



Association nationale
des retraités fédéraux

National Association
of Federal Retirees

OUTAOUAIS

**29TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS
APRIL 22, 2021**

**Board of Directors Report
2019–2020**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. A word from the President.....	3
2. Board of Directors and Branch Resources.....	4
2.1. Officers and Executive Committee.....	4
2.2. Administrators.....	4
2.3. Branch Personnel.....	4
2.4. Volunteers.....	5
3. On the national scene.....	5
3.1. Annual Meeting of Members.....	5
3.2. Presidents’ Forum.....	5
4. On the provincial scene.....	6
5. On the regional scene.....	6
5.1. Partnerships.....	6
5.2. “Table de concertation des aînés et retraités de l’Outaouais”	7
6. On the local scene.....	7
6.1. Impacts of the pandemic.....	7
6.2. Definition and prioritization of the Branch’s challenges.....	8
6.3. Advocacy for Members.....	8
6.4. Financial Management.....	9
6.5. Recruitment and retention of members and volunteers.....	9
6.5.1. Recruitment and retention of members.....	9
6.5.2. Recruitment and Retention of volunteers	10
6.6. Health Liaison Officer.....	11
6.7. Regional Preferential Rate Program	11
6.8. Communications with members.....	11
6.9. Social and cultural activities.....	12
6.9.1. Information sessions for our members.....	12
6.9.2. Annual Banquet.....	12
6.9.3. Mechoui Dinner.....	13
6.9.4. Sugar Shack.....	13
6.9.5. Discussion Brunches.....	13
7. Overview 2021–2022.....	14
7.1. Member Services.....	15
7.2. Retention.....	15
7.3. Communications.....	15
7.4. Regional Preferential Rate Program	15
7.5. Operation of the Board of Directors.....	15
7.6. Policy Priorities for 2021–2022....	15
7.6.1. Advocacy.....	15
7.6.2. Recruitment and Retention of members.....	15
7.6.3. Financial Management.....	15
7.6.4. Governance.....	16

1. A word from the president

Dear members:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Federal Retirees' Outaouais Branch, I am pleased to present our report for the years 2019 and 2020. This report is coloured by the impact of the pandemic on the activities and governance of our Branch. Exceptionally, this report covers the last two years.

The pandemic experienced in 2020, although having forced us to cancel face-to-face activities, did allow us to put in place tools to offer some of our activities in virtual mode. A lot of effort and energy was necessary to obtain a better coordination of our activities with the National Office, and to increase the efficiency of our resources. I would like to congratulate the members of the Board who contributed to the achievement of these results.

Over the past two years, your Board of Directors has focused its activities on the implementation of the "National Strategic Plan 2019–2024". In addition to supporting the national programs developed by Federal Retirees' National Office, branches were given three specific mandates: to support the implementation of national advocacy programs; to increase membership recruitment and retention, and: to increase our regional visibility through the development of partnerships with associations aiming at improving the quality of life of seniors.

I invite you to read the next pages of this report, which present the activities carried out by the directors, staff, and volunteers. I would like to take this opportunity as well to congratulate and thank them all for their contribution to the vitality and renewal of the Outaouais Branch.

Thank you, dear members, for your continued support.

Donald Déry
President of the Outaouais Branch

2. BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND BRANCH RESOURCES

2.1. Officers and Executive Committee

President	Donald Déry
1st Vice President	Odette Simard
2nd Vice President	Josée Laurin
Secretary	Jacques Lecompte
Treasurer	Claude Tremblay (January 2019 to April 2020)
	Pierre Laflamme (April to November 2020)
	René Caron (November 2020 to today)

2.2. Administrators

Director	Pierre Laflamme
Director	Gérard Goyette
Administrator	Monique Arsenault
Administrator	Murielle Allain

Director departed in 2019: Carole Davidson (April 2019)

2.3. Branch Personnel

Manager Programs and services	Guyline Ross
--	---------------------

2.4. Volunteers

Web page—Outaouais Branch	Michelle Page
Facebook Page	Michelle Page
Photography	Francine Frappier
	Robert Dubois
Calls to members	Hélène Brosseau.
	Christiane Babin
Administration	Denise Denault
Internet hosting	Guy Gaumont

Volunteer who left in 2019: Denise Denault (September 2019)

3. ON THE NATIONAL SCENE

3.1. Annual Meeting of Members (AMM)

The Annual Meeting of Members was held in June 2019, where a new strategic plan was adopted by a near-unanimous vote (99.6%). During the period July 2019 to June 2024, the Association will strive to achieve three specific goals: advocacy for the best interests of our members, which we hope will help to establish the Association as a respected national voice supporting a secure, healthy, and dignified retirement for federal retirees and all Canadians; to foster membership retention and growth, and to pursue organizational excellence at all levels of the Association.

