



Red Tape Reduction at Employment and Social Development Canada - 2025

Progress Report

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Table of Contents

Context	1
Executive summary	2
Measures to support labour mobility	3
Occupational Health and Safety regulatory harmonization	3
Reducing red tape for business	5
EI Program	5
Work-sharing temporary tariff response measures	5
EI Premium Reduction Program – online portal	6
Advancing real time payroll reporting to support the administration of the EI Program	6
Labour Program	7
Review and possible consolidation of Hours of Work regulations	7
Employment Equity Regulations – administrative amendments	7
Harmonizing forms and reports for hazardous occurrences	8
Workplace inspection harmonization	8
Harmonization with Transport Canada regulations	8
Reducing red tape for beneficiaries and Canadians	9
Canada Learning Bond – automatic enrollment	9
Permanently introducing a personal declaration for EI sickness claimants in quarantine	10
Accessing EI benefits when in receipt of employer-provided cellphones	10
Legislative amendment to the Government Annuities Improvement Act to remove the audit requirement	11
Program delivery and service modernization	11
Passport Program Modernization	11
Canada Disability Benefit – application simplification	12
Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security application simplification	12
Forms and correspondence review for Employment Insurance and Canada Pension Plan Programs	13
Sludge audits	14
Enhancements to My Service Canada Account	14
Labour Complaint Online Portal	15
Enhancing Equi*Vision with artificial intelligence	16
Moving forward	16

Context

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), including the Labour Program and Service Canada, delivers programs and services to Canadians to help build a stronger and more inclusive Canada, support Canadians to live productive and rewarding lives and improve Canadians' quality of life.


These responsibilities span labour standards, occupational health and safety, employment insurance, pensions, and social programs. ESDC fulfills its mission and mandate by:

- developing policies that ensure Canadians can use their talents, skills and resources to participate in learning, work and their community
- delivering programs that help Canadians move through life's transitions, from school to work, from one job to another, from unemployment to employment, from the workforce to retirement
- providing income support to seniors, families with children and those unemployed due to job loss, illness or caregiving responsibilities
- helping Canadians with distinct needs such as Indigenous people, persons with disabilities, travelers and recent immigrants
- ensuring labour relations stability by providing mediation services
- promoting a fair and healthy workplace by enforcing minimum working conditions
- promoting decent work and employment equity, and fostering respect for international labour standards
- delivering programs and services on behalf of other departments and agencies

As a federal regulator and service provider, ESDC is responsible for developing and enforcing regulations that protect workers, support employers, and ensure fair and equitable access to benefits. These rules and regulations can, however, result in regulatory red tape that affects businesses, Canadians, and even ESDC itself.

Businesses, especially small ones, are often faced with a high administrative burden and can spend significant time and resources complying with ESDC regulations. According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business's 2024 "Red Tape Report", the average business spent 735 hours on regulation and 256 hours on red tape, with \$17.9 billion attributed to red tape. Often, businesses deal with overlapping requirements from multiple government departments or different levels of government, which can lead to confusion and inefficiency. The Labour Program, for example, oversees more than 30 regulations designed to protect workers' health and safety, uphold employment standards, and ensure employment and pay equity within the federally regulated workplace.

Canadians may experience delays in accessing benefits or services due to complex processes or forms or are faced with repeatedly providing the same information to the government for different purposes. Stakeholders, particularly those representing populations that receive federal income



supports, have highlighted a need to simplify application processes, including for Employment Insurance (EI), Old Age Security, and the Canada Disability Benefit.

For ESDC, managing, enforcing and administering complex regulations can strain internal resources and slow down service delivery, which emphasizes the need for technological modernization, streamlined processes that support a “tell us once” approach and more efficient government operations that save time and money.

As a result, ESDC is continuously working to support the Government of Canada’s goal to reduce regulatory red tape. This is achieved for example, by amending or repealing regulations to achieve administrative burden reductions to meet offset requirements under the *Red Tape Reduction Act* and the one-for-one rule, as well as participating in ongoing annual regulatory exercises like the Administrative Burden Baseline review, Regulatory Stock Review, and Forward Regulatory Plan.

The report that follows serves as both a progress update and a strategic overview of ESDC’s continued commitment to regulatory red tape reduction, regulatory modernization and client-centered service transformation.

Executive summary

On July 9, 2025, the Government of Canada announced a red tape review of regulations across federal departments and agencies with regulatory responsibilities, with the aim of enhancing efficiency, delivering better services, and helping to position Canada as having the strongest economy in the G7.

