

# ACFO-ACAF: The best return by any measure

Association of Canadian Financial Officers  
March 2019



## **ACFO-ACAF: Value for your money**

We know that, as financial professionals, you understand value for money. We also know that every month you invest some of your money in ACFO-ACAF, so we want to be clear about the value you get for that money. We want to show you, using concrete examples and hard numbers, why we are confident ACFO-ACAF offers a better return on your investment than you could get anywhere else.

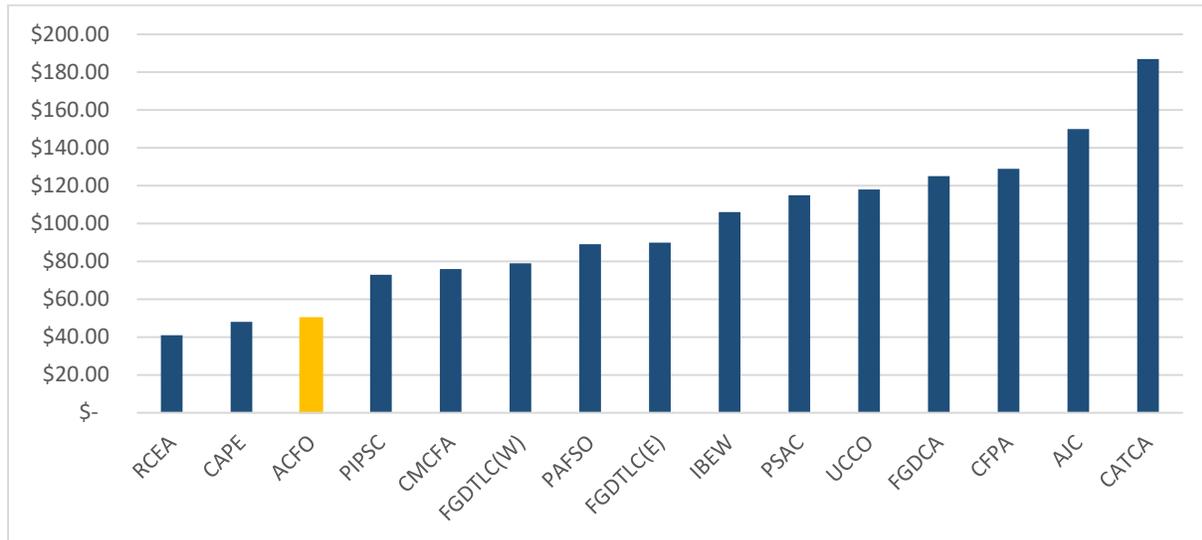
Nearly thirty years ago, ACFO-ACAF was created in part out of a desire for greater value for money from a union. Our membership then felt that their unique needs were not being met. They wanted a union exclusively dedicated to financial and comptrollership professionals founded on the twin principles of superior service and unparalleled value. We continue to work to adhere to these principles every day.

To illustrate the value ACFO-ACAF offers with real-life examples but without compromising our members' privacy, we have created a sample member who we will call Angela Lyon. Angela is not a real member, but her experiences reflect and are shared by many of our actual members. Through the following sections we will demonstrate how Angela's annual investment in ACFO-ACAF is returned to her several times over.

### **An investment in your career**

Like every ACFO-ACAF member, Angela pays \$50 a month in dues for a total of \$600 per year (\$450 net after tax deductions). This is among lowest dues rates of all federal public service unions (as shown in Figure 1 below). In some cases, it is two to three times less than what other public servants pay their unions. Since its inception thirty years ago, ACFO-ACAF has consistently been among the unions with the lowest dues. ACFO-ACAF has been able to maintain low dues by minimizing overhead costs and securing alternate revenue streams to ensure that the majority of dues are spent on direct member benefits. We also review our expenditures as part of our annual budgeting process.

