



Annual Report 2019

There's no doubt about it – 2019 was a year of unprecedented success for ACFO-ACAF and our community. Not only was it our 30th anniversary as the union for financial professionals, it was also a year of growth and change, one that saw us expand our membership, our influence and the services we offer.

This past year we negotiated three landmark agreements: the new FI public service collective agreement, the Phoenix damages agreement and the pay equity joint study agreement. We also successfully campaigned to represent the newly-created Comptrollership Group. Finally, 2019 saw us launch two new professional development initiatives, the Comptrollership Training Centre and the CV Inventory. We did all this in twelve short months, while maintaining the same high standard of service our community has come to expect from ACFO-ACAF.

We at ACFO-ACAF want to see more years like these. We believe it is important that we be able to make the most of opportunities for growth while continuing to provide high-quality services, professional representation and effective advocacy on behalf of our community. To ensure we can do this while maintaining financially responsible operations in the long term, ACFO-ACAF will be proposing a modest, reasonable change in dues structure in the coming year. We hope to have your support in safeguarding the future of our community.

The ACFO-ACAF staff and Board of Directors take pride in what we accomplished this year, but even as we do, we are keenly aware that none of it could have been possible without our membership. You showed your support in the ratification vote and membership card drive and offered your input on everything from collective bargaining priorities to improving our professional development services. In every decision we made, you have informed and inspired us. We are truly grateful for your support and proud to represent such a strong, engaged community of professionals – this year and every year.

Collective bargaining

In a busy, fruitful year, one of the achievements we are most proud of is reaching a strong new collective agreement for our public service FI members that received a record 99% ratification vote.

Highlights of the public service FI collective agreement include:

- an 8% increase over four years, including a 5% increase over the first two years;
- improvements to the Maternity Allowance;
- expansions of the definition of family for Leave with Pay for Family-Related Responsibilities and Leave Without Pay for the Care of Immediate Family;
- new Caregiver Leave provisions;
- improved access to leave balance information;
- the introduction of 75 hours of Domestic Violence Leave for those that need it;
- improvements to the agreement on Supporting Employee Wellness (MOU); and
- a lump sum payment of \$400 to each member to reflect longer-than-normal timelines for some retro payments, with further financial penalties if the employer does not meet the timeline.

Not only did we set an ACFO-ACAF record for percentage of voting members in favour of the collective agreement, we were once again the first group to ratify, putting us first in the queue for implementation. Thanks to this strategy, most of you are already receiving your new rates of pay while some groups are still waiting for implementation and others are yet to even reach their agreements.



ACFO-ACAF President Dany Richard announced the results of the ratification vote during the annual Spring Tune Up development day in Ottawa on June 4, 2019.

Phoenix damages agreement

We were able secure this agreement thanks to the hard work of the Collective Bargaining Committee and the invaluable input of the wider public service FI Community. In emails, at events and through the collective bargaining survey, you shared with us the priorities that shaped our approach throughout negotiations.

Going forward, we will continue negotiations on the Employee Wellness Support short-term disability plan. Rest assured, we will not stop until we have a wellness plan that is an improvement on the existing sick leave regime. We will ensure that all ACFO-ACAF members will have the coverage they need when they need it, and only then will we bring the proposed plan to the ACFO-ACAF membership for approval.

The Phoenix payroll debacle has plagued ACFO-ACAF's membership for years, affecting not only employees who directly experienced a payroll error, but also those who shouldered a heavier workload as a result of an error-ridden and overtaxed system.

We are keenly aware of how much the ACFO-ACAF membership has endured due to Phoenix so we were gratified to announce in May that, along with 14 other bargaining agents, we had approved an agreement on Phoenix damages. This agreement provides damages to all public service members and is in addition to the reimbursement and financial compensation affected members will receive.

The Phoenix damages agreement awards:

- two days of leave for employees who were employed in the federal public service in 2016-2017;
- one day of leave for those who were employed in 2017-2018;



Representatives from the participating unions and the employer met at the ACFO-ACAF office to sign the damages agreement on June 12, 2019.

- one day of leave for those employed in 2018-2019; and
- one day of leave for those employed in 2019-2020 (to be added within 150 days of the end of that fiscal year).

All public service FI members should have already seen these credits in their leave banks. In addition to the leave credits, the agreement also set the parameters for a more efficient process for reimbursement of additional costs and compensation and/or damages to be awarded to those who experienced payroll errors.

We know that for those directly affected by Phoenix, nothing can truly compensate for what you have undergone. Our goal was to expediate the reimbursement process and secure an acknowledgement of what the community has endured.

