

ACPM focusing on flexible pension models, CAPSA guidelines in 2025

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In 2025, the Association of Canadian Pension Management is focusing on flexible pension plan models amid a backdrop of multiple elections taking place across Canada.

Korinne Collins, chief executive officer at the ACPM, says flexibility is needed around decumulation strategies for defined contribution plans and the potential for different income tax treatments for workers looking to take advantage of their retirement income.

“More flexibility would be really helpful, allowing individuals to manage their retirement savings more easily and transfer benefits from one employer’s plan to another.”

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In addition, the looming Ontario and federal elections are already causing a pause in some of the files the association is working on, allowing the ACPM to take a proactive approach to pension matters such as the updated capital accumulation plans and risk management guidelines from the Canadian Association of Pension Supervisory Authorities, which are expected to be implemented by Jan. 1, 2026.

While ACPM members are adopting the guidelines, Collins says they don’t see a lot of difference from previous risk management policy. “We’re not seeing a significant shift in operational activities. It’s more about future planning than managing the funds on a day-to-day basis, with a focus on preparing for potential future risks.”

Canadian pension funds were called into question last year about whether their investments in domestic markets were sizeable enough. The question even caused the federal government to task former Bank of Canada governor Stephen Poloz with creating a working group to investigate methods of incentivizing institutional investors to make further investment in Canada.

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This approach was solidified last year when former Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland said the federal government would remove the so-called ‘30 per cent rule’ preventing pension funds from owning more than 30 per cent of the voting shares of a Canadian entity.

“In light of the current economic climate and shifting government priorities, I think we may see an evolution in the ‘invest in Canada’ strategy,” says Collins.

The dialogue around domestic investments has also revived a demand for the return of real return bonds, a cause the ACPM has advocated for in the past. The federal government decided to cease offering the asset in 2022.

“We might see economic circumstances unfold in a way that leads to a more robust dialogue about that being another option for us,” she says.

Read: Ottawa to remove 30% investment cap for Canadian pension funds

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