Figure 1: Federal public service union dues (monthly)



For Angela, this \$50 represents an investment in improving her compensation, protecting her job and advancing her career while being part of the union best suited to advocate for her interests.

### Value: Consistently above-pattern compensation

Over the years ACFO-ACAF has consistently secured agreements above the pattern set by other bargaining agents for our members. Our bargaining team has negotiated better wage increases than most other public service unions and exclusive benefits such as an additional week of annual leave at members’ fifth year of service. We have always achieved all this through arbitration and without resorting to strike and the resulting pay losses.

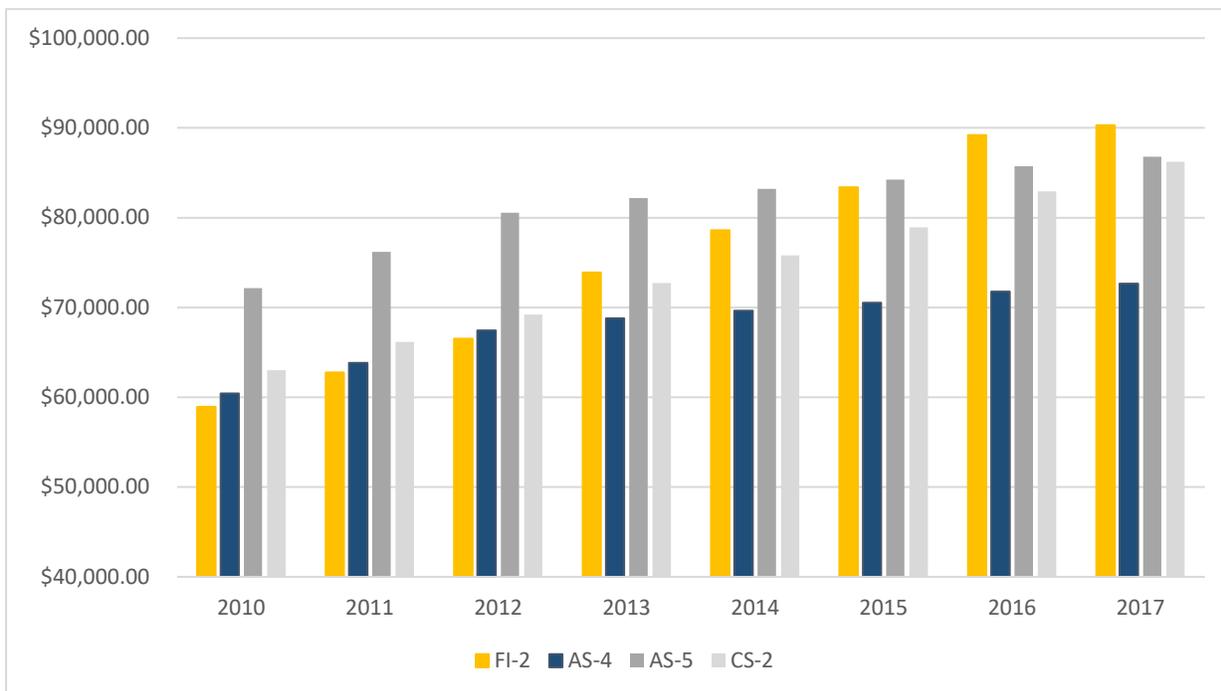
Angela began her career in the public service in 2010 as an FI-2. Over the course of seven years, Angela’s salary increased by 53%. In the same time, her colleague who is a CS-2 saw her salary increased by 37% and her AS-4 colleague’s salary only increased by 20% (see Figures 2 and 3). Over seven years, Angela’s salary even eclipsed that of an AS-5, who started out making \$13,000 more than her.

