistency of process and outcome and the ability to maintain and monitor quality control practices. These objectives are accomplished while at the same time safeguarding the particular and unique expertise of the Tribunal.

Environmental Scan

External Scan:

- The Tribunal expects to continue to receive a caseload that is largely focused on unionized broader public sector employers. The presiding officers, all of whom are cross-appointed to the OLRB, possess expertise in collective bargaining, broader public sector restructuring, and labour relations generally, which makes them well-qualified to hear these disputes.
- Several cases filed recently involve disputes arising out of the negotiation of amended pay equity plans where workplace circumstances have changed since the original plan was posted. Given some of those original pay equity plans were posted more than twenty years ago, there exists a significant potential for more disputes of this nature to be raised with the Tribunal, but they have not arrived in great numbers as yet.
- A significant portion of the current caseload has its genesis in audits conducted by the Pay Equity Office, which led to the issuing of orders. Those orders are either being objected to by employers, or in the absence of objections, are the subject of applications to enforce made by the Pay Equity Office itself. The latter can often be dealt with in writing or in an expedited proceeding that does not impact substantially on the Tribunal's caseload, but that is not necessarily true for the former. It is hard to anticipate the impact on the Tribunal of what appears to be increased auditing activity on the part of the Office.
- Several cases filed in the past year relate to the failure of broader public sector agencies to pay the adjustments required under their pay equity plans, usually plans concluded using the proxy methodology of comparison. While significant in number, no individual case is likely to require more than one hearing day unless there is some change in the Tribunal's jurisprudence.

Internal Scan:

- Given the relatively small number of cases heard by the Tribunal each year, on average 20 cases annually, the Tribunal now uses only part-time members. As long as the Tribunal could cross-appoint full-time members from the Ontario Labour Relations Board, recruiting part-time members was not a problem. However, the OLRB has now moved toward using only part-time members such that there are no longer full-time OLRB members. All of the Tribunal presiding officers or neutrals are cross-appointed to the OLRB.

Strategic Plan Implementation and Risk Assessment

The Tribunal will hear and decide cases through an accessible and fair hearing process, timely scheduling of hearings, and timely and thoughtful decisions.

The Tribunal will continue to employ a case management strategy that utilizes its adjudicative and mediation resources to resolve the issues between the parties. Where cases do not settle, the Tribunal will work on finding ways to streamline any hearing that has to take place through case management tools: agreed statement of facts, witness “will say” statements, etc.

The Act prescribes that a three person panel constitutes a quorum of the Tribunal. There are two part time members representative of employers and three part time members representative of employees. The Tribunal’s ability to constitute a quorum, either at all, or in a timely fashion, is seriously impacted by the illness or other unavailability of a member, or where a member has a conflict of interest. While the Statutory Powers Procedure Act permits one person to constitute a quorum of the Tribunal, this is conditional upon consent of the parties.

There is some risk associated with the Tribunal’s reliance on part-time members given that the OLRB will soon no longer have part-time members who can be cross-appointed to the Tribunal. Pay equity is a very complicated and specialized area. The low per diem rate payable to Tribunal part-time members (\$398 per hearing day verses the per diem rate of \$664 payable to OLRB members) and the low case load makes it very difficult to attract part-time members to the Tribunal alone.

There is also risk in the salary freeze for the Presiding Officers who are all OICs cross-appointed from the OLRB. PEHT and OLRB OIC salaries have been frozen for over six years. At the end of 2015, the Government recognized the need to provide a one time payment to Management and Excluded employees who had also not seen an increase in over six years. Unfortunately, OIC appointees were not included in this decision and no salary increases have been awarded. As a result, PEHT and OLRB OIC salaries remain at 2009 levels. These salaries are dramatically less than OICs could earn as private arbitrators and mediators which has resulted in an ongoing history of OLRB Vice-Chairs leaving the Board as experienced adjudicators and mediators to successfully pursue private careers at enhanced income levels. This trend negatively impacts on the PEHT’s ability to attract and retain qualified OICs who are cross-appointed from the OLRB. The frozen salary levels create serious retention and recruitment problems for the PEHT.

