

NDT Industry Pension and Benefit Plans 2019 Year in Review

www.ndtbenefits.org

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Financial Markets

The pension plan is well positioned to withstand the turmoil in financial markets and the slowing global economy caused by the Coronavirus crisis.

Overview as at March 31, 2020

The 2019 year started with fears that never realized: a global economic slowdown; disruptive trade wars between the U.S. and China and potential missteps from the monetary policy makers. The year ended with the stock markets reaching new highs. Coming into 2020, optimism loomed as economists forecasted low risk of near-term recession and modest rise in global markets.

This optimism was quickly dampened by the coronavirus outbreak in China and its potential effect on the global economy. As the outbreak spread around the world and became a pandemic, there was a sudden halt to global economic activity. The result has been the fastest move in history from a stock market peak to a bear market. A bear market is a period during which stock prices consistently fall from their most recent high.

This picture attests to the fact that no one can predict what the market will do. It also reinforces the importance of following a disciplined, long-term approach to investing. While the shock to the economy and the significant market downturn will mean a decline in the value of the pension plan's assets, it is reasonable to expect that the market will recover and the pension plan's assets will bounce back over time. In April 2020, the fund's rate of return is estimated to be -7%. Your pension plan is resilient to these short-term fluctuations. Here's why:

Rational Perspective — Markets will go up and down over the short term and downturns happen frequently. Short term volatility is part and parcel of investing. However, market setbacks have typically been followed by recoveries, as evidenced by the recovery following the 2008 financial crisis.

Strict Discipline — Trying to time the market rarely pays off and can be costly. A rigorous, disciplined approach to investing (as outlined, for example, in your pension plan's Statement of Investment Policy and Procedures, or "SIPP") provides investors with a long-term plan for dealing with gains and losses that emerge over the short run.

Long-Term Focus — Although past performance is no guarantee of future results, there is ample evidence to show that, historically, stock markets have performed well over the long term. Your pension plan continues to have a long-term outlook and its assets are invested with this in mind. After all, pension benefits are long term in nature.

Broad Diversification — The expression "don't put all your eggs in one basket" is certainly good advice when it comes to investing. Your pension plan's assets are well diversified, meaning that the assets are allocated to a wide variety of different investment types (bonds, stocks, mortgages, real estate, infrastructure, etc.), industry sectors (energy, utilities, consumer goods, materials, financials,



Your Pension Plan

Plan Expenses
(Compare to 2%-3%
in Retail Market) **0.49%**

\$764.5M Plan Assets
(Net)

Investment Earnings

2019 **\$94.2M**

2018 **\$-17.2M**

Gross Rate
of Return **13.8%**

5,888 Total Pension Plan
Members

Contributions **\$42M**

126 Participating
Employers

Benefit
Payments **\$45M**

\$87.7M Net Increase
in Assets

etc.), geographies (Canada, US, developed countries outside North America, emerging economies, etc.), and even investment styles. Since different asset types are impacted by different events, a diversified portfolio such as your pension plan's, experiences lower volatility than any one individual investment.

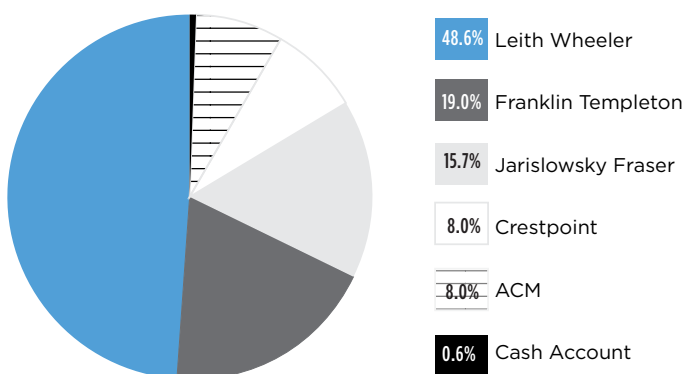
Robust Governance – The Trustees have hired professional fund managers to manage your pension plan's investments. These managers are responsible for implementing your pension plan's investment strategy and achieving its short and long-term goals, as outlined in the SIPP mentioned above. The Trustees oversee and regularly monitor the performance of the managers.