Figure 2: Table of FI-2, AS-4, AS-5 and CS-2 sample salaries, 2010-2017

Year	FI-2	AS-4	AS-5	CS-2
2010	\$58,951	\$60,435	\$72,148	\$62,996
2011	\$62,764	\$63,829	\$76,202	\$66,151
2012	\$66,531	\$67,444	\$80,560	\$69,223
2013	\$73,904	\$68,793	\$82,171	\$72,730
2014	\$78,601	\$69,653	\$83,198	\$75,791
2015	\$83,405	\$70,524	\$84,238	\$78,912
2016	\$89,199	\$71,763	\$85,717	\$82,923
2017	\$90,314	\$72,660	\$86,788	\$86,213

Because of the agreement negotiated by ACFO-ACAF’s collective bargaining team, Angela was able to not only match her colleagues’ salaries but surpass them. As a result of ACFO-ACAF’s 2013 arbitration decision, the FI pay grid was compressed to reduce the number of FI-1 and FI-2 levels, creating significant financial benefits for FI-1s and FI-2s. FIs of all levels also received an additional 1% pay restructure increase.

Figure 3: Graph of FI-2, AS-4, AS-5 and CS-2 sample salaries, 2010-2017



The same arbitration decision meant that in 2015, after five years of service, Angela received an extra week of paid vacation. By contrast, her colleagues, like almost all other public servants, did not receive their fourth week of paid vacation until they reached eight years of service.

Angela has now reached the top increment and is benefiting from the additional 2% Chief Financial Officer Transitional Allowance which was implemented in 2006 and later fully rolled into salary. No other occupational group has benefited from this allowance.

In 2017, ACFO-ACAF negotiated another above-pattern settlement with a 1.25% increase and 1% market restructure versus the 0.5% restructure the AS group received. ACFO-ACAF was able to get the larger market adjustment, which is a permanent, pensionable salary adjustment, in part because the union has long opted for salary adjustments instead of signing bonuses, which are one-offs and not pensionable.

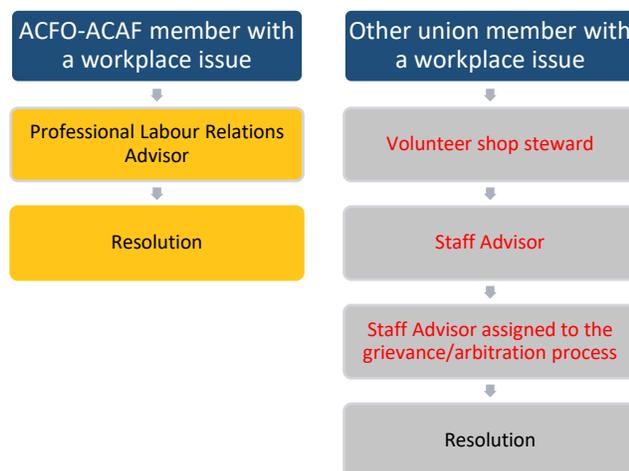
As of 2017, the final year covered by the most recent ACFO-ACAF public service collective agreement, Angela earns \$90,314 per year, up 1% from the previous year's salary of \$89,199. Based on that salary, every 1% increase translates into an additional \$1,115 in her pocket annually. The value of that 1% will increase and compound year after year as Angela moves up the FI pay grid and receives further percentage pay increases through collective bargaining.

## Value: Timely, professional labour relations support

ACFO-ACAF offers members professional advocacy and representation services, answers and advice from our Labour Relations Advisors (LRAs) at no cost with a promise of a quick response time and continuity of service.

When a member contacts us with a workplace issue or question, the first person they speak to is an experienced, professional Labour Relations Advisor (LRA) who is a trained lawyer, not a volunteer, shop steward or colleague like in other unions. We also offer an almost immediate response time by telephone or email and a promise that the LRA a member speaks to the first time they contact ACFO-ACAF is the person who will handle their case to its resolution.

Figure 4: Workplace issue resolution process



Our LRAs can offer guidance and representation in the case of significant workplace issues, including those requiring mediation, arbitration, staffing complaints, human rights complaints or legal action before the Canadian courts

Throughout her seven-year career in the public service, Angela has had a largely positive working experience. However, last year she was faced with a workplace conflict neither she nor her superiors could address on their own. Approximately 15% of the cases ACFO-ACAF handles are complex, like Angela's, and can take an average of 40 hours to resolve.

