

## British Columbia Government Retired Employees' Association

2021 General Members Survey: Nanaimo/Mid-Island Branch 600

March 2022





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The content of this report and associated research has been commissioned from Collegiate Digital Resources Ltd. on behalf of the British Columbia Government Retired Employees' Association.

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### **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

#### SUMMARY REPORT INFORMATION

Company Name:	BC Government Retired Employees' Association.
Branch Name:	Nanaimo/Mid-Island (Branch 600)
Survey Start:	December 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2021
Survey End:	January 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2022
Report Date:	March 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2022.

#### SUMMARY STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Survey Population:	496
Sampling Method:	Census, no sampling used.
Responses:	178
Response Rate:	35.89%
Confidence Level:	.95
Confidence Interval:	+/- 5.89 points 19 times out of 20
Main Research	What are the main activities that are a priority for BCGREA members, and what are the
Question:	communication methods and frequencies preferred by members?

This research report is based on the *General Members Survey* conducted by CDR Business Diagnostics on behalf of the BC Government Retired Employees' Association. The purpose of the survey was to collect data regarding the activities that are a priority for members, and what communication tools and frequency of communications are preferred by members when receiving information from the Association. **This report is filtered to only include the responses submitted from the branch indicated above.** 

The survey ran from December 6th, 2021, to January 22nd, 2022. The survey was run census style, with no sampling methods used or required. The response rate for this branch was **178** completed responses out of a total branch membership of **496**. The total completion rate for the survey was therefore **35.89%**, which makes the survey accurate within +/- **5.89** points, 19 times out of 20. Due to the fairly low response rate and the relatively high margin of error, the results in this report may not be representative of the entire branch membership; however, the report may still provide useful insights, particularly in this case where the confidence interval is just beyond tolerance.

The survey on which these results are based was completely anonymous and contained a mix of single answer and 'select all that apply' type quantitative questions, most of which had an 'Other' box to capture additional data. In addition, there was a one final open-ended qualitative question included at the end of the survey. Data was collected via a secure research server accessible only to staff at CDR Business Diagnostics.

All information is presented in aggregate form to ensure respondent anonymity pursuant to provincial and federal legislation and research ethical guidelines. All data for this survey was collected and managed in a manner consistent with the *Tri Council Policy Statement on the Ethical Conduct of Research*.

If you have any questions about this report, please email CollegiateDigital@protonmail.com

### SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

#### **1. Current Services**

The current BCGREA service that is important to the most respondents is *Representation on the Public Service Pension Plan Board of Trustees*. 79.21% of survey respondents from this branch selected this service.

Another top service was Newsletters, selected by 67.98% of respondents.

Chart 1



Current Services that are Most Important, by Age Group

Current Services

Under 65 Age 66 to 75 Age 76 to 85 Greater than age 85

	< 65	66 to 75	76 to 85	> 85	Total
Representation on the Public Service Pension Plan Board of Trustees	12	76	41	12	141
Links to member discounts on goods and services	12	55	13	3	83
Membership in advocacy organizations	8	51	22	4	85
Information sessions including webinars and guest speakers	7	30	13	5	55
Newsletters	12	56	36	17	121
Branch meetings	3	18	18	6	45
Other	0	1	0	0	1
Total	54	287	143	47	531

#### 2. Provincial Areas for Expansion

When asked to choose areas where the BCGREA provincial body should expand their efforts, the option selected most frequently was Advocacy on behalf of members regarding pension and benefits, selected by 77.53% of respondents from this branch.

The second most-selected option was Negotiations for member discounts, selected by 47.19% of respondents from this branch.



Chart 2

■ Under 65 ■ Age 66 to 75 ■ Age 76 to 85 ■ Greater than age 85

	< 65	66 to 75	76 to 85	> 85	Total
Negotiations for member discounts	12	54	14	4	84
Presentations on topics of interest to members (i.e., webinars, zoom meetings)	9	28	16	4	57
Cooperation with other seniors' groups (i.e., COSCO)	7	42	21	8	78
Cooperation with related pension associations (i.e., teachers, municipal, colleges)	5	45	17	8	75
New member recruitment initiatives	3	28	19	2	52
Advocacy on behalf of members regarding pension and benefits	17	66	39	16	138
Other	0	2	1	0	3
Total	53	265	127	42	487

#### 3. The Role of the Branch

When asked about what their Branch should provide, the option selected most frequently was *Guest speakers on topics of interest*, selected by 69.10% of respondents from this branch.