An additional fund of \$80,000 has been established to provide financial assistance for branches to implement activities or programs that will assist in the achievement of these objectives.

An amendment to the Preferred Partner Program bylaw was proposed by the Ottawa Branch and second by the Outaouais Branch. The new bylaw was adopted unanimously. See item 6.7 for more details on the Regional Discount Program.

3.2. Presidents' Forum

At the 2019 AMM, Chairs and observers from all branches across Canada gathered for a discussion panel. The panel consisted of six presidents representing small, medium, and large branches across the country, namely: Barbara Fagg (Kingston and District, 3400 members), Stephen Hryciuk (Prince George, 414 members), Donald Déry (Outaouais, 10,000 members), Ceci O'Flaherty (Winnipeg and District, 6200 members), René Smith (Miramichi, 600 members) and Robert Giroux (Ottawa, 34,600 members). The topics for discussion were developed following several planning sessions earlier in the year. Three topics were discussed: strategies needed

to increase the local presence of branches; how can branches retain their members, and how to better support the team and volunteers. The results of this forum, among other things, were used to develop our Branch's 2019–2024 strategic plan.

4. ON THE PROVINCIAL SCENE

In preparation for the 2019 Annual Members Meeting, Quebec Branch Presidents met in Trois-Rivières in May to develop a common vision of actions to be taken by Quebec Branches to achieve the goals of the 2019–2024 National Strategic Plan. A second meeting was held in Joliette in October chaired by the Quebec District Directors and representatives from the National Office. All scheduled face-to-face meetings were cancelled to comply with COVID 19 protective measures. The Quebec Presidents' meetings were held via videoconference and focused on the implementation of a project to publish a regional newspaper for Quebec Branches.

5. ON THE REGIONAL SCENE

5.1. Partnerships

The Outaouais Branch has maintained and strengthened its relationship with the Ottawa Branch through quarterly meetings between the two Branch presidents, and between the two Boards of Directors, either formally or through events to which the boards were invited. This partnership allows both branches to share issues and solutions and to better present their needs at the national level.

We have established and maintained new alliances with associations advocating for seniors and retirees' rights in the Outaouais region. We are particularly proud to have established a good partnership with the "Association québécoise de défense des droits des personnes retraitées et préretraitées de l'Outaouais" (AQDR) for the organization of a debate in anticipation of the 2019 elections (see 6.3 for more details).

In April 2019, the Branch contributed \$2,000 to the "Académie des retraités de l'Outaouais" (ARO) to produce the Vivons Vactive physical activity kit, created by and for people aged 50 and over. This kit is a guide for facilitators of the Vactive program in the Outaouais region, proposing five physical activity routines that work on different parts of the body in a safe and fun way. It consists mainly of pictorial workbooks accompanied, in some cases, by lively music. Thanks to this program, 3,050 groups of seniors are active every week in the Outaouais. The Branch is proud of the partnership established with the ARO and to have contributed to this activity kit, which will have lasting benefits and will certainly contribute to improving and maintaining the health and autonomy of Outaouais seniors, including many of our members.

5.2. Tables de concertation des aînés et retraités de l'Outaouais

TCARO is continuing its efforts to consult with its members. Various consultations have been held, particularly regarding the increase in pension funds, in addition to advocating the implementation of a program that would protect retired workers from seeing their pension plans dissipated through company bankruptcies. TCARO is the voice of seniors in the Outaouais.

The publication of the newsletter BY and FOR seniors has set the tone for a greater media presence for TCARO and its members in the Outaouais. This newsletter has been admired and praised by the Quebec seniors' community and now reaches an audience of over 17,000 seniors. A remarkable work of cooperation and collaboration! In addition, TCARO has participated in more than 34 different media sessions, on the regional, provincial, and even national scene.