Although these principles are presented in the context of your workplace pension plan, they are equally applicable to your personal finances. Establish your personal investment goals and take a disciplined approach to investing, so that, when the ups and downs of the market happen, you can take advantage of opportunities that arise. In respect of your personal investments, a professional advisor can assist you with keeping a rational perspective, maintaining strict discipline, focusing on the long-term, diversifying broadly and implementing a robust governance framework.

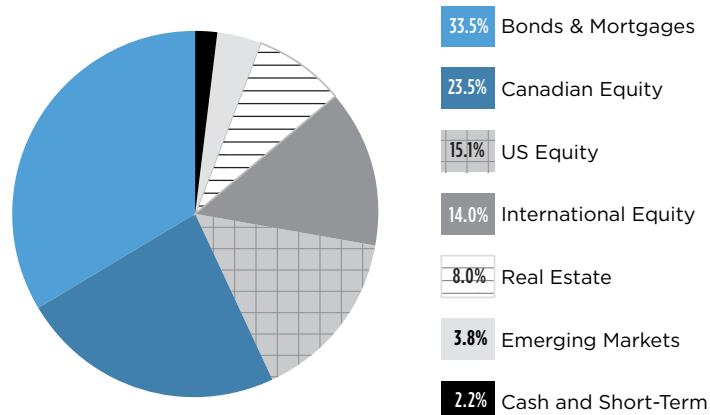
NDT Industry Pension Plan Asset Allocation

For the period ending December 31, 2019

By Manager



By Asset Class



Source: Proteus Investment Performance Report

The Pension Rainbow

Pension Plans in Canada are as varied as the colours of a rainbow. Let's look at the different types of pension plans and figure out the colour of your pension plan.

Traditional Types of Plans

There are two traditional categories of plans: defined benefit and defined contribution.

In a defined benefit plan, members receive a lifetime income, or a pension, upon retirement. The amount of pension received is typically based on a pre-determined formula and does not depend on how well the investments perform. The contributions going in to fund the benefits are variable and are calculated by periodic actuarial valuations. In simple terms, the benefits delivered by a defined benefit plan can be predicted as they are driven by a formula; the contributions needed to support the benefit are not predictable as they depend on the plan's investment returns and other factors.

In a defined contribution plan, members accumulate a pot of money based on the contributions made to the Plan and the investment returns earned on these contributions. Upon retirement, members can draw on the pot of money as a source of income. The amount of income at retirement largely depends on how the investments perform and what the pot of money has grown into. In simple terms, the contributions made to a defined contribution plan are known but the benefits delivered are not predictable as they depend on the plan's investments and the choices the member makes in converting the pot of money into income.

Cost Sharing

The cost of a pension plan, regardless of whether the pension plan is defined benefit or defined contribution, can be shared between the employer and the plan members; or it can be employer pay all. A pension plan that requires member contributions is known as a "contributory" plan. One that does not require member contributions and is solely funded by employer contribution is known as a "non-contributory" plan. If the contributions to the pension plan are determined by negotiations between the union and the employer, then the pension plan is coined as a "negotiated cost" plan.

Plan Sponsors

A pension plan can be sponsored by a single entity such as an employer or a union or it can be sponsored by multiple entities. When a plan is sponsored by a single employer, it is known as a "single employer" pension plan. When a plan is sponsored by a group of employers, it is known as a "multi-employer" pension plan.

When the responsibility for the pension plan is equally shared between the employer(s) and the plan members, then the plan is known as a "jointly sponsored pension plan."

Non-traditional Types of Plans

Generally speaking, the non-traditional types of plans are found in the defined benefit environment. A defined benefit plan by nature is exposed to cost pressures as it attempts to deliver the ultimate pension benefits but the cost of these benefits can go up or down depending on the economic times.

A "Target Benefit Plan" is the most recent innovation in the pension industry. While the concept is not new to negotiated cost defined benefit multi-employer plans, the pension regulators in Canada have recognized the need to focus on the long-term sustainability of defined benefit plans. Special funding rules are now in force for plans that qualify as a Target Benefit Plan.

