

Administrative Services: adding value

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Administrative Services accounts for some 22 per cent of PEO's overall operations (2003 budget figures), which indicates the wide range of front-line logistical and financial services undertaken by the department on behalf of the association.

Figure 1 reveals Administrative Services' budget breakdown for 2004. It is evident that three-quarters of the department's resources are devoted to PEO's "common administration and physical plant" (rent, facilities and purchasing, and mailroom). The remaining 25 per cent is divided among financial services, document management centre/customer services, and business planning and policy operation.

Administrative Services is concerned with PEO's overall objective of making the association more efficient and cost effective, and in demonstrating to members at large that operations are being conducted in the most transparent way possible.

To that end, Administrative Services has established a number of key priorities for 2004-2005. Some of these, such as PEO's online payment and change of address systems, have been underway since May 2004, and have been well received by PEO members. The department assisted in developing PEO's privacy policy and an updated records retention manual, which were approved by PEO Council in September. Implementation of the privacy policy will

PEO Fast Facts is designed to provide readers with quick insights on ways PEO is working to improve service to members, and to demonstrate how resources are being used. This issue, we turn our attention to Administrative Services.

be a major initiative for PEO over the next six months (see In Council, pp. 22-23, also the January/February 2005 issue of *Engineering Dimensions* for privacy policy coverage). In addition to the current services that PEO offers its members, Administrative Services will soon provide more convenient options for making fee payments. Other initiatives, such as upgrades of the financial and phone systems, focus on effective and efficient use of existing facilities, and efforts to enhance PEO's overall customer service orientation.

To demonstrate greater efficiency and cost effectiveness of PEO's human resources, Administrative Services introduced the Staff Contribution System, which requires staff to enter online the amount of time spent on different activities. The system allows directors and managers a better appreciation of how staff time is being used in both day-to-day operations and special programs.

To assist in budget preparation and financial forecasting, Administrative Services is

spearheading Activity Based Costing (ABC) software, which enables staff to undertake activity-based budgeting, and to link budget information with different cost objects. ABC has been adopted by PEO to better understand the cost of its regulatory and regulatory support processes and programs.

Finally, Administrative Services has developed an activity-based budgeting process for 2005, which was designed to assist staff in drafting a balanced budget. Daria Babaie, P.Eng., director of administrative services, calls the 2005 budget plan "a road map" for staff and committee members to develop operating and capital budgets. He says the overall principle guiding the department's operations is to demonstrate to PEO's membership that their annual fees are used as effectively as possible. In addition to the transparency/accountability imperative, he adds, the department is keen on offering convenience and updated services to PEO members. ❖

Figure 1. Budget breakdown in 2004

