



2026 Federal Pre-Budget Consultations

Written submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance

April 30, 2026

List of recommendations from the Canadian Association of Professional Employees (CAPE)

Recommendation 1: The government should end the Translation Bureau's Special Operating Agency (SOA) status, provide it with adequate and sustainable funding, and make its services mandatory and free for all federal departments and agencies.

Recommendation 2: Part of its upcoming budget, we urge the government to implement full transparency in its use of artificial intelligence, by proactively disclosing all AI use, from staffing processes to policy review and beyond.

Recommendations 3: Artificial intelligence tools should be co-developed by the employer and its workers, and workers should be equal partners in the design and implementation of artificial intelligence across government.

Recommendation 4: As the government carries out its cost-cutting exercises, employment equity indicators should be publicly reported at the departmental level through the Public Service Commission's monthly priority statistics, with disaggregation by employment equity groups where possible.

Recommendation 5: Ensure that cost-saving and worker-centered accommodations such as remote work are accepted whenever possible and ensure that adequate resources are dedicated to reviewing accommodation requests to reduce delays and backlogs.

Recommendation 6: That Budget 2026 restore full national funding for Health Canada's Health Products and Food branch and the Public Health Agency of Canada's Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention branch to protect downstream provincial health systems and improve health outcomes for all Canadians. Redirecting funds away from in-office presence could be used to offset program and capacity cuts to critical services such as health care and reconciliation.

Recommendation 7: That Budget 2026 prioritize public sector jobs at Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada and other government departments delivering health programs, including Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada instead of using costly private consultants.

Introduction

The Canadian Association of Professional Employees (CAPE), representing more than 27,000 federal public service professionals, is pleased to contribute to the 2026 Federal Pre-Budget Consultations. As the federal government navigates a period of fiscal restraint and rapid technological change, it is essential that budget decisions strengthen, not erode, the capacity, integrity, and fairness of Canada's public institutions. This submission outlines targeted, practical recommendations to ensure that investments in the public service uphold official languages obligations, promote transparency and accountability in the use of artificial intelligence, protect employment equity, and reinforce the federal government's critical role in safeguarding public health. Together, these measures will support a modern, inclusive, and effective public service that delivers for all Canadians.

Interpreters

The Translation Bureau, currently designated as a Special Operating Agency (SOA), operates under a cost-recovery model that requires it to bill federal departments for most of its services. While this model is intended to promote efficiency, it inadvertently places financial constraints on the preservation and promotion of Canada's official languages. This arrangement is fundamentally at odds with the Bureau's mandate to provide high-quality translation and interpretation services in both English and French, and to act as a centre of excellence in language services.

The current model disproportionately impacts French, the most frequently translated official language, thereby undermining its status and impeding the federal government's ability to meet its obligations under the *Official Languages Act*. By limiting access to high-quality translation services, the SOA structure hinders the implementation of effective bilingual communication across federal institutions.

- 1. Recommendation:** The government should end the Translation Bureau's SOA status, provide it with adequate and sustainable funding, and make its services mandatory and free for all federal departments and agencies.

Artificial Intelligence

The government has made artificial intelligence a key priority across central agencies with ambitious goals of using AI to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the federal public service. However, departments are proceeding without coordination, clear principles, and without fair consultation of their own personnel whose jobs will be affected, for better or for worse.

AI can create opportunities to streamline work, but it requires human oversight and careful implementation to protect Canadian data sovereignty and Canadians' personal information.

Worker oversight is essential to ensure that AI risks are properly managed within the public sector, and to ensure that errors are corrected before severe consequences can arise.

2. **Recommendation:** As part of its upcoming budget, we urge the government to implement full transparency in its use of artificial intelligence, by proactively disclosing all AI use, from staffing processes to policy review and beyond.
3. **Recommendation:** Artificial intelligence tools should be co-developed by the employer and its workers, and workers should be equal partners in the design and implementation of artificial intelligence across government.

Employment Equity and Accommodation

The government is currently cutting programs and trimming the ranks of the public service. The intent of this process is to reduce headcount and program expenses, but the process has left the door open to unintended negative consequences, such as a less diverse and less representative public service. In recent years, the government has worked to increase diversity through its hiring practices, but recent gains are in jeopardy as workers newer to the public service, including both permanent and term employees, are not retained.

We call on the government to purposefully and transparently track how the workforce adjustment process affects employment equity groups and the government's employment equity targets in real time. The Public Service Commission's priority statistics should be updated to include success rates in the selection of employees for retention or lay-off (SERLO) at the greatest level of disaggregation possible while preserving confidentiality (i.e., by employment equity group and by department where possible).

We also note with concern reports that accommodation requests are being denied when remote work is a possible remedy that eliminates further accommodation needs while also saving taxpayer money. Accommodation requests should be assessed fairly and without delay, with proposed remedies that center the worker and their wellbeing at work. The current practice prioritizes the return to offices over human rights obligations.

4. **Recommendation:** As the government carries out its cost-cutting exercises, employment equity indicators should be publicly reported at the departmental level through the Public Service Commission's monthly priority statistics, with disaggregation by employment equity group where possible.
5. **Recommendation:** Ensure that cost-saving and worker-centered accommodations such as remote work are accepted whenever possible and ensure that adequate resources are dedicated to reviewing accommodation requests to reduce delays and backlogs.

Health Care

The federal government has long played a central role in health and health care to ensure that all Canadians have access to high quality, public health care when they need it. While the day-to-day running of health care systems and services is a provincial responsibility, the federal government supports these systems via health transfers and through national work on health regulation, health promotion and chronic disease prevention. These essential services reduce long-term pressure on community-level health services, from hospitals to health professionals, and help to keep Canadians healthy and active.

We note with concern that cuts carried out by the government will result in reduced capacity to fill this role, and opens space for the privatization of these services, through increased use of consultants and third parties to be involved in health care.

In Budget 2026, we urge the government to step up to the plate and fully fund these regulation, prevention and promotion programs to ensure that consumer safety and public health remain federal priorities. We also call on the government to ensure that health care services and delivery remain public at every level, from local service delivery to national coordination.

6. **Recommendation:** That Budget 2026 restore full national funding for Health Canada’s Health Products and Food branch and the Public Health Agency of Canada’s Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention branch to promotion to protect downstream provincial health systems and improve health outcomes for all Canadians. Redirecting funds away from in-office presence could be used to offset program and capacity cuts to critical services such as health care and reconciliation.

7. **Recommendation:** That Budget 2026 prioritize public sector jobs at Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada and other government departments delivering health programs, including Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada instead of using costly private consultants.

About the [Canadian Association of Professional Employees \(CAPE\)](#):

With more than 27,000 members, the Canadian Association of Professional Employees (CAPE) is one of the largest federal public service unions in Canada — dedicated to advocating on behalf of federal employees in the Economics and Social Science Services (EC) and Translation (TR) groups, as well as employees of the Library of Parliament (LoP), the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (OPBO) and civilian members of the RCMP (ESS and TRL).