

January 29, 2026

The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy  
Minister of Finance  
Frost Building South, 7th Floor  
7 Queen's Park Crescent  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1Y7

1 Dundas Street West, Suite 2310 416.595.9000  
PO Box 72 Toronto ON M5G 1Z3 Toll-free 1.888.262.7236

**Re: AMAPCEO 2026 Budget Submission**

Minister—

To protect Ontario, AMAPCEO—a union representing more than 17,000 public service professionals—offers several recommendations focused on investment in public services.

These recommendations are meant to enable job creation, keep costs down, and deliver better services, and by doing so – protect the economy, protect public services, and protect Ontario.

AMAPCEO believes that the government can best protect Ontario by building world class public services.

Much is risked if Ontario's public services lack the expertise and capacity to deliver. From the timely approval of applications to the reliable administration of benefits, the private sector relies upon effective governmental administration. Indeed, consider the degree to which private sector job creation relies upon predictable, efficient public service.

Yet, for more than thirty years, successive governments representing all three major parties have eroded the public service by pursuing an assortment of austerity measures, hiring freezes, and costly outsourcing. These efforts, driven by an obsession with cost-containment, have undervalued the necessity of effective public services.

Put simply: Ontario is put at risk by a public service that lacks the capacity to effectively carry out its duties.

Our budget recommendations, outlined below, are squarely focused on how Ontario can build world-class public services. Through these recommendations, government can ensure that taxpayer dollars go where they have the highest value for Ontarians.

## **AMAPCEO's budget recommendations:**

### **1. Protect public service continuity by ending the "hiring freeze."**

The government's so-called hiring freeze has not reduced headcount. It has, however, created turnover and churn while miring managers in red tape. To work around the hiring freeze, the public service has relied on short-term contracts. These must be replaced with permanent staffing with staffing numbers aligned to service requirements.

Rather than expanding the hiring freeze into agencies, the government must support a public sector where staffing decisions are based on need, not ideology.

### **2. Build capacity in-house.**

The hiring freeze has driven government to increase the use of consultants. This sees the government pay premium rates for recurring needs. This forfeits internal expertise and does not provide value for taxpayer money.

The province must begin to build capability in-house. When consultants are required, they should be sparingly used, and—when their work is complete—knowledge transfer must be mandatory.

Critical enterprise systems (such as the payroll system) must be fixed, once and for all. Unreliable enterprise systems only work to inflate administrative costs, create errors, and, as a result, needlessly strain labour relations.

Finally, the government must audit instances of recurring consultant use to identify functions that should be internalized and reinvest the savings that are found into permanent teams and training.

### **3. Ontario must lead on transparency.**

Ontario must increase government transparency by mirroring the federal government by proactively disclosing all contracts over \$10,000. The government should do this on a quarterly basis, using the Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS). Already adopted by more than 50 governments around the world, the OCDS approach to disclosure would promote greater value for money, greater efficiency, and serve as a mechanism to reveal corruption.

This move to transparency will improve scrutiny, comparability, and public trust. Ultimately, this will lead to savings for taxpayers.

### **4. Stop the pointless return-to-office initiative and enshrine flexibility.**

AMAPCEO's position remains clear: remote work works. It works for service delivery, it works for recruitment, and it works for retention.

Flexibility also works for taxpayers. Committing tens or hundreds of millions of dollars to leasing or buying a larger downtown office footprint crowds out investment in the people and the tools that can directly improve services for Ontarians.

A return to a balanced, proven approach to remote work will avoid locking the government into leases and real estate purchases that add nothing for taxpayers and only pull money away from where it is needed most (healthcare, education, housing etc.).

Let me be clear: flexibility is the future of work. The modern workplace has evolved. The government must lead by leveraging alternative working arrangements (AWAs) to widen recruitment of the best talent from across the province. Not only will this aid recruitment, but it will also reduce churn and lower hiring costs.

Hybrid work has been proven successful in the 4 years post pandemic. The government already has the necessary tools in place within the OPS to enshrine flexibility. It's time managers, directors, and deputy ministers be allowed to lead their local workplaces and approve AWAs without centrally imposed restrictions.

\* \* \*

I appreciate the opportunity to share these recommendations, which will help protect Ontario by safeguarding taxpayers' money and strengthening its public service.

Sincerely,



Dave Bulmer  
President/CEO  
AMAPCEO - Ontario's Professional Employees