In the coming year, ACFO-ACAF will continue to advocate for the government to resolve Phoenix issues once and for all and to ensure that every affected employee is compensated. Our Labour Relations Team will also continue to offer support to members directly affected by Phoenix and guidance as they navigate the reimbursement and damages process.

Pay equity joint study



As a female-predominant group, the FI Community has faced wage discrimination. The joint study will bring this case to a faster resolution in a more amicable way.

The fight for pay equity has been one that ACFO-ACAF has fought tirelessly for years. It has been a long, often frustrating process, but our community consistently made their voice clear: it is a battle worth fighting.

This year we are proud to report that we have made significant headway toward ensuring our members receive fair and equitable compensation. In June, ACFO-ACAF reached an agreement with the employer to conduct a joint study that will resolve our pay equity complaint in 24 months.

Our most recent pay equity complaint was filed in 2016 after a preliminary study identified a wage gap between the public service FI Group and male-predominant groups doing work of comparable value. We knew that waiting for our claim to be adjudicated before the Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board could be a decades-long process, so we simultaneously approached the employer to carry out a joint study overseen by a third party to resolve the complaint in a proactive, collaborative way.

Our goal is to reach a fair, timely resolution while avoiding costly litigation and we believe that an evidence-based process with the support of a neutral third party is the best way to accomplish that.

Over the next two years, ACFO-ACAF and the employer will be working with the jointly-selected experts to choose the right comparator groups and determine if there is a gender-based pay gap affecting the public service FI Group.

The CT Group

When it comes to the future of the ACFO-ACAF community, the most significant development of 2019 was the creation of the new Comptrollership (CT) Group and the decision by the Federal Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board for ACFO-ACAF to represent this group.

In March, Treasury Board announced the creation of the CT Group, a new umbrella occupational group that would include FIs, AUs and some internal auditors. Following the announcement, ACFO-ACAF immediately rolled out a comprehensive communications plan informing our existing public service FI members about impacts and next steps and encouraging all future CT Group members to submit membership cards showing their support for ACFO-ACAF to



ACFO-ACAF representatives hosted information sessions and town halls throughout the spring to collect signed cards and explain what the new CT Group meant for FIs.

be the bargaining agent representing the new group. We collected cards through the mail and in-person at ACFO-ACAF headquarters, at local Networking Nights, at Town Halls in Moncton, Fredericton, Charlottetown, North York, Toronto, Halifax, St-Hubert, Winnipeg and Kingston and through drop-off points near major public service office complexes.

By mid-June, thanks in large part to the overwhelming support of the public service FI Community, we were able to present nearly 3,000 signed cards to the Board. The Board officially approved our application in late September, making ACFO-ACAF the representative of the CT Group. We are truly grateful for the breadth of community response we received. To see the cards, concrete demonstrations of your support, pour in was truly an honour.

We are very excited about the Comptrollership Group and the new opportunities it presents. For ACFO-ACAF, the CT Group represents the growth of our community and recognition by the employer of the unique importance of the comptrollership function. We will leverage both this recognition and our increased membership to advocate for improvements for our community going forward.

Throughout 2020, ACFO-ACAF will be negotiating with the employer to define the transition process and timeline to ensure that the transition happens smoothly and effectively for all our members.

Professional development



More than 1,200 ACFO-ACAF members attended the annual Spring Tune Up development day, which also featured our first ever career fair.

2019 was a record year for professional development at ACFO-ACAF as well, with the continued success of the Joint Career Development Program (JCDP) and the creation of two distinct new development initiatives.

Joint Career Development Program

This past year of Joint Career Development Program (JCDP) offerings saw the return of program favourites such as the IFSD 360 course led by Kevin Page, as well as the introduction of new programs, such as the Data Analytics Conference and Job Shadowing and Intragroup Job Swap.

This year's JCDP offerings included:

- three sessions of the Authentic Leadership course hosted by Trillium Teams designed to help participants become a more effective communicator and engaging leader;
- two Data Analytics Conferences, which discussed the application of strategic analytics approaches in financial management;
- the FI-only, five-day uOttawa Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy (IFSD) 360 course, a full circle insider's guide to the key facets of the financial cycle led by Kevin Page;
- the Persuasive Communications for Financial Officers course, which offered participants hands-on lessons on how to present financial information clearly and concisely;
- 12 Networking Nights held in Ottawa and throughout the regions;
- job shadowing, which gives FIs across Canada the opportunity shadow FIs in their respective cities and host FIs in their respective departments on a flexible schedule with no associated cost or travel component;
- four sessions of the FI Interchange Program, held in Toronto, Montreal and the NCR; and



Regional Tune Up events across the country featured presentations on building networks and opportunities to test those skills at post-event networking mixers.

