

2021

Pre-Budget Submission

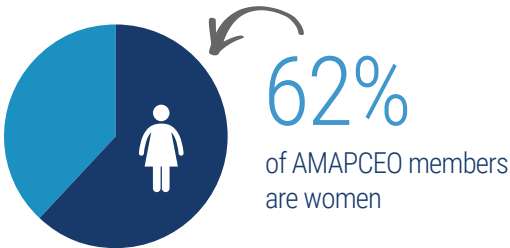
TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS



AMAPCEO
ONTARIO'S PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES

Who We Are

AMAPCEO is a member-driven union of professional employees, dedicated to providing outstanding representation and membership services. We protect members' rights, defend Ontario's public services, and advocate for better working conditions for all workers.



The majority of AMAPCEO members work for the Ontario Public Service (OPS). You will have met some. They work in every ministry, and in agencies, boards, and commissions in over 130 communities across the province and in eleven cities outside Canada.

We also represent members in seven bargaining units in the Broader Public Sector:

- the Financial Services Regulatory Authority of Ontario;
- the Ontario Arts Council;
- Ontario Health - Quality Unit;
- Public Health Ontario;
- Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care; and
- the former offices of the Ontario Child Advocate and the French Language Services Commissioner (now part of the Office of the Ontario Ombudsman)

Our membership is educated, professional, and diverse. They are problem solvers who take pride in working hard and offering creative, evidence-based solutions to public policy issues. They are passionate about serving the public interest.

As a non-partisan union, AMAPCEO has a long and proud of working in a constructive, problem-solving manner with governments of all political stripes. We have worked successfully on legislation and policy initiatives and negotiated free and fair collective agreements with governments led by all three major parties.

14,000
public professionals
represented

The OPS Workplace of the Future

Since March, all OPS employees able to do so have been working remotely. The swiftness with which the government acted to switch to remote work was commendable.

Before the pandemic, the OPS would see tens of thousands of its employees go to work in downtown Toronto. It is no exaggeration to suggest that lives were saved by such a large employer immediately implementing remote work for its staff. This was a team effort and a demonstration of how working together can result in successful outcomes. Both the government and our members can be proud of the transition.

AMAPCEO applauds the government for their continuing leadership on this.

We recommend maintaining remote work policies until it is safe to transition back.

We appreciate the pause of the back-to-work plan for now and **recommend maintaining remote work policies until it is safe to transition back.**

The success of remote work provides us with an opportunity to consider what the workplace of tomorrow can and should look like. To what extent can work continue to be done remotely? What is to become of open-plan workspaces? Is there an opportunity for the government to save money by reducing the amount of leased office space?

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Address these important questions through a collaborative process between AMAPCEO, the government, and the OPS Employer.

The Value of a Strong OPS: Vital to Public Health and Economic Recovery Efforts

The pandemic has demonstrated the importance of a strong and well-staffed public service. Throughout the crisis, AMAPCEO members have worked tirelessly to meet the rapidly changing needs of the ministries they serve. The professionalism of AMAPCEO members has shone through as public servants have led the efforts.

As the province works towards economic recovery, Ontarians need to continue to trust the quality of the public services they rely on.

We are concerned the unconstitutional Bill 124 is still on the books.

Imposing what are effectively wage cuts is not the way to keep the OPS strong.

When it sits down with employers, AMAPCEO has demonstrated, time and again, its ability to achieve collective agreements that serve the interests of each party.

Free and fair collective bargaining works.

As we come out of the pandemic, there will be voices calling for public servants to pay for the deficits of the next few years with reduced compensation and benefits.

Strong, nimble public services, staffed by professionals, will be central to recovery efforts.

This is the wrong approach.

Austerity does not solve problems.

As has been shown around the

world, it only magnifies and delays them.

Strong, nimble public services, staffed by professionals, will be central to recovery efforts.

Now is not the time to diminish the public service by either further

reducing its ranks or by making it a less-desirable place to work by offering poor terms and conditions of employment.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Government should immediately repeal the *Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, 2019*.

Act Now: Bring in Paid Sick Days

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, our province is in crisis.

A healthcare crisis. A long-term care crisis. An economic crisis.

Ontario must act decisively to save lives.

Urgent actions, grounded in the latest public health expertise, will also serve to heal the economy faster.

The most important job for the government right now is to get the spread of COVID-19 under control.

It is clear that the government understands this, instituting numerous control measures—for instance, suspending most in-store shopping, shifting to remote learning, and promoting remote work wherever possible.

However, as much as the government has done, gaps remain. The most significant is access to paid sick days.

There is overwhelming evidence that much of Ontario's pandemic spread is happening around work—on shift, on break, while commuting—and the virus is spreading between customers, clients, and co-workers.

Yet, [58% of workers in Canada still do not have access to paid sick days](#). That number climbs to more than 70% among those earning less than \$25,000 a year. These are the people more likely to be the essential workers we're all relying on: those caring for our loved ones, ensuring shelves are stocked at our grocery stores, and delivering products to our doors.

To stop the spread of COVID-19, these workers—and all workers—need to be able to take paid sick days.

The temporary federal Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB) is certainly better than nothing, but the program is deeply flawed.

Advocates have rightly criticized the program for being insufficient and cumbersome. It fails to cover some of the most precarious workers.

Unfortunately, the pandemic is ever-changing and far from over. Paid sick days are essential to keeping workers safe and fighting COVID-19, as the province looks to get back on the road to economic recovery.

We urge the government to do all it can to mandate paid sick days for all.

AMAPCEO urges the Ontario government to do all it can to make this happen.

Not doing so would be a moral failure.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

The Government should immediately amend the *Employment Standards Act* to mandate paid sick days for all workers.

See more of
AMAPCEO's submissions at
amapceo.on.ca/publications

AMAPCEO

ONTARIO'S PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES

Established in 1992, AMAPCEO is a bargaining agent that represents 14,000 professional and supervisory public servants who work in the Ontario Public Service or one of six organizations in the Broader Public Sector.

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