The second most-selected option was *Social connections (luncheons, goodwill)*, selected by 57.30% of respondents from this branch.





Role of the Branch, by Age Category

	< 65	66 to 75	76 to 85	> 85	Total
Social connections (luncheons, goodwill)	11	51	31	9	102
Guest speakers on topics of interest	13	63	34	13	123
Activities such a group tours or outings	13	39	18	5	75
Subsidizing admissions for members to local attractions	8	28	7	2	45
Recruitment of new members	9	37	17	5	68
Other	0	2	6	1	9
Total	54	220	113	35	422

#### **3.** Communication Preferences

Overall, the most popular method of receiving branch communications is *Email*. This option was selected by 88.76% of respondents from this branch.

Overall, the second most popular method of receiving branch communications is *Through the postal system i.e., Paper copy*. This option was selected by 21.35% of respondents from this branch.

Email is the most popular communication method for every age group in this branch. (See *Chart 5* on the following page.)



Chart 4

	< 65	66 to 75	76 to 85	> 85	Total
Telephone calls	1	3	10	3	17
Emails	20	86	41	11	158
Text messages (Standard Messaging)	3	10	2	0	15
Accessing the branch web page	0	8	8	1	17
Through the postal system i.e., Paper copy	1	15	14	8	38
I'm generally not interested in branch communications	0	1	0	0	1
Total	25	123	75	23	246





Chart 6





### QUANTITATIVE RESULTS BY QUESTION

This section shows the distribution of the responses selected for each question. The tables below provide the number of times each answer was selected, and the percentage of the total respondents this represents. All results in this section combine the online survey data and the mail-in data.

### **About You**

#### **1.** My age falls within the following group:

Response	Number	Percentage
Under 65	20	11.24%
Age 66 to 75	89	50.00%
Age 76 to 85	50	28.09%
Greater than age 85	19	10.67%
(No response)	0	0.00%

#### **2.** I belong to the following branch of the BCGREA:

Response	Number	Percentage
Nanaimo/Mid-Island (Branch 600)	178	100.00%

#### **3.** The first three digits of my postal code are:

Response	Number	Percentage
VON	2	1.12%
VOR	28	15.73%
V2W	1	0.56%
V3B	1	0.56%
V8K	2	1.12%
V9A	1	0.56%
V9G	11	6.18%
V9K	4	2.25%
V9L	18	10.11%
V9N	2	1.12%
V9P	8	4.49%
V9R	18	10.11%
V9S	11	6.18%
V9T	31	17.42%
V9V	17	9.55%
V9X	8	4.49%
V9Y	4	2.25%
VOR	1	0.56%
(No response)	10	5.62%

### **Member Needs and Preferences**

4. I initially joined the BCGREA for the following reasons (check all that apply):

Response	Number	Percentage
I was invited to join by a member, friend or colleague	36	20.22%
I wanted social contact with former coworkers and fellow retirees	37	20.79%
I saw information about the BCGREA at a preretirement seminar or Pension Life	90	50.56%
I wanted the discounts offered such as travel insurance, hearing aids, etc.	48	26.97%
I wanted to receive updates on pension status	113	63.48%
I wanted to have a representative for my interests on the Pension Board of Trustees	72	40.45%
Other ( <i>please specify below</i> )	6	3.37%
(No response)	3	1.69%

Other (please specify below):

- I want to contribute to the fund. I started going to meetings in Prince Rupert but now live in Nanoose Bay and don't know where they meet.
- Husband passed away.
- Branch opened in Duncan, which I joined.
- My husband was a member and I kept up the payments for above info.
- I have participated in activities, but I find it difficult due to distance and commitments.
- All of the above.
- I WANTED INVOLVEMENT!!!
- Continue my association with Prov.
- I wanted to have a connection with BCGREA.
- Speakers at meetings.
- I WANTED TO CONTINUE TO REPRESENT MEMBERS AS I WAS USED TO WHEN ON THE JOB.
- For better working benefits.
- Just stay in touch with job.
- I wanted to support an organization to advocate for me as a pensioner.
- To lobby for benefits such as the Dental Plan.
- I want to belong to a group that advocates on a wide range of issues relating to Seniors.
- Advocacy, opportunity to explore issues of the day that are significant to seniors and my community, a collective voice.
- Connection to other groups who represent Sri. I.e., Cosco.
- I want the BCGREA to fight for BCGREA members when the govt next strips our benefits, as they did in ~2004.