On the provincial scene, TCARO keeps a watch on various issues through the mandate of its president, Robert Leduc (member of NAFR) on the Board of Directors of the Conference of Tables. Great visibility for one of our members and especially for TCARO.

Finally, TCARO has just received confirmation of funding (over a period of two years) to publish a compendium of exceptional seniors throughout the Outaouais. This compendium will recognize our seniors who stand out in our region!

TCARO is increasingly a beacon for all of us in the Outaouais. Let us be proud of it! It is a remarkable job done by the dozens of senior volunteers who sit on TCARO.

6. ON THE LOCAL SCENE

6.1. Impacts of the pandemic

In mid-March 2020, all branches were notified that they were to postpone their Annual General Meetings and extend the terms of office of elected officers until further notice. Branches were also advised not to engage in outreach to political members and to cancel all face-to-face activities until further notice.

6.2. Definition and prioritization of the Branch's challenges

Training for directors, divided into two consecutive half-days, was presented by the National Office on May 9 and 10, 2019, followed by a day of training on the roles and responsibilities of a board of directors offered by United Way Outaouais on May 19, 2019.

As a result of this training, and in support of the Association's National Board of Directors' strategic plan, Board members and the manager met on July 4, 2019, to plan for the next five years; establish priorities for action by the Branch, and; consolidate the work of the Board.

During this strategic planning and issues prioritization workday, the Board mandated a working group composed of two administrators, Ms. Odette Simard, and Mr. Pierre Laflamme, and the manager, Ms. Guylaine Ross, to study, evaluate and do a cost-benefit analysis of different organizational restructuring scenarios in support of the priorities approved during the workday. The purpose of the restructuring was to reorganize the administrative offices to incorporate an additional resource for the Branch. The working group was subsequently given the task of implementing the decisions of the Board of Directors for this project. However, health restrictions imposed in 2020 and the temporary closure of the Branch's offices delayed the recruitment process.

6.3. Advocacy for Members

The Outaouais Branch is committed to defending the interests of its members. One of our strategies is to work to form coalitions and develop partnerships with other regional associations with a similar mission to ours of defending the interests of Outaouais retirees. In this context, and in anticipation of the 2019 federal election, the Branch, in collaboration with the "Association québécoise de défense des droits des personnes retraitées et préretraitées de l'Outaouais" (AQDR Outaouais), invited a representative of each of the parties elected to the House of Commons, as well as a representative of the People's Party of Canada, to a debate held on October 8, 2019, at the Log Cabin.

Four major issues were discussed during the debate, including:

- Income security in retirement,
- The implementation of a national seniors' strategy,
- The aging variable in federal health transfers,
- housing and stay-at-home programs.

The invitation was extended to the public and to Outaouais seniors through our various communication platforms. Our partners from seniors' associations were also invited to attend the debate. More than 300 people attended in person or through one of our live broadcasts via Zoom and Facebook.

During 2020, the National Office implemented the "Reach 338" program asking Branches to educate MPs on the four issues outlined above. Unfortunately, the Branch was unable to move forward with this initiative due to a lack of dedicated resources to carry out the program. We are still looking for a volunteer or administrator to take on the role of Advocacy

Liaison Officer, who would be primarily responsible for implementing this program for the Branch.

6.4. Financial Management 2019–2020

The Branch had several treasurers in 2020. Mr. Claude Tremblay, who was in office at the beginning of the year, stepped down in April and was replaced on an interim basis by Pierre Laflamme until the Branch found a new treasurer. Mr. René Caron joined the Board of Directors in November and was elected to the position of Treasurer in December 2020.

Due to the pandemic, planned activities in 2020 could not take place. As a result, the Branch has a financial surplus of \$36,000. The next Board of Directors will decide on its use.

The Branch has signed a service contract to December 2021 for its bookkeeping with the accounting firm Monette Fortin Tremblay Inc. who also have the task of producing a Notice to Reader for the financial statements.

The overall financial status of the Branch will be presented during the reading of the financial statements prepared by the accounting firm, and the Branch Treasurer will present the FY 2021 budget forecast.