A Target Benefit Plan has elements of both defined benefit and defined contribution pension plans. Similar to a defined contribution plan, a Target Benefit Plan has stable contribution rates. This provides cost certainty to the plan sponsor. Similar to a defined benefit plan, it provides a targeted future pension benefit based on a formula. This allows members to predict with some accuracy their expected income during retirement.

A Target Benefit Plan is different from a traditional defined benefit plan in the sense that under a Target Benefit Plan, benefits are “targeted” as opposed to guaranteed. In a Target Benefit Plan, benefits can be adjusted both up or down in order to keep the contributions stable. However, unlike a defined contribution plan where each individual member is exposed to investment risk and longevity risk (risk of outliving your savings), a Target Benefit Plan pools these risks together so that the risks are shared among all the plan members.

Your Pension Plan

Now, let’s see if you can determine what type of pension plan you have.

You have a multi-employer negotiated cost defined contribution plan. It is non-contributory as plan members are not required to make contributions. The contributions your employer makes on your behalf are negotiated and set out in the Collective Agreement. These contributions, together with the investment income earned on them, will grow into a pot of money for your retirement. In your plan the amount of your personal account is directly related to the number of hours you work, as your collective agreement requires a payment, to your account, for every earned hour.

These are some of the features of your pension plan:

- **Simplicity** — Your Plan is simple to understand. Your pot of money, or account balance, is determined based on the contributions that go in and the investment returns earned on them.
- **Professional Management** — Your money is invested with qualified investment managers who manage other pension plans. Your money is in the hands of professionals.
- **Lower fees** — Because your money is pooled together with other plan members, the fees you pay are substantially lower than in the retail market. Your money grows faster.
- **Flexibility** — When you are ready to retire, within certain parameters, you have flexibility as to how much and how often you withdraw from your retirement nest egg.

Trustees

The Board of Trustees meet formally at least twice a year. In 2019 they met on May 14th and October 29th.

2019 Trustees

Mr. Kent R. Oliver (Chair - 2016)	Mr. Richard MacIntosh (2018)
Mr. Garon Robb (2018)	Mr. Adam Stasuk (2018)
Mr. George Hoytema (2019)	Mr. Phil Tetzlaff (2017)
Mr. Brent Hunt (2016)	Mr. Gerry Sieben (1989)



Set Your Retirement Income Goal

Planning for your retirement is like any other project you take on in life — if you don’t give yourself a deadline you may never get around to it. And remember that it is never too early or too late to start planning for your retirement. You just need to roll up your sleeves and get to work. Here are some ideas to help you chart your course ...

Get Started

We all want the peace of mind of knowing that we will have a comfortable income when we retire. However, many of us don’t spend the time to think about retirement. Some of the barriers are:

- **Procrastination** – It’s not that we don’t want to prepare for our retirement years; we just can’t get around to it.
- **Preference for today** – The dollar we have in our pocket today is more valuable to us than what that dollar might grow into 20 years from now.
- **Too complicated** – There are so many choices: banks offering investments, employers providing retirement savings plans, financial planners and well-meaning relatives offering advice. Planning for retirement is complicated and we don’t know where to start.

But let’s take it one step at a time. The first step is to define your retirement income goal. Once an income goal is identified, then you can picture your financial future; you will be more engaged, and you can turn all that complication into action.

Set an Income Goal

How much money you need in retirement is a personal decision as it relates to the lifestyle you wish to maintain in retirement.

In retirement, some expenses such as CPP, EI contributions and union dues will disappear, while others may increase or decrease depending on your personal circumstances. On average, it is reasonable to expect that a lower income may meet one’s needs. However, as the needs vary between individuals, a good place to start is to assess your current living expenses and give some thought to how they may change in retirement.

Step 1—Create a Personal Budget

Create a budget by categorizing your current annual expenses into the following:

1. **Housing** (principal and secondary) — Include mortgage payments, rent, taxes, heat and electricity, insurance, cable, internet, phone, maintenance.
2. **Transportation Expenses** — Such as expenses to commute to and from work; car expenses; car insurance, public transportation costs.
3. **Living Expenses** — This category includes all your living expenses such as food; clothing, personal care; health care costs.
4. **Personal expenses** — Any typical expense not included in one of the other categories should be included here; such as entertainment costs, vacation, education, etc.
5. **Income Tax and Payroll Deductions** — This category includes all of your income taxes and statutory payroll deductions such as CPP and EI contributions, or union dues.
6. **Savings and Financial Security Expenses** — Here include your contributions to RRSPs, TFSA, non-registered savings, life, disability insurance, health benefit and your workplace pension plan.