There is some risk associated with the possibility that a party may seek to participate in a hearing in French. Consecutive oral interpretation doubles the hearing time, and normal hearing costs, even without factoring in the interpreter and translation fees. Given the length of Tribunal hearings, the additional costs could be significant and a pressure on the Tribunal’s financial resources.

The number of applications filed with the Tribunal may not be an accurate predictor of hearing resources required. Due to the small sample size and the considerable variation in hearing time required to dispose of matters, it is almost meaningless to speak of an “average length of hearing”.

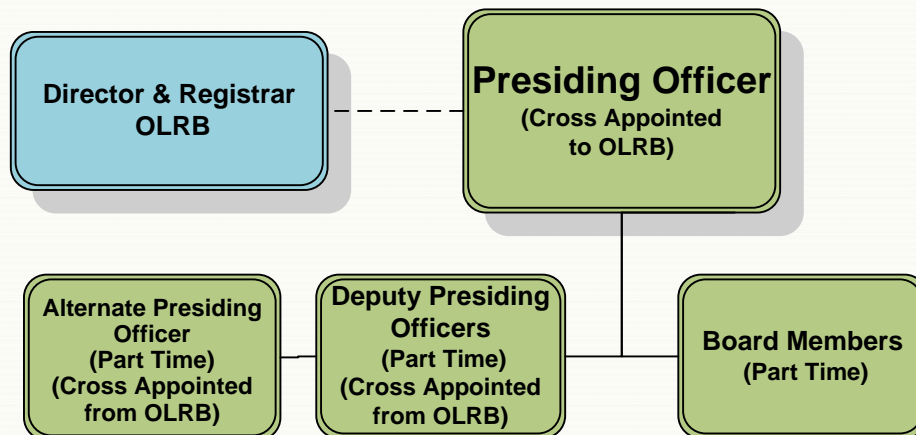
Key Activities with Stakeholders

The Tribunal will communicate with its community of client/ stakeholder groups by regular outreach sessions and applicable conferences and seminars.

Human Resources – Organization

Support services for the Tribunal are provided by the OLRB: Office of the Director/Registrar, Solicitors Office, the Manager of Administration, Mediation Field Staff and case processing staff of the OLRB. Tribunal staff is comprised entirely of Order-in-Council (OIC) Appointments including the Presiding Officer, Alternate Presiding Officer and two Deputy Presiding Officers, all cross appointed to the OLRB, as well as five part-time Members. Full-time OICs are paid an annual salary with the cost shared amongst the Tribunals to which they are appointed. The part-time members are paid by a per diem rate.

PEHT Organization Chart



Information Technology Plan

All information technology support, including maintenance of the Tribunal web site, is provided by the Board. The Board implemented a new Case Management System in 2014 which also applies to the Tribunal.

Communications Plan

The Tribunal will continue to communicate with its community of users through the use of its website, our decisions as posted on CANLII database; and through regular participation in conferences and committees.

Appendix A – Financial: PEHT Multi-Year from 2016 - 2019 (000's)

