



## Executive Summary

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The Public Service Alliance of Canada represents most federal government employees including those of Service Canada. Last year we provided you with a brief outlining our concerns about the new "Service Canada" initiative. In this second brief, we strive to draw your attention to our concerns about the long term impact of the Service Canada approach to service delivery to Canadians.

Many government programs are being reorganized under Service Canada. The stated purpose of Service Canada is to offer "one stop, personal service" to Canadians. It combines programs and services on income support programs and services to the unemployed (EI), youth, seniors (OAS and CPP), and many others with short term services such as applying for passports, pleasure boat licenses and other services. The vision is that Canadians will be better served by being able to access all government services under one entity.

Our position as the union representing the workers of Service Canada is that the reverse is true. Service Canada is first and foremost a cost saving initiative. It is modeled on the Australian "Centrelink" program that combined many services into "one stop shopping". Centrelink also resulted in frustrated service delivery, inefficient reporting practices, increased privatization of services and increased costs to taxpayers for less service.

### **Service Canada**

Service Canada boasts it will save 2.5 billion dollars over the next 5 years. Despite the promises and PR hype about improved Service Canada, it was announced in the budget as a cost saving measure. Make no mistake; Service Canada is first and foremost a cost saving measure. HRSDC plans to decrease its total workforce nationally by 1000-1600 indeterminate positions over the up-coming 5-year period. Term and casual employees are not included in this estimate but will be terminated before indeterminate employees are let go. With less resources and the loss of knowledgeable workers, how can they deliver on this promise to provide quality, personalized service? Service Canada has failed to address this basic question posed in our last brief.

In the Atlantic Region, currently these federal services are offered in all major cities and towns. Many are offered in small rural areas bringing meaningful federal government employment to these regions.



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We believe that the current government and management approach is resulting in:

- 1) a serious decrease in the quality of service and programs provided to the public
- 2) the erosion of the quality of the work performed by public service employees delivering the service
- 3) a decrease of federal revenues and presence in Atlantic communities
- 4) job loss
- 5) privatization of public services / less accountability

In the body of the brief, we discuss these issues in more detail.

### **Act to improve rather than dismantle public services**

We are asking you to investigate the issues raised in this brief. Talk to Service Canada users, staff and managers. Drop by offices. Talk to your constituents who use these services. Some MP's and certainly their staff have called 1-800-O-Canada on behalf of their constituents. Please take the time to do so, particularly ask for help with a less than straightforward issue. This action will demonstrate to you that quality service is suffering.

Please take time to speak on these issues in your riding and in the House. Write letters expressing your concerns to the Ministers responsible.

Attrition over the next 5 years provides an excellent opportunity for young people to remain in Atlantic communities in decent paying federal government jobs with a secure future. The loss of knowledgeable people with years of experience in working with complex legislation on Income Support programs should be motivating the federal government to plan for the future and to do the long term planning needed to replace these knowledgeable workers and reinstate quality public service.

Act now to restore a healthy public service for Canadians. The Federal Government and its citizens need to take pride in the public service and be able to have confidence in the service provided. Public Service employees need to be able to work in an environment that appreciates quality service.