Increasing Alberta Public Sector Workforce Transparency

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Recommendation Overview

Amend the Alberta Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act, or enact new legislation, to require disclosure of key non-private information for **_all_** public sector human resources, not just for those employees exceeding specified salary thresholds. This also includes consulting contracts.

Rationale

While current legislation requires publishing so-called 'sunshine lists' for employees whose salaries exceed certain thresholds, this represents only a fraction of the total government workforce. Some of the greatest waste may not be due to a small number of highly-paid employees, but rather due to a large and ever-growing number of moderately-paid staff.

Some public sector organizations already report aggregate workforce statistics for their programs and services. However, aggregation can lead to obfuscation, potentially hiding patterns of mismanagement from external scrutiny. The availability of highly granular workforce data would enable independent detection and disclosure of problems such as:

- Excessive ratios of managers to non-managers within organizations ('depth and span' waste).

- Excessive salary ranges compared to comparable private sector roles.

- High ratios of back-office 'overhead' positions relative to front-line service delivery.

- Extraordinary year-over-year staff increases in specific departments or job functions.

- Labour inefficiencies for certain departments, boards, and municipalities compared to benchmark averages.

Over time every organization accumulates programs and positions which made sense once, and later became luxuries which are no longer affordable or useful. Increasing transparency would encourage senior management to proactively minimize nice-to-have versus must-have jobs, before they become targets for public ridicule by taxpayers.

Publishing detailed workforce data would not be difficult, so cost should not be a barrier to implementing this proposal. Nearly all public sector bodies in Alberta utilize sophisticated Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) such as PeopleSoft or SAP. These systems already contain all of the required data, and producing a non-aggregated data set (i.e., one row per active employee) is trivial. Similarly, nearly all financial systems can easily produce a list of all consultant contracts.

Proposed Disclosure Requirements for Employees

- *Scope*: Disclosure should apply to the same public sector bodies as required by the current Alberta Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act, but with some modifications:

  - Data for all employees would be disclosed, not just those above compensation thresholds.

  - Education bodies, municipal bodies, and publicly-funded health service providers would be required to report. Under the existing Act and Regulations this may not be mandatory.

- *Schedule:* Report the employee complement as of June 30th and December 31st of each calendar year, published no later than two months after effective date. Publishing twice per year will help ensure any seasonal workers are included at least once.

- *No Personally Identifiable Information*: In order to afford employees a reasonable degree of privacy, and to avoid potential court challenges, no personal information should be published for employees. In particular, the employee's name should not be disclosed.

- *Pay Grade Ranges versus Actual Compensation*: In order to afford employees a reasonable degree of privacy, and to avoid potential court challenges, no confidential information should be published for employees. In particular, the employee's actual salary or paid compensation should not be disclosed. Instead, pay grade ranges would suffice for most purposes

- *Standardized Format*: In order to enable year-over-year and inter-departmental analysis, the format, types of facts, and naming conventions of the published data sets should be consistent across all reporting entities.

- *Granular*: There should be one 'row' of data per active employee per reporting period.

- *Cumulative*: Each reporting period's data should be added to previous periods' data, enabling time-based trend analysis.

- *Machine-Readable*: The published datasets should be published in a machine-readable format, which enables automated analysis. The Comma Separated Values (CSV) format is recommended as it is the most widely adopted by public sector Open Data portals.

- *Specific Data Elements*: The following data elements ('columns') are recommended for each row of published employee data:

  - Year: Report effective year

  - Month: Report effective month (6 = June, 12 = December)

  - Employer: Name of the public sector body / corporation

  - Business Unit: Name of the highest level department in which the employee works

  - Department: Name of the specific functional department in which the employee works

  - Job Title: The employee's current working job title

- Position Title: The title of employee's position (only if employee assigned to a position)

- Supervisory: Y if the employee supervises others, otherwise N

- Regular / Temporary: R = Regular (permanent), T = Temporary / seasonal

- Full-time / Part-Time: F = employee is designated full-time, P = Part-time

- FTE: Numeric value indicating fractional Full-Time Equivalents worked by the employee (e.g., 0.5 = half-time, 1.0 = full-time)

- Job Family: E.g., Engineering, Finance, HR, IT, etc. (if applicable)

- Collective Bargaining Unit: E.g., union local name, management exempt)

- Pay Grade Name: Name of the pay grade classification currently assigned to the employee.

- Annual Pay Grade Minimum: Minimum annualized rate of pay for the employee's assigned grade, rounded to nearest full dollar amount and based on full-time employment.

- Annual Pay Grade Maximum: Maximum annualized rate of pay for the employee's assigned grade, rounded to nearest full dollar amount and based on full-time employment.

- Salaried / Hourly: S = employee is paid at a fixed salary, H = paid hourly

Proposed Disclosure Requirements for Consultants / Contractors

- *Scope*: Disclosure of consulting contracts should apply to the same public sector bodies as required by the current Alberta Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act, but with some modifications:

  - Education bodies, municipal bodies, and publicly-funded health service providers would be required to report. Under the existing Act and Regulations this may not be mandatory.

- *Schedule:* Report all consulting contracts once per calendar year, published no later than two months after calendar year-end.

- *Standardized Format*: In order to enable year-over-year and inter-departmental analysis, the format, types of facts, and naming conventions of the published data sets should be consistent across all reporting entities.

- *Granular*: There should be one 'row' of data per consulting contract per reporting period.

- *Cumulative*: Each reporting period's data should be added to previous periods' data, enabling time-based trend analysis.

- *Machine-Readable*: The published datasets should be published in a machine-readable format, which enables automated analysis. The Comma Separated Values (CSV) format is recommended as it is the most widely adopted by public sector Open Data portals.

- *Specific Data Elements*: The following data elements ('columns') are recommended for each row of published consulting contract data:

    ○ Year: Report effective year

    ○ Employer: Name of the public sector body / corporation

    ○ Business Unit: Name of the highest level department which engaged the contractor

    ○ Consulting Firm Name: Name of the company / entity providing the service.

    ○ Contract Title or Description: Brief descriptive name of the contract (e.g., its purpose)

    ○ Total Contract Value: Dollar value of the entire contract commitment or estimate, including taxes. This includes the total value of multi-year contracts.

    ○ Current Year Actual Paid: Dollar amount paid in this calendar year, including taxes.

Author

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