

## Canada Post RFP Identifies Mandatory Professional Requirements



*The Disability Management Centre of Excellence at Canada Post, the country's sixth largest employer, has taken another groundbreaking stride in ensuring that the corporation and its employees benefit from best practices and international standards in disability management. Here's more on an innovative Request for Proposals (RFP) issued by Canada Post that has other employers taking note.*

In January 2010, Canada Post issued a landmark RFP requiring "Proposers" to ensure that the key program manager overseeing disability management program design, implementation and services with Canada Post hold the Certified Disability Management Professional (CDMP) designation overseen by the International Disability Management Standards Council (IDMSC). The RFP is calling for proposals to provide self-insured short-term and long-term disability management for unionized employees, and for management and exempt staff. The term of the agreement is six years, with an option to renew for an additional four.

The decision by Canada Post's Disability Management Centre of Excellence, responsible for 60,000 employees in 4,000 locations across the country, is aligned with several other links in the organization's chain of initiatives designed to reorganize around the best practice standards of the IDMSC.

Canada Post already requires that its own in-house occupational abilities policy managers and DM regional managers hold a professional designation in disability management, and is now taking the next step to work with certified professionals delivering out-sourced services as well.

"We want to work with people who speak the same language, have the same philosophy and same values, and understand disability management as we do. We decided to close the loop and ask for it from vendors," says Canada Post Director, Disability Management Daryl Gauthier.

He explains that the corporation's Centre of Excellence has been reorganizing and changing the way it delivers disability management services to become more proactive and, at the same time, more supported by its unions, employees and service providers. He describes this as the first link in a new delivery model that requires "significant business and cultural change."

As for the second link in the model, Gauthier – who took over from retiring director Stefan Ginder in December 2009 – is continuing the momentum already gained in implementing international best practices standards in DM at Canada Post.

He comes well prepared for the position after three years as a senior Human Resources practitioner at Canada Post and time spent in Human Resources at the corporation's electronic subsidiary, epost. On top of that, Gauthier is the first Canadian to achieve four Certified WorldatWork Professional designations in the areas of compensation, benefits, work-life, and integrated total rewards. He expects to add CDMP to his resume in 2011 or 2012.

Like his predecessor Ginder, Gauthier believes, "NIDMAR represents the best practices an employer can use to have a good path to follow."

It's important to note that NIDMAR is the Canadian representative of the IDMSC, which oversees the global certification process of the CRTWC (Certified Return to Work Coordinator) and CDMP designations, and also manages the global administration of the Consensus Based Disability Management Audit (CBDMA) and Workplace Disability Management Assessment (WDMA).

As outlined in a January 2010 NIDMAR *Bulletin*, Canada Post had already committed to following IDMSC standards by undergoing a Consensus Based Disability Management Audit. Ginder, in charge at the time, said the audit showed that Canada Post has many of the features of a best-in-class program and also identified areas for further improvement. Under the audit's action plan was the requirement for Canada Post program managers to achieve the IDSMC designation of CDMP, which was achieved by the Centre's existing program managers in spring 2009.

Ginder also said, "Service provider certification was a natural progression from Canada Post's own efforts and commitment. It is the best way to ensure external service providers provide consensus based disability management services of a high quality, aligned with Canada Post's requirements."

Current director Gauthier explains that one of Canada Post's provider representatives sits on an IDMSC working committee set up to review standards for service providers and how to select vendors. "We reviewed our own RFP and included most elements in light of the working committee's document. It's very much in line with our external RFP."

Canada Post Occupational Abilities Manager Pierre Gourgon adds, "Our model is a hybrid out-sourced model with certain services delivered in-house. Disability management is not our core competency. We deliver the mail," he says laughing. "We made a decision to outsource to those who understand DM as we do and can coach and influence others within the corporation."

The RFP states, "The designation must be commensurate with the role of the Proposer's employees (i.e. National Disability

Manager certified as a Certified Disability Management Professional; supervisors as Certified Disability Management Professional or Certified Return to Work Coordinator).”

In conjunction with the RFP process now underway, Gauthier and Gourgon will host a two-day initiative in Ottawa to help 20 Canada Post occupational abilities managers from across the country prepare to write the CDMP examination this June. Uniquely, Canada Post has also invited representatives from each of its incumbent service providers: Sun Life, Manulife and Great-West Life.

“They’re enthusiastic,” says Gourgon of the inclusive invitation designed to ensure that existing out-sourced disability management services are delivered to the same standards that Canada Post is following.

This initiative will carry Canada Post throughout what Gauthier expects will be a year-long process in selecting successful proponents under the RFP and implementing new disability management program design. At that point, service providers, who are successfully awarded six-year contracts for Canada Post’s out-sourced DM services, will have two years in which to have their employees successfully achieve the CDMP or CRTWC designations.

In the meantime, another goal within the Centre of Excellence is to undergo a second Consensus Based Disability Management Audit. Gourgon notes Canada Post scored better than the Canadian average on 14 of 16 elements on the first CBDMA, “showing we’re directionally correct.”

But understanding what effective DM can achieve, he and Gauthier are committed to achieving the requisite 80 per cent score or higher on the next audit, which would award Canada Post IDSMC-certified status for its disability management programs, an accolade the Centre’s heads are anxious to achieve.

To that end, Gauthier indicates they are working on closing the gaps through “more partnerships, more joint union committees and more employee communication.” Among the desired outcomes will be to “reorganize and lock down on 2010 key performance indicators, and to increase visibility of the programs on the management side,” says Gourgon.

They make clear, though, that the reasons behind the initiatives are not only economic. “DM is more than a legislated requirement. Do this correctly and, yes, you get business advantages from it, but it’s also doing the right thing.”