- the inaugural intragroup job swap program, which allowed participants to go on a 3-6-month job swap with another public servant in the same group and at the same level in a different department within the same city.

Under the JCDP, ACFO-ACAF also expanded our development opportunities in the regions, with a total of six Regional Tune Ups for ACFO-ACAF members in Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and Moncton, in addition to our flagship Spring Tune Up event in Ottawa. The Tune Ups were both well-received and well-attended, with a record 500 members attending Tune Up events in the regions and 1,200 in Ottawa.



Statistics Canada FI Sean Kew and small-talk expert Debra Fine shared their wisdom at Regional Town Hall events across Canada.



The opportunity to build your professional network in a social setting is a part of almost every JCDP event.



The Interchange Program under the JCDP allows participants to get a taste of life in a different department in a different part of the country.

The Comptrollership Training Centre

The demand for JCDP spots this year was so high that ACFO-ACAF launched the Comptrollership Training Centre (CTC), a training and development institute exclusively focused on delivering programs for financial professionals at a below-market cost. This programming is designed to meet the development needs of the ACFO-ACAF membership as identified in surveys, case files and conversations with senior finance leaders.

The CTC gives ACFO-ACAF members increased access to high quality professional development without affecting the resources available to deliver on our core mandate of representing and advocating for our community.

It was ACFO-ACAF's longstanding record of offering quality professional development that led to our official recognition as a professional development provider by Office of the Comptroller General and allowed us to establish the Comptrollership Training Centre.

CTC programming successfully commenced in the fall and will continue into the coming year.



The Comptrollership Training Centre offers classroom-style courses on topics that matter for your career development.

The CV Inventory and Career Fair

Finally, this year marked the inaugural FI Career Fair and the launch of the CV Inventory. The FI Career Fair, held at the Spring Tune Up, garnered positive feedback from both the employer and ACFO-ACAF members, some of whom received multiple offers as a result of the fair. In August, ACFO-ACAF launched the CV Inventory, a matchmaking service connecting managers with FIs who are considering changing jobs. In just a few short months the CV Inventory has already proven to

be a resounding success, with hundreds of FIs submitting applications, new manager requests streaming in each week and confirmed hires resulting from the service.

Under the new collective agreement, funds for the JCDP have already been renewed through to 2021-2022. In the coming year, ACFO-ACAF will continue to hone and expand our professional development offerings and opportunities through the JCDP and CTC as our membership itself grows and changes. As ever, we will work to proactively identify and meet the development needs of our community.



The first-ever FI Career Fair at the annual Spring Tune Up event.

Operations and labour relations

Throughout this period of change and growth, we at ACFO-ACAF never forgot the importance of maintaining the professional, high quality services and judicious operation that our members have come to rely on.

Our Labour Relations Team continued to handle a high number of cases, largely due of Phoenix payroll errors. In response to this larger case volume and the imminent growth associated with the creation of the CT Group, we added a seventh Labour Relations Advisor to our staff. We're proud to report that our team was able to resolve most cases swiftly, collaboratively and to members' satisfaction.

ACFO-ACAF also made strides toward improving our day-to-day operations and streamlining expenses. We have begun to implement our more flexible, robust membership database and will continue to roll out its new functions in the coming year. We reduced event space rental and travel expenses by hosting more meetings and events in ACFO-ACAF's headquarters. When travel for ACFO-ACAF staff was necessary, we made the most of costs by scheduling Town Halls, Lunch and Learn sessions or other events to coincide.

We also continued to advocate for important issues affecting the ACFO-ACAF community within departments and in the public sphere. We released the results of our fourth annual State of the FI Community survey, launched a new research project on non-advertised staffing and are preparing to convene a roundtable on Artificial Intelligence and the future of public service work.

We are pleased to report that our membership's satisfaction level with ACFO-ACAF has only grown: this year's Pulse Check Satisfaction survey found ACFO-ACAF's average satisfaction was 4.34 out of 5, up from 4.05 last year. Similarly, 85% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with ACFO-ACAF overall, up from 72% in 2018.



We never forget that serving you, our community, is at the core of everything we do.

Ensuring high quality services and long-lasting financial responsibility

In recent years, the natural increase in ACFO-ACAF's fixed expenses has moved us towards a structural deficit, despite our efforts to remain efficient and effective. Most fixed expenses increase roughly at the same rate as inflation.

