*“I want to hire a Free Agent”*

# **What is Canada’s Free Agents?**

Canada’s Free Agents is testing [Deloitte’s “GovCloud” model](https://www2.deloitte.com/nz/en/pages/public-sector/articles/govcloud.html). In this model, top talent resides in the cloud, making them truly government-wide employees. The program offers managers unique access to talented Public Servants. Free Agents...

* can be rapidly deployed for critical, time-limited projects;
* allow departments to manage costs and deliver results in an adaptable way; and,
* are already having an impact in many organizations across the Public Service.

Canada’s Free Agents began in May 2016 and is currently housed at Natural Resources Canada and the Treasury Board Secretariat. For more information, visit our[GCpedia page](http://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/Free_Agents).

# **Should I consider hiring a Free Agent?**

Consider hiring a Free Agent if your project needs someone who...

* emphasizes the need for evidence-based decision-making;
* is able to work collaboratively with multiple partners;
* will bring new ideas and creative solutions to your work;
* is comfortable taking risks and exploring new approaches; and,
* works in an “open by default” way.

While not always necessary, the **ideal** project for a Free Agent will be one where…

* the work is a departmental or government priority;
* the work requires a whole-of-government approach;
* the Free Agent will work with external stakeholders;
* the Free Agent will have the opportunity to experiment with new ideas and approaches;
* the Free Agent will have exposure to senior management;
* the Free Agent will be supported in their learning needs; and/or,
* there will be support for flexible working arrangements (telework, flexible hours, etc.).

# **What are the benefits of hiring a Free Agent?**

By hiring a Free Agent, you get...

* fast-track access to high-quality, pre-screened talent;
* flexibility to accommodate your project’s scope and budget;
* reduced staffing risk - managers can terminate the agreement at any time;
* to avoid complex and lengthy hiring processes.

# **Who are the Free Agents?**

Canada’s Free Agents is made up of public servants from a range of different classifications (including EC, IS, AS, PC, CS, CO and PM), language profiles, locations, and backgrounds. Free Agents work on assignments that vary in length (generally between 6-12 months) and location (any federal department or agency in the core public service, anywhere in Canada or abroad).

To meet the current Free Agents visit our [GCpedia page](http://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/Free_Agents/Meet).

# **How are the Free Agents screened?**

Free Agents are deployed at level following an intense screening process designed to assess ability to learn, team-orientation, creativity, and action-orientation among other attributes. Our screening process includes a formal application, an individual interview and a group interview to assess against Free Agent attributes.

If you are interested in hiring a Free Agent, you will be able to meet with those who are interested in your opportunity to assess suitability and fit

# **What is expected of hiring managers?**

Managers who hire Free Agents are asked to:

* contribute to the development of performance objectives and the completion of a performance review led by the Free Agent Talent Manager;
* approve leave taken by the Free Agent;
* allow the Free Agent time to participate in regular check-ins for the program; and,
* allow the Free Agent to attend, at no cost to you, occasional workshops organized by GoC innovation labs, or other conferences or professional development events with innovation-related topics.

# **What are the financial implications?**

Canada’s Free Agents is a cost-recovery model. Home departments pay all up-front costs and assume all financial risks associated with the program. As a result, we ask that host organizations reimburse us for the Free Agents’ salary and a 20% fee to cover the program’s operations and management (O&M) costs (talent manager salary, I.T. and accommodation needs, training and development expenses, etc.).

Example scenario:

* Department identifies a project and selects a Free Agent to complete the project
	+ Free Agent’s annual salary is $60,000
	+ Project lasts 4 months
	+ Periodic salary cost is $20,000
* Total cost for the project = periodic salary + 20% fee

# Total reimbursement = $24,000

# **Are there any HR, IT or security implications?**

Some things to consider when you hire a Free Agent:

* You will be signing an Interdepartmental Letter of Agreement, which is different from a secondment or assignment agreement.
* You may not necessarily need a classified position to host a Free Agent in your organization.
* Home departments will generally manage the employee’s classification and staffing actions, except in the case of acting appointments, which must be processed at host departments.
* As necessary, you may be required to provide the Free Agent with a building security pass, a computer, and accommodations.

# **OK sounds great, how do I hire a Free Agent?**

Hiring a Free Agent is easy!

1. Identify an opportunity for a Free Agent.
2. Complete the [Free Agent Assignment Form](http://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/gcwiki/images/9/90/Free_Agent_Assignment_Form.docx)
3. Send the completed form to freeagents-agentslibres@canada.ca

We will work with you to pitch your project to the Free Agents and help you find the best fit for your needs.

**How many Free Agents can I hire?**

Access to Free Agents is based on availability and suitability, and there are no limits on the number of Free Agents you can hire into your team. Many teams across the public service have worked with multiple Free Agents at one time on projects or key initiatives.

# **Why are we doing this?**

The Public Service must face and solve 21st century problems, yet we are currently relying on a staffing model built for a different era. Our current human resources model is designed primarily to address needs through an indeterminate hiring model, supplemented by temp-style help. But increasingly, projects require talent for only several months. To deliver on priorities, we must consider new, more agile models of talent mobilization that will allow us to respond to these new realities.

Home departments have mandates to explore new ways of working that benefit the Public Service. Canada’s Free Agents is just one of many projects that the home departments are experimenting with to improve government operations.

# **How can I learn more?**

Contact us by email at freeagents-agentslibres@canada.ca

* For information about individual Free Agents.
* To set-up an interview with Free Agents of interest.
* To learn about the managers who have hired or are currently working with Free Agents.
* For anything else at all!