

**Business Plan  
Addendum  
2017 - 2020**

**aPPEALS**  
**COMMISSION**  
FOR ALBERTA WORKERS' COMPENSATION



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## Introduction

The purpose of the Business Plan Addendum is to provide an update on the 2017-2020 Business Plan, which was developed to align with the Government of Alberta's strategic direction on adjudication and dispute resolution, enhancing worker rights, developing the workforce, engaging people, and maintaining and sustaining an organization.

The Business Plan Addendum will also provide the current status of performance measures related to the four pillars in the 2017-2020 Business Plan:

1. Increase Awareness
2. Enhance Appeal Process
3. Produce Quality Decisions
4. Foster a Positive Work Environment

In addition, the Business Plan Addendum will introduce new performance measures, which are outlined in the Appeals Commission 2018 Communications Plan. The Communications Plan focuses on improving communications with our external and internal stakeholders and within the Commission. The communication strategies in this plan closely align with the goals outlined in the 2017-2020 Business Plan.

## PILLAR ONE: INCREASE AWARENESS

Increasing awareness of the Appeals Commission within the Government of Alberta and external stakeholders will improve communication and develop relationships with key individuals, agencies, boards, and departments. It is also important to focus on increasing awareness with the public, which will cultivate opportunities to develop knowledge of the Appeals Commission.

### GOAL: INCREASE AWARENESS OF THE APPEALS COMMISSION WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

#### Strategies

- Maintain communication and relationships with key officials within the Ministry, emphasizing our tribunal independence
- Maintain and build communication and relationships with key individuals and departments within the Government of Alberta, including other agencies, boards, and commissions
- Share information about the Appeals Commission within the Government of Alberta

#### Performance Measures

- 1.1.1 Send monthly updates to the Minister's Chief of Staff and Office of the Deputy Minister
  - a. Due: April 25, 2018
  - b. Status: In progress
- 1.1.2 Attend meetings with the Minister
  - a. Due: March 31, 2019
  - b. Status: Ongoing
- 1.1.3 Hold meetings with the Public Agency Secretariat and other agencies, boards, or commissions to promote information sharing
  - a. Due: March 31, 2019
  - b. Status: Ongoing
- 1.1.4 Release addendums to Business Plan
  - a. Due: April 30, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed
- 1.1.5 Release Annual Report and share appropriately within the Government of Alberta
  - a. Due: September 1, 2018
  - b. Status: In progress
- 1.1.6 Hold Annual General Meeting, with invitations circulated within Minister and Deputy Ministers' offices
  - a. Due: September 1, 2018
  - b. Status: Ongoing

- 1.1.7 Meet with the President of the WCB, the Medical Panel Officer, and Fair Practice Commissioner<sup>1</sup>
  - a. Due: September 1, 2018
  - b. Status: Ongoing
- 1.1.8 Release Business Plan Addendum and share appropriately with the Minister of Labour
  - a. Due: October 31, 2018
  - b. Status: In progress

## GOAL: INCREASE AWARENESS OF THE APPEALS COMMISSION WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

### Strategies

- Maintain communications and relationships with key external stakeholders
- Assess and enhance external communication tools

### Performance Measures

- 1.2.1 Establish and attend annual meeting with the Labour Task Force and Labour Coalition
  - a. Due: September 13, 2018
  - b. Status: Ongoing
- 1.2.2 Hold quarterly meetings with Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) executive, legal counsel, and Dispute Resolution and Decision Review Body
  - a. Due: March 31, 2018
  - b. Status: Ongoing
- 1.2.3 Hold an in-person meeting at the Canadian Council of Administrative Tribunals (CCAT) Conference
  - a. Due: June 4, 2018
  - b. Status: In progress
- 1.2.4 Conduct two scheduled information sessions about the Appeals Commission to employers and union representatives
  - a. Due: March 31, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed
- 1.2.5 Retain a communication specialist
  - a. Due: June 31, 2017
  - b. Status: Completed
- 1.2.6 Develop an external communication plan
  - a. Due: January 15, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed

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<sup>1</sup> See Recommendation 13 on page 52 in the *Working Together Report and Recommendations of the Alberta Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) Review Panel* document.