ESDC – including the Labour Program and Service Canada – undertake wide-ranging efforts to streamline regulations, modernize service delivery, and reduce administrative burden. Actions and measures to eliminate red tape include removing outdated regulations, reducing duplication with provincial rules to support labour mobility, and making it easier for businesses and Canadians to access services. This report presents ESDC’s achievements to date and outlines future initiatives aimed at reducing red tape for businesses and Canadians, improving efficiency, enhancing client experience, and supporting economic growth.

The Department’s red tape reduction efforts are presented in 4 categories:

- **measures to support labour mobility:** coordinating with provincial and territorial governments as well as well as domestic and international tables to align standards and eliminate duplication, particularly in occupational health and safety, to support labour mobility
- **reducing red tape for business:** revising or repealing outdated regulations to reduce administrative burden and align with modern service delivery practices, testing innovative approaches, such as exploring real-time payroll reporting to support the administration of the

Employment Insurance (EI) program, to evaluate its effectiveness in reducing red tape and improving service delivery

- **reducing red tape for beneficiaries and Canadians:** improvement measures to address simplification of administrative processes for easier access to benefits
- **program delivery and service modernization:** digitizing and simplifying processes, supporting a “tell-us-once” approach through better information sharing across government, and replacing antiquated and expensive paper-based processes with digital solutions resulting in reduced processing times, improved client-experience and enhanced efficiency of government operations

These initiatives are guided by stakeholder feedback, cost–benefit analyses, and performance data, ensuring that red tape reduction efforts maintain program integrity, public safety, and legal compliance. ESDC’s ongoing commitment to transparency and accountability is reflected in its participation in regulatory reviews and public reporting.

Measures to support labour mobility

Occupational Health and Safety regulatory harmonization


In collaboration with provinces and territories, the Labour Program is working to align workplace safety standards, which will reduce red tape and mobility barriers for workers and businesses operating across jurisdictions – supporting the Government of Canada’s One Canadian Economy priority.

In 2019, as part of the Canada Free Trade Agreement, the Labour Program reached agreement with all provincial and territorial governments to harmonize various Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) regulations. The goal is to simplify regulatory requirements for employers operating in multiple regions while maintaining strong protections for workers.

Key aspects of this ongoing collaboration to align workplace safety standards across jurisdictions include standardizing safety requirements, reducing trade and mobility barriers by reconciling differences in OHS regulations to make it easier for workers and businesses to operate across provinces/territories; and ongoing regulatory updates to address inconsistencies.

Most recently, in December 2024, regulatory changes to the sanitation provisions came into force allowing employers greater flexibility in choosing which type of washrooms they wish to provide (whether gendered or all-gender). Previously, regulations required minimum amounts of male and female specific toilets depending on total number of employees of each sex and minimums did not count all-gender washrooms, thus disincentivizing employers from offering them.

This change in standards reduced the regulatory burden on employers, while making sure that standards that are still enforced are the most up to date and consistently available version.



The Labour Program is planning to propose further changes under the Canadian Free Trade Agreement to support OHS regulatory harmonization and modernize workplace safety practices.

The Canadian Free Trade Agreement establishes a regulatory reconciliation process to address the barriers to interprovincial trade. This process is run by the Regulatory Reconciliation and Cooperation Table. To address the barriers resulting from variance in OHS regulations, particularly to labour mobility, the Canadian Association of Administrator of Labour Legislation OHS sub-committee (CAALL-OHS), through the Regulatory Cooperation Table, works to find areas within the regulations that federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions could agree to harmonize.

The Labour Program will propose 3 regulatory initiatives, agreed to under the Canadian Free Trade Agreement:

- **first aid kits:** the objective of this proposed regulatory initiative is to align the requirements of a first aid kit in the federal jurisdiction with the definition used by provincial and territorial governments. This would allow employers across Canada regardless of jurisdiction to follow the same rules for first aid kits, making understanding and acquiring these kits easier for all employers in Canada
- **personal protective equipment:** the objective of the proposed regulatory initiative is to address health and safety requirements for personal protective equipment (PPE) by addressing inconsistencies across the 5 occupational health and safety regulations and with provincial/territorial jurisdictions in Canada. This initiative would also include updating references to technical standards and the correction of inconsistent terminology (for example, the use of protective versus protection equipment) and ensure that PPE fits employees all properly despite varying body types and individual needs
- **levels of sound:** the objective of the proposed regulatory initiative is to address health and safety requirements for levels of sound by reflecting current best practices on noise control and hearing loss prevention programming, including by adopting technical standards that would be used by provincial/territorial jurisdictions across Canada. In addition, this initiative would include repealing requirements for employers to create unnecessary reports

Labour Program is targeting finalizing these changes by fall 2026, which would ensure clear rules for federally regulated employers and reduce their regulatory burden while supporting the Government of Canada's One Canadian Economy priority.