6.5. Recruitment and retention of members and volunteers

6.5.1. Recruitment and retention of members

National Public Service Week is an opportunity to recognize the value of the services rendered by federal public service employees and to highlight their contribution. This event provides an opportunity to meet and exchange with future federal retirees to raise awareness of the benefits of joining the Association.

In June, September, and November 2019, several Board members participated in recruitment events hosted by the National Office, recruiting new members, while educating these future retirees to join us once they retire.

In 2020, mandatory lockdowns and public venue closures effectively prohibited any opportunity for the Branch to hold these in-person group activities.

At the 2018 AGM, the Board of Directors had presented its recruitment strategy that set target goals for 2019 of 7% for new member recruitment and 2% for decreasing attrition and terminations.

Our April 11, 2019, annual report stated that as of December 31, 2018, our Branch had 10,048 active members.

N.B. The data reported in the next tables were calculated as of December 31, 2018.

	Memberships	Terminations	Gap
In 2019	477	427	+50
In 2020	469	439	+30
As of December 31, 2020, the Branch had 10,128 active members.			

Consequently, and despite the loss of 866 members over the past two years, the Outaouais Branch still managed to increase its membership slightly by 80 members. Although this increase of just under 1% is below target, given the pandemic situation that has prevailed, our Branch has fared better than others in Quebec who have seen their membership numbers drop dramatically since last year.

In early 2019, the Board of Directors decided to hire a second office staff member to support the management of the Branch’s operations. The duties of that position would include, among other things, welcoming new members, and follow-ups with outgoing members.

In late 2020, the National Office Recruitment and Marketing Branch, with the cooperation of two branches, initiated a pilot project to phone members whose memberships had lapsed.. The branches that participated in the project were able to achieve a membership reactivation of 40–45% of members contacted. Given this high success rate, the National Office recently provided, on a temporary basis, resources to contact nationally all members who have lapsed memberships in the last 12 months.

6.5.2. Volunteer Recruitment and Retention

Over the past two years, the Branch has benefited from the services of some eight volunteers who have assisted with various Branch tasks and projects. As a result, and to show our appreciation, they were invited to attend a small party organized for them on Thursday, December 19, 2019. Their involvement, whether it be administrative, for photography, or calls to members, has allowed us to continue to offer the best service possible. National Office Director Simon Coakeley and the Ottawa Branch President, Robert Giroux, joined the Board of Directors in recognizing the important role our volunteers play in the Association.

Unfortunately, we were unable to personally convene volunteers in December 2020. The Board of Directors therefore sent each of our volunteers an artistic thank you card, created by our volunteer, Ms. Michelle Page.

6.6. Health Liaison Officer

The Board of Directors Health Liaison Officer position is still vacant on the. In the meantime, the Branch continued to support members to the best of its ability by following up with the Sun Life Insurance Company when required. To our knowledge, members are always pleased to receive this kind of support.

6.7. Regional Preferential Rate Program

The Annual Meeting of Members (AMM), held in June 2019 and attended by all Branch presidents across Canada, approved an update to Bylaw 5.5 regarding the Association's Preferred Partners Program.

The Branch also added a supplier to its program, Ottavio Gatineau, a local restaurateur, and entered into numerous new negotiations for new incentives - each more interesting than the last - to increase the number of discounts and advantageous privileges on various products and services. Once again, however, the pandemic had the effect of bringing these negotiations to a halt.

6.8. Communications with Members

We communicate with our members through the SAGE magazine, newsletters, and frequent updates to our Branch website. In keeping with the increased use of social media, we have created a Facebook page and hosted our website under the National Association platform.

Our Facebook page now has over 560 subscribers. They regularly receive invitations to our activities, videoconferences, photos, as well as key news from the Branch. If you are not already a subscriber, you can subscribe at no charge through our "[Retraités fédéraux Section Outaouais](#)" Facebook page by clicking "like," which will ensure that you are always up to date with our publications. Please feel free to share posts to maximize our social media presence and reach as many federal seniors and retirees as possible.

Despite these many ways to communicate with our members, a good number of them can only be reached quarterly through SAGE magazine as these members do not have an email address on file. To fill this gap, we have launched a phone call program to reach these members to update their files and obtain their email addresses.