- 1.2.7 i. Develop website as a key platform for communication
  - a. Due: March 31, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed
- ii. Develop and implement use of email communications with appellant
  - a. Due: March 31, 2019
  - b. Status: In progress
- iii. Commence Phase 2 of website project, submitting electronic appeals
  - a. Due: March 31, 2019
  - b. Status: In progress
- 1.2.8 Transfer maintenance of website communication updates to Communications Coordinator
  - a. Due: April 30, 2018
  - b. Status: Ongoing
- 1.2.9 Review website analytics and website feedback monthly
  - a. Due: March 31, 2019
  - b. Status: Ongoing
- 1.2.10 Host annual information sessions for all representatives
  - a. Due: August 1, 2018
  - b. Status: In progress

**GOAL: INCREASE AWARENESS OF THE APPEALS COMMISSION WITH THE PUBLIC**

**Strategies**

- Renew and revise publicly available information about the Appeals Commission
- Promote opportunities to learn more about the Appeals Commission

**Performance Measures**

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- 1.3.1 Release revised Rules and Practice Guidelines
  - a. Due: September 1, 2018
  - b. Status: In progress
- 1.3.2 Prepare Code of Conduct for labour representatives
  - a. Due: December 31, 2018
  - b. Status: In progress
- 1.3.3 Commence using revised plain language rewrite of standard correspondence (letter templates)
  - a. Due: September 1, 2018
  - b. Status: In progress
- 1.3.4 Conduct and promote Annual General Meeting
  - a. Due: September 1, 2018
  - b. Status: Ongoing
- 1.3.5 Begin process of rewriting Rules, Practice Guidelines, and correspondence in plain language to enhance readability, comprehension, and ease of publication
  - a. Due: March 31, 2019
  - b. Status: In progress
- 1.3.6 Develop external building signage
  - a. Due: December 15, 2018
  - b. Status: Delayed
- 1.3.7 Update media plan
  - a. Due: September 1, 2018
  - b. Status: In progress
- 1.3.8 Create webpage and upload Appeals Commission business plans and annual reports on the website
  - a. Due: September 1, 2018
  - b. Status: In progress
- 1.3.9 Improve/add plain language content to the website
  - a. Due: November 30, 2018
  - b. Status: In progress



- 1.3.10 Display awards and endorsements on website (IPAC, Canada's Top 100 Employers)
  - a. Due: November 30, 2018
  - b. Status: In progress
- 1.3.11 Include a copyright notice on website
  - a. Due: June 1, 2018
  - b. Status: In progress
- 1.3.12 Add a search function to website
  - a. Due: September 28, 2018
  - b. Status: In progress
- 1.3.13 Create videos on how the appeals process works and the types of hearings for the website
  - a. Due: April 15, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed

## PILLAR TWO: ENHANCE APPEAL PROCESS

Enhancing the appeal process within the Appeals Commission comprises of: increasing quality, implementing innovative use of technology, improving accessibility, and incorporating information governance. Successful execution of these strategies will create more efficient and accessible hearings and appeal processes for clients.

### GOAL: INCREASE QUALITY AT ALL STAGES OF THE APPEAL PROCESS

#### Strategy

- Establish continuous quality management program (Appeals Commission Quality Framework) that includes standards and measurements for all working groups within the Appeals Commission

#### Performance Measures

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- 2.1.1 Begin process review and report for:
  - i. Appeals Services
    - a. Due: TBD 2019
    - b. Status: Deferred
  - ii. IT Services
    - a. Due: TBD 2019
    - b. Status: Deferred
  - iii. Administrative Services
    - a. Due: TBD 2019
    - b. Status: Deferred
  - iv. Legal Services
    - a. Due: TBD 2019
    - b. Status: Deferred
- 2.1.2 Periodic consultation with internal stakeholders regarding quality standards and measures
  - a. Due: March 31, 2019
  - b. Status: Ongoing
- 2.1.3 Develop and deliver training to support quality
  - a. Due: September 1, 2018
  - b. Status: Ongoing
- 2.1.4 Develop annual draft of Appeals Commission Quality Framework (version 1) including:
  - i. Map of current processes
    - a. Due: March 31, 2018
    - b. Status: Completed

- ii. Quality standards for Appeal Documents Packages
  - a. Due: March 31, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed
- iii. Documentation of current and developing quality-related initiatives, including Reasonable Reader program
  - a. Due: March 31, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed
- iv. Annual strategic plan for continuous improvement of appeal process quality
  - a. Due: March 31, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed
- v. Training required to support quality of appeal process
  - a. Due: March 31, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed
- vi. Analysis of engagement and compliance
  - a. Due: March 31, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed
- vii. Documentation of external quality benchmarks and best practices
  - a. Due: March 31, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed
- viii. Quality management program performance metrics
  - a. Due: March 31, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed

## **GOAL: IMPLEMENT INNOVATIVE USE OF TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE APPEAL PROCESS**

### Strategies

- Leverage use of technology for more flexible, digital, and streamlined hearings
- Leverage use of technology for more flexible, digital, and streamlined appeal process
- Leverage use of technology for a more user-friendly client experience

### Performance Measures

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- 2.2.1 Roll out enhanced website
  - a. Due: June 2017
  - b. Status: Completed
- 2.2.2 Trial paperless hearing
  - a. Due: October 3, 2017
  - b. Status: Completed

- 2.2.3 Offer video conferencing options to replace teleconference in appropriate situations
  - a. Due: April 30, 2018
  - b. Status: In progress
- 2.2.4 Make Wi-Fi access available for hearing participants
  - a. Due: February 1, 2017
  - b. Status: Completed
- 2.2.5 Complete internal training on digital records management
  - a. Due: December 15, 2017
  - b. Status: Completed
- 2.2.6 Complete 100% of Managing Information at Work certificates
  - a. Due: October 1, 2018
  - b. Status: In progress
- 2.2.7 Hold enhanced website review and feedback sessions
  - a. Due: February 28, 2019
  - b. Status: Pending
- 2.2.8 Confirm and implement disposition schedules for Appeals Commission
  - a. Due: March 31, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed
- 2.2.9 Create a business case to explore possibility of translators attending hearings via video conference
  - a. Status: Suspended
- 2.2.10 Develop a business case to explore possibility of in-house redaction
  - a. Due: April 1, 2020
  - b. Status: In progress

## **GOAL: IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY OF APPEALS SERVICES**

### Strategies

- Ensure appeal process is sensitive to diverse needs
- Ensure official publications and correspondence are responsive to the needs of our clients

### Performance Measure

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- 2.3.1 Attend training, which helps public bodies ensure that policies and practices are responsive to the diverse needs of Albertans
  - a. Due: March 31, 2019
  - b. Status: Ongoing

## **GOAL: INCORPORATE INFORMATION GOVERNANCE INTO EVERY ASPECT OF THE APPEAL PROCESS**

### Strategies

- Embed information management governing standards and practices into all working groups of the Appeals Commission
- Ensure that all working groups are defaulting to an electronic records system where possible

### Performance Measures

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- 2.4.1 Recruit information management champions from each working group
  - a. Due: September 15, 2017
  - b. Status: Completed
- 2.4.2 Design awareness tools for filing, storing, and disposing of electronic and hard copy records
  - a. Due: March 31, 2019
  - b. Status: Ongoing
- 2.4.3 Commence bi-annual training on transitioning from hard copy to digital collection, storage, and circulation of records
  - a. Due: January 15, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed
- 2.4.4 Train all working groups on how to manage emails according to information management best practices
  - a. Due: March 31, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed
- 2.4.5 Incorporate records clean-up days for all working groups
  - a. Due: March 31, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed
- 2.4.6 Develop an information management procedures manual
  - a. Due: February 28, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed
- 2.4.7 Align a vital records plan with the new business continuity plan
  - a. Due: March 31, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed

## PILLAR THREE: PRODUCE QUALITY DECISIONS

Providing Commissioners with the support, training opportunities, and education they need to produce timely and fair decisions is reflective of our commitment to serve the needs of our clients. Ongoing support for our Commissioners will ensure that the Appeals Commission is protecting and treating clients fairly through our decision-making process.

### GOAL: PRODUCE QUALITY DECISIONS THAT ARE FAIR, INDEPENDENT, AND RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF OUR CLIENTS

#### Strategies

- Achieve awareness about and agreement on decision standards
- Provide continued support, education, and training to Commissioners
- Recruit qualified Commissioners

#### Performance Measures

- 3.1.1 Establish appropriate plain language guidelines for our decision makers through consultation with Commissioners and training, including:
  - i. Literacy awareness sessions
    - a. Due: March 31, 2018
    - b. Status: Completed
  - ii. Basic plain language workshop
    - a. Due: September 28, 2017
    - b. Status: Completed
  - iii. Decision standards workshop
    - a. Due: October 30, 2017
    - b. Status: Completed
- 3.1.2 Participate in ongoing engagement with Commissioners to ensure appropriate training and support is provided
  - a. Due: March 31, 2019
  - b. Status: Ongoing
- 3.1.3 Provide annual commissioner training that includes:
  - i. Spring Training Conference with workshops, roundtable discussions, refresher training, and/or external experts
    - a. Due: April 21, 2018
    - b. Status: Completed
  - ii. Two medical and two legal training sessions delivered by external experts
    - a. Due: March 31, 2019
    - b. Status: Ongoing