**5.** Current services provided by the BCGREA that are most important or relevant to me include (check all that apply):

Response	Number	Percentage
Representation on the Public Service Pension Plan Board of Trustees	141	79.21%
Links to member discounts on goods and services	83	46.63%
Membership in advocacy organizations (Council of Senior Citizens'		
Organizations of BC - COSCO, National Pensioners Federation - NPF, BC	85	47.75%
Health Coalition)		
Information sessions including webinars and guest speakers	55	30.90%
Newsletters	121	67.98%
Branch meetings	45	25.28%
Other (please specify below)	1	0.56%
(No response)	5	2.81%

Other (please specify below):

- Don't know where they meet.
- Social get togethers, luncheons etc.
- Don't have a lot of involvement with Branch but proud to continue my BCG association.
- MEDOC.
- Travel to Qualicum for meetings is an issue for me depending on weather and, of course, gas is so expensive.
- Info on extended health.
- Legal services to protect the rights of, and benefits for members.
- 6. I support branches making charitable donations to seniors' groups in their communities.

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	148	83.15%
No	23	12.92%
(No response)	7	3.93%

- **7.** I believe that the BCGREA should also provide the following additional services to its members: (please specify below)
  - Similar to labor union.
  - Aiding pensioners in finding health and other services in their communities, such as a new doctor and mental health services.
  - We need a branch back in Duncan.
  - I am satisfied with current services being provided.
  - Provide members at the earliest moment when yearly pension increases are given. I new a week before the announcement to members what the % amount was as I contacted BC Pension Corp.
  - Have small group discussions so we can meet other members. I often don't know who the other members attending are, or their backgrounds.
  - Perhaps a list of names in local branch (I have never gone to a meeting but might if I knew anyone associated) I know "confidentiality".
  - Due to COVID restrictions more zoom individual interaction zoom socials.

- Greater representation and say on the Public Service Extended Benefits Plan.
- Information on what is available to a member who hasn't any family around to assist. The different services. Some people may not be able to afford some things (medically) there should be a service with the BCGREA to assist.
- Better medical and dental coverage.
- I belong to branch 600, Nanaimo/mid island, and I live in Duncan, BC. All branch meetings are held in Nanaimo, which means me and others from Duncan often find it difficult to attend. Meetings should alternate between all areas served by Branch 600.
- Should help members in need of some help.
- Advocacy re: extended health plan.
- Branch meetings via Zoom as well as in person.
- Ways to connect with those members no longer able to attend branch meetings.
- Providing advice and answers to members questions and concerns.
- Active advocacy re: Long Term Care homes (esp. in the Covid pandemic).
- I think they already do a good job.
- Advocates for full dental on our health care. Keeping us current on what can be claimed from Green Shield or any changes with that coverage.
- More social opportunities, encourage volunteer public service, generally more social and political involvement (to the extent possible under charitable laws) in our communities. We were/are privileged and must give to current generations. We have knowledge and skills.
- I really only care about the BCGREA along with the PEA working alongside other such associations to protect the rights of both working and retired govt employees. It is the sole reason I joined and belong to the association. I remember when the Liberal govt of the day stripped benefits from retired employees in 2004 or so, and hope that the association keeps a good reserve for fighting such actions in the future.
- Increased advocacy concerning the use of Greenshields as the benefit provider. They are a difficult organization to deal with. They have very archaic methods of communication which cause excessive delays at times in finding out whether they approve an expenditure. When a person is sick there is very little energy left to deal with large organizations that seem to be more routed in finding ways to not approve claims than helping solve the problems with claims. I have had not one, but two but at least three different issues where I had to fight every time to be listened to and had to even write to the Board of Directors on one medication they did not cover. It took that to get their decision overturned. But does everyone have the energy to do that? I think not and I believe people just give up and pay for it themselves. This has to be improved.
- **8.** When receiving communications from my local branch of the BCGREA, I generally prefer (check all that apply):