If Angela had to consult a labour lawyer, she could have expected to pay \$280-\$400 per hour for a lawyer with the same level of experience as one of ACFO-ACAF's labour relations advisors, all of whom are trained lawyers. In that case, Angela would have had to spend \$11,200 - \$14,040 out of pocket to resolve her issue.

In addition to providing representation, our LRAs are also available to answer any questions members might have about their collective agreement or on topics such as leave and medical or dental coverage.

Last January, Angela had a question about a leave request, and had some trouble understanding one of the items in the new agreement. She spent an hour on the phone with a Labour Relations Advisor getting advice and answers to her questions. Again, had she consulted a labour lawyer, she could have expected to spend \$280-\$400 to have her questions answered.

## **Value: Exceptional professional development opportunities**

ACFO-ACAF has secured the biggest per capita investment into professional development for its members of any union in the federal public service thanks in large part to the Joint Career Development Program (JCDP), which was part of the collective agreement signed in 2017. We offer high-quality events with engaging speakers and informative panels at zero cost.

These professional development events and courses are classified by the Office of the Comptroller General as training, just like events hosted by the Financial Management Institute (FMI) and CPA Canada. ACFO-ACAF's professional development events count as training for those FIs with or without CPA designations. For members with CPA designations, they can also count toward CPA credits.

Our professional development events include an annual full-day Spring Tune Up in the National Capital Region and several full- or half-day Regional Tune Ups across Canada.

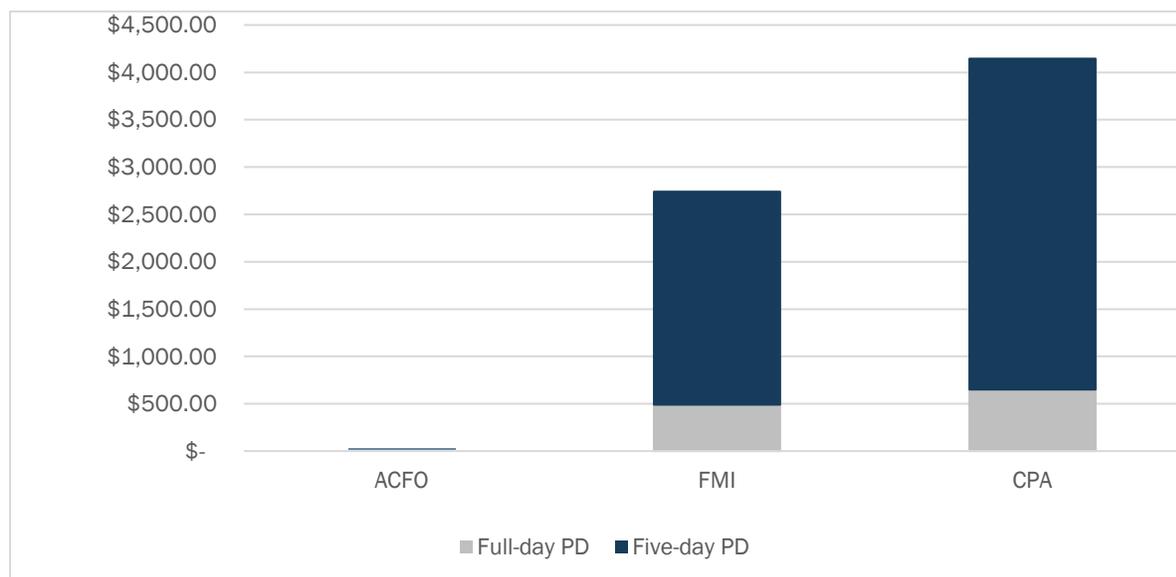
Angela recently moved from Moncton to the NCR. Last year, she attended one of ACFO-ACAF's half-day Regional Tune Ups. Had she attended a half-day event hosted by CPA, she would have earned the same 3 hours of CPA credits but the training fee would have been \$395.