At the end of 2019, some 100 members were targeted by this campaign to test the viability of this project. The results were mixed with only 22 email addresses collected, 18 members not wishing to have their files updated,

and 40 or more attempts to communicate remaining unanswered. A decision on whether to proceed with this initiative will be reviewed by the next Board of Directors elected at the 2021 AGM.

6.9. Social and Cultural Activities

The Branch usually hosts a variety of activities, events, and conferences for its members. 2019 activities are detailed below. However, due to pandemic restrictions, no face-to-face group activities were held in 2020.

The Section began organizing virtual information sessions in December 2020, which have been very well received by our members.

6.9.1. Information Sessions for our Members

In the fall of 2019, the agreement between the Outaouais Branch and “La Corporation des aînés de la Cabane en bois rond” (La Corpo) was renewed, which offers discounts to Branch members for some of their activities. Admission to the Friday conferences and “Discussion Forums,” as well as to “Les petits explorateurs” is free for members of the Association, and the cost of the Wednesday morning workshops is only four dollars (\$4), the same price as for Corpo members. However, the pandemic has also forced La Corpo to temporarily stop most of its face-to-face activities until further notice.

In early January 2019, we began testing the Eventbrite event management technology platform, which gives us a presence on social networks and facilitates event registration online. At the end of the trial period, we will be better able to determine the cost-benefit results and the extent to which we could use this platform to manage registrations for events offered by the Branch.

The Branch offered information sessions to better present the various services offered by our preferred partners. Information sessions on funeral pre-arrangements were offered three times in 2019 by the Racine, Robert, Gauthier, and Beauchamp Funeral Home of Groupe Dignité. A light snack was served at these sessions, which is greatly appreciated by our members. A session on financial literacy was also organized in conjunction with National Bank Financial.

In addition, a conference was organized in January 2020 at the Log Cabin, dealing with topics of interest such as types of hearing loss, signs of deafness, sensory deprivation, communication strategies, hearing loss and cognitive aging. All the participants present much appreciated the speaker, Ms. Amélie Ouellet, consultant with Groupe Forget, Hearing Aid Practitioners, and many registered for the free screening day organized the following month in our offices with a Groupe Forget nurse.

6.9.2. Annual Banquet

On December 8, 2019, the Outaouais Branch held its annual banquet. A full house, a gourmet meal, a lively atmosphere, and entertainment on the

dance floor as well as falling under the spell of our pickpocket magician, not to mention many door prizes drawn during the evening, all entertained participants. It was a great time for the 250 members and friends who gathered to celebrate the end of one year and the beginning of another. Congratulations to the lucky winners of the many prizes drawn during the evening: Nancy Gravelle, Lucie Savard, Huguette Gratton, Diane Pelletier, Suzanne Legault, Murielle Allain, Micheline Charon, Denise Philippe, Richard Willan, Claude Labrèche, Robert Normand, Estelle Gravelle, Andrée Piché, Gisèle Carpentier, Jean-Guy Maisonneuve, Annie Normand, Nicole Prud'homme and Marcel Milks. Congratulations also to the winners of the split draw, which allowed us to give a \$575 bursary to the cadets of the "500 Squadron" to finance their activities.

6.9.3. Mechoui Dinner

Buses with departure and return points in each of the city's sectors were organized for the October 9, 2019 for mechoui at Constantin in Saint-Eustache. This wonderful outing allowed everyone to enjoy good food, fun and laughter followed by a lively evening that kept everyone on their feet.

Some 184 people attended the event, including about 15 from the Montreal Branch who joined the group. It was a great opportunity to meet our colleagues from another branch, and it is only a postponement an interlude, as we intend to repeat the experience.

Everyone was unanimous in saying that they had a great time, thanks to the entertainment and music of J.A. Gamache, dancing to all styles of music: pop, retro, social dances, line dances, country, rock ... bring on the dance steps, laughter, and joy. A wild atmosphere!

The sumptuous buffet, true to the reputation of the establishment, was delicious and copious. There was something for everyone, including some irresistible ones. Many took the opportunity to stock up on homemade products at the take-out shop.

6.9.4. Sugar Shack

The annual Sugar Shack activity was planned for March 17, 2020 at Constantin in Saint-Eustache, and members of the Montreal Branch were also invited to participate. As in previous years, some 110 persons participated. Unfortunately, pandemic restrictions were announced barely a few days prior to the event and forced us to cancel the activity. We reimbursed all participants and hope that we can resume it in 2022.