Response	Number	Percentage
Telephone calls	17	9.55%
Emails	158	88.76%
Text messages (Standard Messaging)	15	8.43%
Accessing the branch web page	17	9.55%
Through the postal system i.e., Paper copy	38	21.35%
I'm generally not interested in branch communications	1	0.56%
(No response)	4	2.25%

**9.** When receiving communications from my provincial executive of the BCGREA, I generally prefer (check all that apply):

Response	Number	Percentage
Emails	151	84.83%
Text messages (Standard Messaging)	20	11.24%
Through the BCGREA webpage	21	11.80%
Through the postal system i.e., Paper copy	45	25.28%
I'm generally not interested in provincial communications	1	0.56%
(No response)	4	2.25%

**10.** When receiving provincial newsletters, I generally prefer to receive them via (check all that apply):

Response	Number	Percentage
Emails	140	78.65%
Paper copy	64	35.96%
Posting on BCGREA website	22	12.36%
I'm generally not interested in provincial newsletters	1	0.56%
(No response)	4	2.25%

**11.** I would prefer to receive electronic communication from the provincial BCGREA:

Response	Number	Percentage
Monthly or Bi-monthly	55	30.90%
Quarterly	78	43.82%
Once or twice a year	30	16.85%
I'm generally not interested in receiving communications	1	0.56%
(No response)	14	7.87%

### **Branch Operations**

**12.** Prior to the pandemic, I generally attended branch meetings:

Response	Number	Percentage
Regularly	24	13.48%
Occasionally	20	11.24%
Rarely	37	20.79%
Never	90	50.56%
(No response)	7	3.93%

**13.** I would be willing to help with my local branch activities if requested.

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	56	31.46%
No	110	61.80%
(No response)	12	6.74%

#### Responses by Age Group:

Age Group	Response	Number	Percentage*
< 65	Yes	6	30.00%
	No	13	65.00%
66 to 75	Yes	26	29.21%
	No	58	65.17%
76 to 85	Yes	19	38.00%
	No	27	54.00%
> 85	Yes	5	26.32%
	No	12	63.16%

\*Percentage of respondents in the age category, as indicated in Question 1.

#### **14.** I see the role of the branch as providing: (check all that apply):

Response	Number	Percentage
Social connections (luncheons, goodwill)	102	57.30%
Guest speakers on topics of interest	123	69.10%
Activities such a group tours or outings	75	42.13%
Subsidizing admissions for members to local attractions	45	25.28%
Recruitment of new members	68	38.20%
Other (please specify below)	9	5.06%
(No response)	23	12.92%

#### Other (please specify below):

- Knowledge/ info re: issues affecting us.
- Advocating for the entire association membership, keeping members advised of changes, sending reminders to members.
- Newsletters with information regarding pensions and practical relationships with membership.
- OPPORTUNITIES TO BE INVOLVED IN THE BRANCH EXEC.
- Information to shut ins or elderly.
- Contact to Public Service / Gov't.
- When initially retired I found information at meetings re volunteer possibilities.
- ACTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS.
- Info re pensions, advocacy re benefits
- Contact to Public Service / Gov't.
- Represent members' interests re: local issues.
- Joined just before Covid started so just a guess as to what branch does normally.
- Highlighting local or regional concerns.
- Note: re willing to help with local branch- if there is a move to more community involvement.