While we've successfully negotiated wage increases that outpace inflation, our dues have not kept pace.

Since 2011:

- Inflation has increased by 12.3%
- FI wages have increased by 14.5%
- ACFO-ACAF dues have remained the same (\$50)

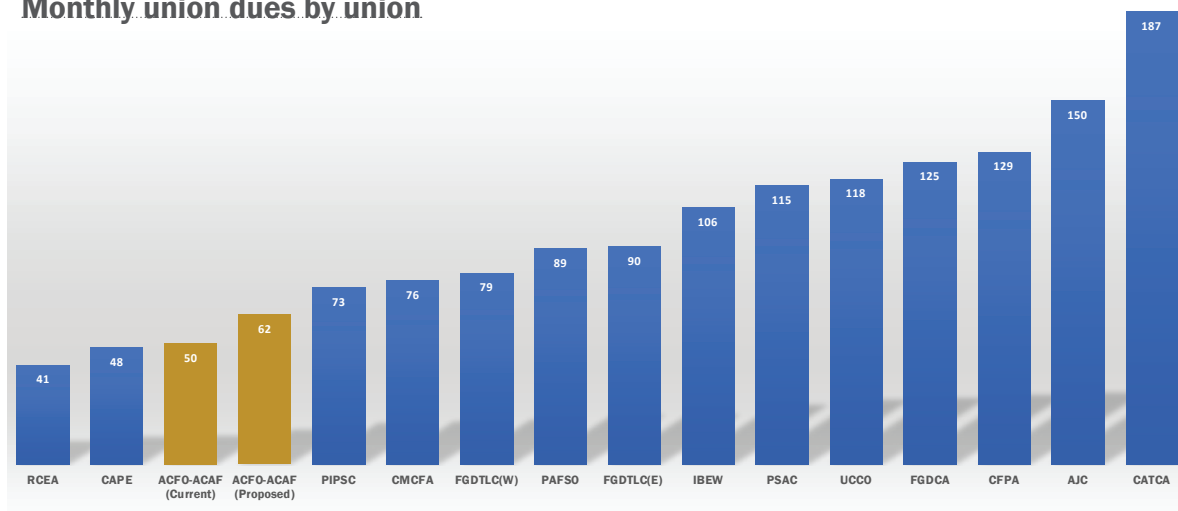
We are proud of our record of efficiently delivering high quality services to our members. We have continued to maintain high scores for member satisfaction while expanding the range of services we deliver to include class-leading professional development, among others – all while keeping our dues among the lowest in the federal public service. However, without this change to our dues structure, we will be in a position where service reductions will be required to close our structural deficit. It simply isn't financially responsible to continue relying on investment revenue and cash reserves for core operational funding.

In recent years, members have raised the issue of our deficit at AGMs and town halls. This year, we consulted with hundreds of members across the country about possible approaches to addressing the structural deficit in a sustainable way while still maintaining a reasonable dues structure that is fair for all members. Based on these consultations, we have come up with a model we believe is fair and sustainable.

We are proposing a dues increase to \$62 per month effective April 1, 2020 with subsequent annual adjustments (effective April 1, 2021) in accordance with the Canadian consumer price index (CPI) for the previous year.

For example, if the CPI for 2020 is 2.3%, dues would be $\$62 + 2.3\% = \63.43 as of April 1, 2021.

Monthly union dues by union



This would address the growing gap between expenses (which are largely fixed and subject to inflationary pressures) and revenues in a sustainable way – all while keeping our dues among the lowest in the public service.

ACFO-ACAF prides ourselves on being as efficient as we are effective. What we are proposing is a change to the way we fund our operations – a change that is reasonable, modest and, most importantly, financially prudent. The impact on each individual will be negligible, but the impact on our ability to serve our members and represent our community will be profound and long-lasting.

Conclusion

Reflecting on this watershed anniversary year, we have largely looked back on our accomplishments and successes, but 2019 has seen its share of challenges too and we expect the coming year to be no different. We know, though, that ACFO-ACAF has never been better-placed to face our current challenges and those that lie ahead.

With an expanding community, increased services and growing influence, we are stronger than we have ever been. And that is largely thanks to you, the ACFO-ACAF membership. Over the past year, you have given your time, energy, ideas and support, and we are truly grateful. We believe that the future of our community is bright and we are already looking forward to new opportunities on the horizon. We can't wait to see what 2020 brings.