		FY 2016/17								
Program/Region	FTE	Salaries & Wages	Benefits	Transp. & Comm.	Services	Supplies & Equipmt.	Total ODOE	Sub-Total	Recoveries	TOTAL
Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal	2.0	275.1	39.7	15.0	135.8	1.0	151.8	466.6		466.6
							-			
Program Sub-total	2.0	275.1	39.7	15.0	135.8	1.0	151.8	466.6	0.0	466.6
Lease					31.7		31.7	31.7		31.7
Grand Total	2.0	275.1	39.7	15.0	167.5	1.0	183.5	498.3	0.0	498.3
		FY 2017-18 (\$000)								
Program/Region	FTE	Salaries & Wages	Benefits	Transp. & Comm.	Services	Supplies & Equipmt.	Total ODOE	Sub-Total	Recoveries	TOTAL
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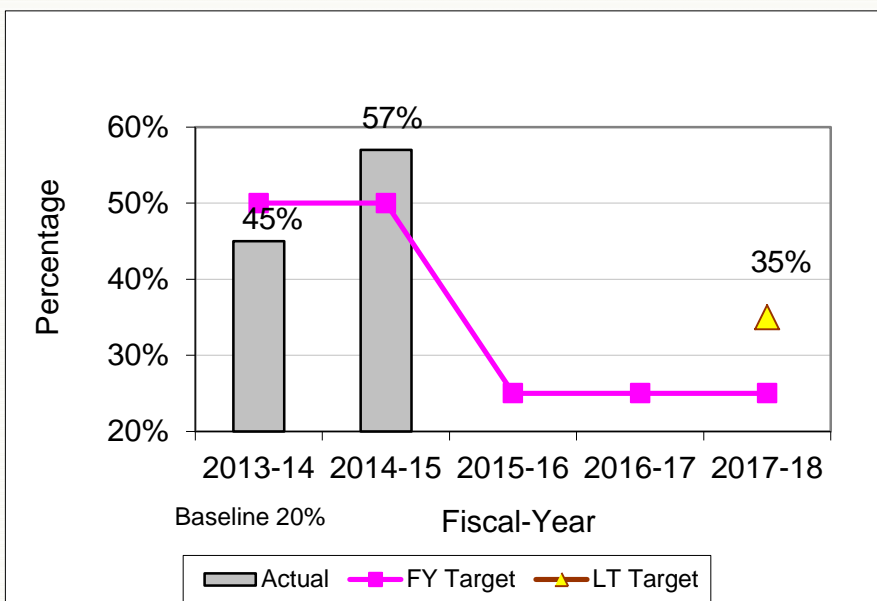
**2016-19 Agency Business Plan
Baseline by Compensation Group
Multi-year FTE Cap**

Agency: [Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal](#)

		2016-17					2017-18					2018-19						
Compensation Group	Regular		Fixed Term		Total		Regular		Fixed Term		Total		Regular		Fixed Term		Total	
	FTEs	Funded Vacancies	FTEs	Funded Vacancies	FTEs	Funded Vacancies	FTEs	Funded Vacancies	FTEs	Funded Vacancies	FTEs	Funded Vacancies	FTEs	Funded Vacancies	FTEs	Funded Vacancies	FTEs	Funded Vacancies
SMG / ITX					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00
MCP					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00
Excluded					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00
OPSEU					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00
AMAPCEO					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00
PEGO					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00
ALOC					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00
OCAA					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00
PSAT					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00
AOPDPS					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00
OPPA					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00
Minister's Staff					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00
OIC	2.00	2.00			2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00			2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00			2.00	2.00
To be Determined					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00
Students					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00					0.00	0.00
Total	2.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	2.00
		TOTAL with Funded Vacancies				2.00		TOTAL with Funded Vacancies				2.00		TOTAL with Funded Vacancies				2.00

Appendix C – Performance Measures (Public): PEHT 2016 - 2019

Percent of cases disposed of during the year.



2016 Commitments

- ▶ 25% of cases disposed of during the year.

Long-term Target

- ▶ 35% of cases disposed of during the year.

What does the graph show?

- ▶ The Tribunal's case load each year is made up of two parts: the cases carried over into the year from the previous year and the cases filed during the current year. The graph measures how much of the Tribunal's total case load is disposed of during the year.

Note: the lower settlement rate and time to conclude cases recognizes the complex nature of pay equity disputes which results in few negotiated settlements. As a result, almost all cases are decided only after lengthy hearings. In general, the same counsel represent the parties in pay equity cases and the scheduling of hearings is further extended by the availability of counsel as well as presiding officers who are cross-appointed to other Tribunals.