**15.** I think that the BCGREA provincial body should expand their efforts in the following areas (check all that apply):

Response	Number	Percentage
Negotiations for member discounts	84	47.19%
Presentations on topics of interest to members (i.e., webinars, zoom meetings)	57	32.02%
Cooperation with other seniors' groups (i.e., COSCO)	78	43.82%
Cooperation with related pension associations (i.e., teachers, municipal, colleges)	75	42.13%
New member recruitment initiatives	52	29.21%
Advocacy on behalf of members regarding pension and benefits	138	77.53%
Other ( <i>please specify below</i> )	3	1.69%
(No response)	17	9.55%

#### Other (please specify below)

- I am not aware of any member discounts except dental plans.
- Info/Advocacy Re: Shrinking pensions drowning in inflation.
- Negotiate senior discounts with Fido, Rogers, Telus as well as cable companies.
- Climate Change advocates.
- Have information meetings at branch. Not everyone is savvy or have computers. Webinar and zoom forget it.
- Like in/person meetings I'm computer literate but hate online meetings other than brief into sharing for a purpose.
- Advocacy toward ensuring all seniors can have a GP.
- Broader advocacy than our narrow self interest, we are in crisis re climate and many other social issues.
- **16.** If the branch I belong to became dormant, I would be satisfied with my interests being met exclusively at the provincial level.

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	117	65.73%
No	51	28.65%
(No response)	10	5.62%

#### Responses by Age Group:

Age Group	Response	Number	Percentage*
< 65	Yes	11	55.00%
	No	7	35.00%
66 to 75	Yes	63	70.79%
	No	23	25.84%
76 to 85	Yes	30	60.00%
	No	16	32.00%
> 85	Yes	13	68.42%
	No	5	26.32%

\*Percentage of respondents in the age category, as indicated in Question 1.

### QUALITATIVE RESULTS

The survey included one final open-ended question, worded as follows:

# *Is there anything else you would like the BCGREA Provincial executive group to know or consider moving forward?*

The written responses submitted by survey respondents in this branch are included below in their entirety. They have not been edited in any way other than to remove any identifying information, and to correct obvious spelling and grammar errors. Responses have been grouped by themes that are presented alphabetically.

#### **Communications Systems and Content**

- As I have no computer and only a land line, I appreciate the phone calls and mail by post.
- The above question is difficult because I have never gone to a meeting but have appreciated the "local" updates in newsletters.
- Because of the pandemic, I have felt a huge disconnection to my local association and its members. I find that the more time that goes by without 'real' face-to-face interaction is beginning to feel like it will be most unlikely that I will once again feel a real sense of belonging to a group that I had previously met with monthly - and with some members even more often for the last twenty years. Very sad indeed.
- MORE PERSON-TO-PERSON COMMUNICATION TO LET THE MEMBERS KNOW THAT WE CARE TO LISTEN, NOT ONLY TO TALK.
- If there was no other way of communicating, then I guess provincial level is better than no communication. There are probably lots of other combinations that could be discussed rather than going to the provincial level.
- I think the group should consider that a lot of the pensioners are not familiar with computers or zoom meetings, etc. therefore difficult for them to access information on computer. Also, I don't know whose business it is but simple things like washrooms at SkyTrain stations would be helpful at times.

#### **Issues Associated with Green Shield**

• Why change to Green Shield from Blue Cross. They were much easier to deal with and coverage way better. Nobody asked us about the change!!!!

#### Membership Support for the BCGREA / Executive

- Again I am satisfied with current services provided by BCGREA Thank you.
- I have been unable to be an active member and I do appreciate those who are. Thank you.
- Thank you to the executive that are looking after our interests.
- Yes, I appreciate the work that continues to be done. Thank you.
- I think it's good to reach out to members with a survey. I haven't been tempted to get involved much before, but I appreciate the amount of work that the local & provincial groups do.
- Keep up with all your good work, much appreciated.
- Thank you for the work you do on our behalf.

- I initially had trouble signing up as phone calls were not returned. I signed up just before the pandemic and have not attended a meeting. Due to health issues, I am still very careful about socializing. Thanks for all you work.
- Thank you for the work.
- You are doing a great job.