6.9.5. Discussion Branches

In January 2019, the Branch piloted a new activity called "discussion brunches." This activity was a great opportunity to interact with other members, possibly forming new friendships while learning about topics of interest. With a somewhat cautious start, the event has generated more

interest over the course of the year. We plan to resume this activity once we are back to normal.

7. OVERVIEW 2021–2022

In conclusion, the following is an overview of the projects undertaken during the first quarter of 2021. Some priorities have also been identified by the outgoing directors as a guide for the next Board of Directors.

7.1. Member Services

In February, the Board reactivated a hiring process for a Membership Assistant. This new resource will assist the Office Manager, Ms. Ross, within the operations of the Branch for membership services (including among others, welcoming calls, membership renewal reminders, and follow-up on member questions).

Until our new employee is in place, the Board plans to hire a contract worker beginning in April 2021 for a period of three months. This contractor will contact our members a few weeks prior to their membership expiration date to encourage them to renew. This project will help to develop and refine the tools and processes that will be implemented within the Branch.

7.2. Retention

A new retention activity made its debut in December 2020 with the holding of our first videoconference events on financial literacy in both official languages with National Bank Financial representatives. These sessions attracted approximately 50 members of our Branch.

A second series of videoconferences, to which other branches in Quebec were invited, was held in early 2020. The growing popularity of the videoconference information sessions has demonstrated the interest of our members for this type of activity. Consequently, the Branch plans to continue to offer this service to members when face-to-face activities resume, as it allows us to reach the approximately 2,000 members outside the region.

7.3. Communications

Federal Retirees, Outaouais is the third-largest branch in the country with over 20% of its members indicating a preference for communicating in English. To communicate effectively with our members, we have undertaken a pilot project to develop ways to communicate systematically and quickly with our members in both official languages. Our newsletters are published in French and English since the beginning of 2021. A report will be presented to the new Board of Directors to determine the viability of implementing a bilingual service to all our members.

7.4. Regional Preferential Rate Program

The pandemic has had a negative impact on the local economy. Once the new Board is convened, a review will be initiated with our preferred partners to revalidate our current agreements and discuss its possible renewal. As a result of the changes to Bylaw 5.5 approved at the 2020 AMM, the Branch will undertake a review of its program templates and documentation.

7.5. Operation of the Board of Directors

Different views on the priorities and governance of the Branch have interfered with the smooth functioning of the Board of Directors. The National Office has been involved in finding solutions. Pandemic-related measures have fundamentally changed the way we operate. Several directors whose terms were expiring resigned during their term.

Because of the pandemic, the terms of all directors were extended by one year, which interrupted alternating terms. We have therefore decided to open the eleven director positions for election to re-establish the alternation of terms: six for a two-year term and five for a single year.

7.6. Policy priorities for 2021–2022

7.6.1. Advocacy

With the growing possibility of a federal election by the end of 2021, the Outaouais Branch should consider putting in place the necessary resources to support the Association's strategic advocacy priorities, particularly the realization of the "Reach 338" project.

7.6.2. Recruitment and retention of members

We are confident that face-to-face activities will resume by the end of 2021. Therefore, it would be important to continue integrating videoconferencing in our social events. The implementation of a videoconference presentation program will require a volunteer familiar with electronic communications media.

7.6.3. Financial Management

The modernization of the Section's financial practices should be pursued by examining the viability of electronic payment of its invoices and direct deposit of expense allowance reimbursements to directors. The new Board of Directors may also wish to consider transferring the management of staff payroll to the National Office.

The goal would be to simplify the financial practices of the Branch, and to put in place an accounting system that will allow us to provide the financial data required by the National Association.

7.6.4. Governance

The Outaouais Branch must comply with the bylaws and Practice Guidelines issued by the Association. In this context, the new administrators will have to revise the Branch's bylaws to ensure their consistency with the various reference documents issued by the Association.

To ensure that all directors on the new Board of Directors are up to date, training sessions for staff, directors and volunteers will need to be scheduled at the beginning of the term.

The strategic plan developed by the Branch in 2018 should be reviewed to adapt its content on the 2019–2024 Strategic Plan of the Association's National Council.