



Public Service Alliance of Canada
Alliance de la Fonction publique du Canada

WE ARE
ALL
AFFECTED

What do you mean when you say “we are all affected”?

When federal government workers lose their jobs, they aren't the only ones affected. Their families struggle to cope with the loss of secure income and are forced to cut spending on everything from food to education. Canadians find it harder to access the services they need and may not even realize that programs have been cut until after they are gone. Local economies suffer when government workplaces are shut down and small businesses lose their customers. The national economy suffers as job losses in the public sector lead to more job losses in the private sector.

Isn't the government saying front-line services won't be affected?

The government may not want to talk about it, but it is cutting a lot of services Canadians need. Here are just some examples:

- All of us rely on food inspectors to keep us safe. But instead of strengthening food safety this government has cut frontline inspectors and food safety funding in its latest budget. It has also cut a program that tracks and monitors meat imports, eliminated the Consumer Protection program's role in food label verification and ended a program that verifies accuracy of meat product labels before they are put on store shelves.
 - This government is shutting down search and rescue centres in St. John's, Quebec City and Vancouver, putting the lives of people who live and work along Canada's shores at risk.
 - Even before this year's cuts seniors were waiting longer for their Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement applications to be processed and finding it almost impossible to reach anyone on the phone for help. Now the government is eliminating hundreds more positions at Service Canada and leaving even more people without services.
 - Canada's veterans are losing access to the services they deserve and need. The government is shutting down nine of the Veterans Affairs district offices that provide face-to-face service. Veterans in PEI, for example, are losing their only service centre and will have to travel hours to Saint John, New Brunswick for help. For a veteran facing health challenges, the four-hour drive from Charlottetown to New Brunswick will be a significant barrier to the services they need.
 - All Canadians depend on transportation safety to ensure air, marine, rail and road safety. But the government is cutting Transport Canada's budget by more than 10 per cent at a time when previous reductions already mean less safety oversight, such as less inspection of aircraft.
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- Cuts to environmental protection and changes to regulation will affect everything from air quality to fish stocks. That affects everyone, including future generations.
- Border security is being compromised too: the government is cutting the jobs of hundreds of plain clothes front-line officers who work with police forces on electronic and physical surveillance and search and seizure, and regional intelligence officers watching for dangerous and illegal substances at our borders, airports and ports.

But isn't this just about streamlining "back office" jobs?

When you take the "back office" out of services you take services away from Canadians. For example, Canadians are waiting longer for Employment Insurance benefits because so-called "back office" Employment Processing Centres are being cut from 120 to 19.

Eliminating the so-called "back office" processing of immigration claims has meant more than 280,000 people who have been on a waiting list to have their applications processed will soon be cut from the list, with no reasonable justification.

Back office work is essential to running the government and ensuring Canadians get timely access to the services they need.

How many jobs are we talking about?

The government said that its 2012 budget would cost 19,200 jobs, but when you add that to cuts still rolling out because of previous spending reviews, we are looking at a loss of 35,200 federal government jobs by 2015.

Government spending cuts also mean an estimated 37,000 additional jobs lost for contractors and organizations dependent on government funding, including crown corporations like the CBC.

Those numbers don't include the thousands of term employees who are seeing their employment end with no notice or transitional support. In 2010, the federal government employed 26,000 of them. Many of those term workers are young, and already feeling the brunt of a "real" youth unemployment rate of 19.7%

Why are you saying these cuts are bad for the economy?

There are thousands of small and medium sized businesses that count public service workers as their customers. The loss of more than 70,000 jobs is going to hit local economies hard.

Economists estimate that the government spending cuts will lead to tens of thousands more jobs lost in the private sector for people like sales clerks, workers in the construction industry, cooks and servers in the food service industry, accountants, architects, taxi drivers and hairdressers.

For many small communities public service jobs are an important part of the local economy and municipal tax base. As these jobs are lost and people move out of the community, everyone suffers.