#### Other

- I believe it is important to have a local active group.
- SINCE THE PROVINCIAL EXEC. HAVE DEIGNED TO TAKE OVER THE COMMUNICATIONS OF ALL -INCLUDING BRANCH COMMUNICATIONS, YOU HAVE EXCLUDED A SECTION OF MEMBERSHIP INVOLVEMENT. THIS SEEMS TO BE THE OPPOSITE OF MEMBERSHIP INVOLVEMENT, AND YET YOU ARE PUSHING FOR INVOLVEMENT. SOMEBODY IS A LITTLE CONFUSED.
- Retirement benefits similar to bogey benefits.
- At this stage in my retirement, I am happy with having an arms length association and having them advocate for seniors, but I am happy and grateful to know that should it become necessary, I can have more social contacts as well. And any help that BCGREA can give to advocate for better 911 wait times would be appreciated.
- I think a local voice is important to keep the view of its members at the forefront.
- We need to be seen, to take on roles of elders, leaders, concerned citizens definitely at the cost of some controversy and debate. We helped create some of current problems, time to re engage, otherwise we are a self interest group.
- I get too much junk mail (both paper and electronic) from BCREA affiliates such as hearing aid companies and travel firms. I believe that the BCGREA need not be involved with such firms, as if I ever need such services, I'll find them, and support the one that gives me the best value at that time.

#### **Outreach for New Members**

- The greatest effort should be in attracting younger, new retirees. When I attend meetings or events most people are over the age of 75.
- I think recruitment should focus on younger retirees.

#### **Role/Involvement in Pension/Benefits Negotiations**

- Reviews scheduled of what can be done to bring pension amounts to reality in present situations of inflation.
- I would like to see a better dental program, specifically to cover dental implants.
- When I retired, in April 2000 (and part of the reason I retired when I did) medical and dental were paid for. Gordon Campbell ended that and now I pay for medical and have no dental coverage. I know that the BCGREA was pursuing that breach of contract. Obviously, nothing has happened as I still pay for extended health and have no dental.
- Negotiating with our extended health benefits. We used to have better under Pacific Blue Cross, especially eye care.
- Member benefits i.e., hearing aids (when working we received \$1,500 an ear, since retiring only receive \$700) extended benefits deductible (when working \$250 per family since

retirement \$200 per family members) these are some benefits that we should still receive the same benefits as when working - thanks for listening.

- Determine a set date each year to notify members of any pension increases. In the past we were notified late November of each year.
- I wasn't happy moving our health care plan out of province.

#### **Suggestions for New BCGREA Initiatives**

- Perhaps rides to meetings when in person opens up and for now more online zoom meetings due to Covid.
- I wonder if it would be possible to somehow compensate the executive members of the local branches. i.e., free admissions to activities, meals, annual payment for the work and hours they contribute to their branches.
- Take into consideration our aging demographic, effects of the pandemic, and making the organization relevant to new members.
- I appreciate the work and time our representatives with the BCGREA put in. I don't personally benefit much, but it's obvious to me we (the elderly) need very active representation and advocacy to look after our best interests. I'm thinking particularly of a) Long Term Care and b) seniors being taken advantage of.

#### Travel / Distance Issues

- We have no branch in Duncan. I attended all meetings when we did.
- I haven't attended branch meetings very much in the past but am moving to Sidney in the Spring and would like to attend Victoria meetings. Hopefully Covid and its variants will be under control, and I will be able to socialize more, which I am looking forward to. Please keep the meetings going.
- I lived and worked in Victoria for many years but now live on Gabriola so am not sure what branch I belong to. Also ferry travel and Covid these days makes it difficult to participate in any activities but when life returns to normal, I may be interested in connecting with the Nanaimo branch of BCGREA. This comment is not really relevant to the question, but I couldn't see any other place to enter it.

#### **ABOUT US**

CDR Business Diagnostics is a small business specializing in organizational diagnostic services and custom research projects to clients worldwide. While we are incorporated in British Columbia, Canada, we leverage modern digital technology to its fullest in order to provide service to clients wherever we are needed. We work with mid- to large-sized organizations, whether public, private, or non-profit.

**Our Vision:** Healthy and effective clients with a strong competitive edge.

At CDR Business Diagnostics, we believe that the best decisions are informed decisions, based on factual evidence, sound methodology, and an objective lens. We believe that all organizations can benefit from increased knowledge of themselves and their environment.

Collegiate Digital Resources was founded in 2012 by Dr. Richard Brown, an experienced practitioner of organization development and diagnostics, with well over 15 years of public and private sector experience.

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