



PENSION PLAN DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

BACKGROUND:

As the day-to-day administrator of 11 pension plans representing approximately 114,000 pension plan members from the provincial public service sector, the education sector, provincial health authorities, Crown corporations, and other quasi-public sector organizations, Vestcor strives to provide these members with the highest quality service possible at all times. Despite this approach, we acknowledge that in the various interactions that we have with these members, there may be instances where complaints arise that require further review.

In order to fulfill our responsibility of both providing exceptional client service and adhering to the rules and regulations applicable to the pension plans we administer, we have established this Pension Plan Dispute Resolution Process for these members.

Oversight of Vestcor's services is conducted by our independent Board of Directors, appointed by our owner, Vestcor Corp.

Information related to these entities is available at the following website: [About Us | Vestcor](#).

The New Brunswick Financial and Consumer Services Commission (FCNB) is responsible for ensuring that pension plans registered in New Brunswick meet the legal requirements of the *Pension Benefits Act*; this legislation is designed to protect the interests of New Brunswick pension plan members by setting minimum standards for these pension plans. Information related to FCNB is available at the following website: [New Brunswick Financial and Consumer Services Commission \(FCNB\)](#).

SCOPE:

This process applies to all pension-plan-related* complaints made by any active, inactive, deferred, and retired member of the pension plans that Vestcor administers (the "pension plan member").

A complaint is a verbal or written expression by a pension plan member that an issue related to their pension plan that pertains to them is unsatisfactory or unacceptable. Our aim is to address all complaints impartially, efficiently, and in a manner which protects the privacy of the individual.

** Any complaints related to the Pension Plan for Part-Time and Seasonal Employees of New Brunswick (PT&S Pension Plan) should be directed to Manulife at 1-877-666-2764.*

DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS:

The process below details the steps a pension plan member should take if they have a concern related to their pension plan. At each step of the process, the inclusion of the following information is helpful:

- The reason for the pension plan member's submission and the action that they are looking for in order to resolve the issue
- Any relevant facts and documents that support the result that the pension plan member is seeking

It is important that complaints are submitted as soon as possible to allow for prompt resolution. While the issue may not be resolved immediately, the pension plan member can expect an acknowledgement of receipt of their complaint within one business day of the submission.

STEP 1: VESTCOR'S MEMBER SERVICES TEAM

Pension plan members are encouraged to resolve their complaint by first contacting a Vestcor Member Services Analyst. Our staff is committed to finding satisfactory solutions within the parameters that apply to the applicable pension plan and legislation.

If the pension plan member is not satisfied with the resolution provided by the Analyst, they may request to escalate their issue to the Manager of Vestcor's Member Services; the Manager will review the particulars of the file and determine if there is any additional information that was not accounted for in the initial resolution.

STEP 2: VESTCOR'S PENSION POLICY TEAM

Step 2 in the process may be triggered:

- If the pension plan member is not satisfied with the resolution in Step 1, and notifies Vestcor in writing
- If the Vestcor Member Services Team identifies special circumstances or additional research required related to the member's case which requires escalation to Step 2

The Pension Policy Team is, among other duties, responsible for the review of pension files that require comprehensive investigation to ensure compliance with the applicable pension plan provisions and regulatory requirements (e.g., requirements under the *Pension Benefits Act*, *Income Tax Act*).

The Pension Policy Team will investigate the complaint and provide a written response to the pension plan member within 30 days. During that time, the Pension Policy Team may consult with applicable external resources for assistance; these entities may include the applicable pension plan's actuary, regulatory bodies, and legal services.

STEP 3: VESTCOR'S CHIEF PENSIONS AND BENEFITS OFFICER

Step 3 in the process may be triggered:

- If the pension plan member is not satisfied with the resolution in step 2, and notifies Vestcor in writing
- If the Pension Policy Team warrants the need for Step 3

The Chief Pensions and Benefits Officer is responsible for the oversight of the day-to-day operations of the pension plans administered by Vestcor. The Chief Pensions and Benefits Officer will investigate the complaint and provide a written response to the pension plan member within 30 days. During that time, the Chief Pensions and Benefits Officer may consult with applicable external resources for assistance; these entities may include the applicable pension plan's actuary, regulatory bodies, and legal services.

STEP 4: APPLICABLE PENSION PLAN GOVERNING AUTHORITY

Step 4 in the process may be triggered:

- If the pension plan member is not satisfied with the resolution in Step 3, and notifies Vestcor in writing
- If the Chief Pensions and Benefits Officer warrants the need for Step 4

The applicable governing authorities of the pension plans Vestcor administers are provided in the following table:

PENSION PLAN	GOVERNING AUTHORITY
• New Brunswick Public Service Pension Plan (NBPSPP)	NBPSPP Board of Trustees
• New Brunswick Teachers' Pension Plan (NBTPP)	NBTPP Board of Trustees
• Shared Risk Plan for Certain Bargaining Employees of NB Hospitals (CBE)	CBE Board of Trustees
• Shared Risk Plan for CUPE Employees of NB Hospitals (CUPE Hospitals SRP)	CUPE Hospitals SRP Board of Trustees
• Pension Plan for General Labour, Trades & Services Employees of NB School Districts (GLT&S Pension Plan) • Pension Plan for Full Time CUPE 2745 Employees of NB School Districts (CUPE 2745 Pension Plan) • <i>Members' Pension Act</i> (MPA) • <i>Members' Superannuation Act</i> (MSA) • <i>Provincial Court Judges' Pension Act</i> (PCJPA) • <i>Provincial Court Act</i> (PCA)	Finance and Treasury Board (Government of New Brunswick)

The applicable governing authority is responsible for the overall governance and administration of the pension plan in question. When the issue is brought forward to the governing authority by Vestcor, the governing authority will ensure that the complaint is investigated as required and that the pension plan member receives a written response within 30 days. During that time, the governing authority may consult, or direct Vestcor to consult, with applicable external resources for assistance; these entities may include the applicable pension plan's actuary, regulatory bodies, and legal services.

If the pension plan member is still not satisfied with the resolution provided by the governing authority, they may escalate the complaint to the FCNB.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Vestcor understands the importance of protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the pension plan members of the various pension plans that we administer. As such, all complaints are addressed with strict confidentiality, and only relevant information is disclosed on a need-to-know basis. Records of complaints and their resolution are maintained by Vestcor in order to ensure consistency in our practices and to assist in identifying areas where our services can be improved.

CONCLUSION:

Vestcor welcomes all feedback from pension plan members in order to improve our services. By establishing this protocol, our goal is to provide pension plan members with a clear and transparent process to address their complaints. While the end result of following this process may not always be to the ultimate satisfaction of the pension plan member, they can be assured that their concerns have been heard and addressed with the best suitable course of action available to them.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Vestcor Member Services Team (Step 1)



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Vestcor Pension Policy Team (Step 2)



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Vestcor Chief Pensions and Benefits Officer (Step 3)



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