This year Angela attended ACFO-ACAF’s Spring Tune Up in the NCR and earned 5.5 hours of CPA credit. If she had attended one day of FMI’s PD Week, the training fee would have been \$490. If she had attended a full-day event hosted by CPA, the fee would have been \$650. In both cases, she would have received the same number of hours of CPA credit.

Beyond our Tune Up events, ACFO-ACAF also offers members the opportunity to apply for professional development such as language training, CPA training, an FI Interchange program and an FI-only uOttawa Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy (IFSD) course through the JCDP. The JCDP is funded by the employer and jointly administered by ACFO-ACAF and the Office of the Comptroller General. All JCDP training is free for ACFO-ACAF members.

Angela applied to the JCDP and was selected to attend the five-day uOttawa IFSD 360 course. She received valuable professional development training and 35 hours of CPA credit. If she had instead attended the entirety of FMI week, she would have received 35 hours of credit and spent \$2,250. If she had attended one of CPA’s “in-depth” conferences, she would have earned 25 hours of credit and spent \$3,495.

Figure 5: Professional development event and conference costs



## Value: A respected voice and a commitment to service

While the example of Angela is useful for illustrating ACFO-ACAF’s value at the individual level, we also represent the interests of the financial management and comptrollership community as a group.

When it comes to advocating for financial professionals in the public service, we can say with confidence that no one is better placed than ACFO-ACAF. We understand the specific challenges of comptrollership in the public sector and we know how to advocate for such important professionals

in this context. We have worked for years to build relationships with members of Parliament, senior department officials and with the offices of the Comptroller General and Auditor General. Through our written briefs and our appearances both in Parliamentary committees and the media, ACFO-ACAF has cultivated a reputation as a thoughtful, respected voice on issues relating to public sector financial management including whistleblower protection and staffing. We are also leveraging our expertise and reputation to address the issue of pay equity for our members. ACFO-ACAF identified a pay gap affecting our community early on and through a combination of formal grievance, advocacy and appearances in the media and government committees, and has been working to close that gap.

We have done all this to better position ourselves to influence decision-makers and make positive change on behalf of the financial management and comptrollership community.

We have also done this while remaining committed to providing superior day-to-day support and service to members. ACFO-ACAF is proud to see our commitment to service reflected in our members' levels of satisfaction and engagement. In a recent satisfaction survey, ACFO-ACAF received an average satisfaction score of 4 out of 5 with a significant majority of respondents reporting being either satisfied or very satisfied with the service they received. In a ratification vote following the most recent round of negotiations for the public service FI Community, an overwhelming 93.6% of voters cast their ballot in favour of ratifying the agreement ACFO-ACAF proposed.

These are objective measures that demonstrate ACFO-ACAF's success at representing our members. We are also continually working to improve our level of service and to make greater progress on the issues that are important to our community.

## **ACFO-ACAF: The best return by any measure**

We think it's clear that by any measure ACFO-ACAF offers our members the best return on your investment.

We make you money by securing above-pattern compensation packages that continue to compound and pay dividends for years to come without ever resorting to strike action and the resulting pay losses. We save you money by offering exceptional career development opportunities and professional, efficient labour relations representation and advice by trained lawyers, both at zero cost. We leverage our invaluable connections to make positive change on the issues that matter most to you. And we do all this while providing superior day-to-day service and maintaining one of the lowest dues rates of all federal public service unions.

We believe we provide the best value for your money, but we are still working every day to improve our standard of excellence. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions about your dues or ACFO-ACAF services, please contact ACFO-ACAF President, Dany Richard, at [drichard@acfo-acaf.com](mailto:drichard@acfo-acaf.com).