Once you are done, remember that your total expenses must add up to your gross income.

Step 2—Create a Retirement Budget

After you have identified all your current expenses, look at them in a slightly different way to help you estimate how these expenses will change after retirement.

Remove your statutory payroll deductions as you will no longer have those expenses. You can also allow for lower income taxes. Divide your other expenses into the following three categories to make it easier for you to know where the trade-offs, if any, need to be.

Necessities	Comforts	Luxuries
Expenses necessary to meet your and your family's basic needs.	Expenses that are not necessary but they enhance your life and provide comfort.	Expenses that provide enhanced comforts. Generally, they fulfill dreams.
Example: Bread	Example: Cheese	Example: Lobster

Doing a budget in anticipation of retirement will give you a clearer picture of what you'll need in retirement. The logical starting point is what you're spending now. Also, if your retirement income goal presents a challenge to achieve, reviewing your current expenses can help you identify areas where you might be able to cut back and save a little more for your retirement.

Here's an example of a sample budget completed by a colleague, Mr. Joe Jolly.

	Current Actual (Annual \$)	Anticipated in Retirement (Annual \$)
	Total Household	Total Household
Housing	\$10,000	\$8,000
Transportation	\$2,000	\$1,000
Living Expenses	\$15,000	\$12,000
Personal Expenses	\$5,000	\$10,000
Income Tax	\$8,000	\$4,000
Payroll Deductions	\$5,000	\$0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Insurance • Canada Pension Plan • Union Dues • Other 		
Savings	\$5,000	\$0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pension Plan • RRSP • TFSA • Other 		
Total = Gross Income	\$50,000	\$35,000

In completing this, Joe makes the following observations:

1. Once accounted for all their expenses, the family's budget must add up to the family's gross income of \$50,000. Do you know why?
2. The family's take-home pay, after taxes, payroll deductions and savings is \$32,000. Add (1) to (4) under column labelled "Current Actual" to see if this is true.
3. To maintain their standard of living in retirement, Joe and his partner need roughly the same take home pay in retirement as in their working years. Add (1) to (4) under column labelled "Anticipated in Retirement" to see if this is true.
4. Joe figures out that in retirement with an income of \$35,000 before taxes, he and his partner can meet their expenses. Joe is mighty Jolly. Can you see why?

Now it is your turn to do the work and figure out how much money you need in your retirement.

Who Looks After My Money?

Have you heard the expression it takes a village to raise a child? Well, it also takes a village to look after your money. Let's look at how your Plan is governed and who looks after your money.

As a start, the Plan is overseen by a board of trustees. The trustees are fiduciaries of the Plan. That is, the trustees must, among other things, act in the best interests of the plan members. They must also act in an even-handed manner. That is, in dealing with different classes of members, the trustees have to be fair to all plan members.

To help carry out their responsibilities, the trustees have employed the following professional advisors:

- **Plan Administrator** — Day-to-day operations of the Plan including record keeping and administration are delegated to D.A. Townley, one of the largest third-party employee benefits administrators in Western Canada. They keep track of the benefits you earn in the Plan.
- **Custodian** — The role of the custodian is to safekeep your money in a trust, separate and apart from the assets of your employer. The custodian also prepares the Plan's financial statements.
- **Investment Manager** — The investment manager is responsible for investing the Plan's assets according to the guidelines established by the trustees. Your money is pooled with other plan members and invested by professionals who also manage other pension funds.
- **Investment Consultant** — The investment consultant's primary role is to assist the trustees set up guidelines and objectives for how your money is invested. Because the investment consultant is not actually investing the money, they can provide an unbiased review of the manager's performance.
- **Auditor** — The Plan's financial statements are audited by a professional auditor every year. The role of the auditor is to certify that all the financial activities related to the Plan are accurate and fairly represented. In other words, your money has been properly accounted for.

These entities collectively look after your money; and in doing so the trustees have made sure that all the checks and balances are in place.

Questions? Contact Us