- iii. Guided discussions/roundtable sessions or other short training sessions as required at hearing chair meetings (open to all Commissioners)
  - a. Due: March 31, 2019
  - b. Status: In progress and ongoing
- 3.1.4 Make Reasonable Reader program available to all Commissioners to help ensure decisions are written to established standards, including plain language
  - a. Due: March 31, 2019
  - b. Status: Ongoing
- 3.1.5 Introduce revised orientation program for new Commissioners that includes a structured mentoring program and a Reasonable Reader program
  - a. Due: September 29, 2017
  - b. Status: Completed
- 3.1.6 Develop annual draft of Appeals Commission Training Plan (version 1), including:
  - i. Documentation of current and developing training initiatives
    - a. Due: March 31, 2018
    - b. Status: Completed
  - ii. Annual strategic plan for continuous improvement of training
    - a. Due: March 31, 2018
    - b. Status: Completed
  - iii. Documentation of role-specific competencies and required outcomes
    - a. Status: Delayed
  - iv. Links between training, knowledge management, and quality/performance metrics for training
    - a. Due: March 31, 2018
    - b. Status: Completed
- 3.1.7 Evaluate content on knowledge management database
  - a. Due: August 31, 2018
  - b. Status: In progress
- 3.1.8 Evaluate requirements and options for knowledge management database
  - a. Due: May 31, 2018
  - b. Status: In progress
- 3.1.9 Establish internal standard processes for the recruitment and reappointment of Commissioners
  - a. Due: March 31, 2019
  - b. Status: Ongoing
- 3.1.10 Validate Competency Matrix
  - a. Due: March 31, 2019
  - b. Status: In progress
- 3.1.11 Introduce revised performance review procedure for Commissioners
  - a. Due: January 30, 2019
  - b. Status: In progress

- 3.1.12 Develop a business plan to review legal services resourcing and capacity
  - a. Due: January 30, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed
- 3.1.13 Ensure 98% upheld decision success by the courts and Ombudsman
  - a. Due: March 31, 2019
  - b. Status: In progress



## PILLAR FOUR: FOSTER A POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Continuing to create a positive work environment is a significant part of improving and maintaining culture and morale within the Appeals Commission. A workplace where morale is high and culture is rich leads to an increase in productivity, efficiency, and motivation.

### GOAL: ENHANCE PHYSICAL WORKSPACE TO MAXIMIZE PRODUCTIVITY AND EFFICIENCY

#### Strategy

- Assess and, if necessary, reconfigure workspaces to meet the needs of each working group

#### Performance Measures

- 4.1.1 Ensure Medical Panel Office (MPO) is complete
  - a. Due: January 31, 2017
  - b. Status: Completed
- 4.1.2 Reconfigure Appeals Services workspace
  - a. Due: March 31, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed

### GOAL: SUPPORT A POSITIVE AND RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE, AND ENHANCE MORALE AND POSITIVE WORK EXPERIENCE

#### Strategies

- Provide opportunities for professional and personal development
- Provide team building opportunities
- Continue to explore best practices utilized by top employers in Alberta
- Create an inclusive work environment

#### Performance Measures

- 4.2.1 Conduct four social activities per year in both offices
  - a. Due: March 31, 2019
  - b. Status: Ongoing
- 4.2.2 Develop the commission community outreach initiative and hold our first volunteer activity
  - a. Due: August 27, 2019
  - b. Status: Ongoing
- 4.2.3 Review participation in the commission flexible work options program annually and ensure it meets the needs of the Appeals Commission
  - a. Due: March 31, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed

- 4.2.4 Conduct Employment Engagement Survey
  - a. Due: March 31, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed
- 4.2.5 Ensure that staff completes all of the required e-courses, including: Respectful Workplace - Respect in the Government of Alberta and Managing Information at Work
  - a. Due: March 31, 2017
  - b. Status: Completed
- 4.2.6 Offer ongoing opportunities for training and professional development for staff, including Appeals Commission University's regular guest speakers
  - a. Due: March 31, 2019
  - b. Status: Ongoing
- 4.2.7 Provide two Lunch and Learn sessions in Edmonton and Calgary annually
  - a. Due: March 31, 2018
  - b. Status: Completed
- 4.2.8 Hold bi-annual town halls in Edmonton and Calgary
  - a. Due: August 31, 2018
  - b. Status: Ongoing
- 4.2.9 Recruit one Aboriginal Peoples of Canada individual
  - a. Due: March 30, 2019
  - b. Status: In progress



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# APPEALS COMMISSION FOR ALBERTA WORKERS' COMPENSATION