The 5 major OHS regulations incorporate hundreds of standards created by various governmental and non-governmental organizations. Sometimes these standards are out of date and can be inconsistent across regulations.

Building on the review of all Sanitation standards completed in 2024, the Labour Program plans to conduct a comprehensive review of its regulations to propose a list of referenced standards to repeal or amend. The redundant standards would be repealed as they are currently unenforceable, while outdated ones would be updated, ensuring consistency across the regulations.

The review is expected to contribute to standardizing Occupational Health and Safety requirements with provinces/territories and support employers by ensuring that the most recent standards are referenced in the regulations, which would make them easier to acquire and to comply with.

Reducing red tape for business

EI Program

Employers frequently report that the EI program's complexity and administrative burden create "red tape," leading to challenges in implementation and calls for the program to be simpler, more efficient, and better aligned with current labour market realities. Some interventions during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as simplifying recovery plan requirements for the Work-Sharing program, have helped reduce administrative inquiries from businesses. More broadly, consultations have taken place to gather feedback on modernizing the EI program, with ongoing efforts to create a more resilient, accessible, and adequate program.

Work-sharing temporary tariff response measures

The Work-Sharing program under EI helps employers and employees avoid layoffs during temporary downturns in business activity that are beyond the employer's control.

To support businesses affected by the threat or impact of tariffs, temporary special measures were introduced. These are in effect from March 7, 2025, to March 6, 2026. The measures make the program more flexible and easier to access by:

- expanding eligibility for employers and employees
- simplifying the application process
- waiving the required waiting period between agreements
- focusing reporting requirements on maintaining business viability

Work-Sharing applications have grown by 114% year-over-year for the January to August period, reaching 1,256 as of August 9, 2025. Of these, 81% (1,014 applications) cited tariffs as a reason for applying.

These changes help businesses stay competitive, protect jobs, and support the Canadian economy. They also ensure the program responds effectively to the needs of employers and workers directly or indirectly affected by tariffs.



EI Premium Reduction Program – online portal

The EI Premium Reduction Program generates currently alleviates financial burden to employers, with an overall savings of approximately \$1 billion annually. Efforts to modernize the Program, specifically the application process, will mean that employers will no longer be required to submit applications and supporting documents through conventional mail or fax.

The development of an online employer portal using cloud-based applications was developed to improve efficiency by allowing secure electronic submissions. After its launch in August 2025, employers can now save time and money by using the portal rather than relying on conventional mail or fax to submit their applications, resulting in fewer touchpoints between employers, insurers and Service Canada. Estimated average processing times are expected to be reduced by 5 days.

Advancing real time payroll reporting to support the administration of the EI Program

Service Canada is exploring a pilot to support alignment of employer EI reporting requirements with employer payroll practices, following a similar example in the United Kingdom. Real-time data would enable faster, more accurate EI applications and payments through pre-filled forms and automated eligibility checks, improving client experience.

Real-time data collection for the EI program would deliver the following outcomes:

- **alleviating administrative burden in the business community:** employers have long identified the significant burden associated with complying with EI reporting requirements, specifically the Record of Employment and other required forms, as a significant cost for business
- **improved service delivery:** real-time data would enable faster, more accurate EI applications and payments through pre-filled forms and automated eligibility checks, improving client experience
- **responsiveness to economic shocks:** real-time labour market insights would enable immediate updates on workers' earnings, allowing for quicker, more effective, targeted distribution of federal benefits, and ongoing monitoring of the impact of policies in real-time
- **improved accuracy and reduced fraud:** real-time payroll reporting would help improve the accuracy of tax credit and benefit calculations and make it more difficult for individuals to manipulate or underreport their earnings, thus reducing opportunities for fraud
- **cost savings:** this initiative could lead to long-term savings through improved administrative efficiency, reduced program integrity costs, and a reduction in inaccurate payments

Labour Program

Employer and employee representatives as well as other stakeholders have, over time, reported that the Labour Program's processes and regulations create administrative burden, overlaps and inefficiencies. Feedback received through regulatory consultations, advisory committees, annual reporting cycles as well as program evaluations and reviews has led to the proposals outlined in this report. Several initiatives have or will be undertaken to review potential overlaps, create a more efficient regulatory environment, and streamline service delivery to benefit workers and employers, including through collaboration with other programs in the ESDC portfolio and other government departments.

Review and possible consolidation of Hours of Work regulations

In response to feedback from stakeholders, the Labour Program is examining its regulations that include certain hours of work rules, exemptions, and modifications for various federally regulated sectors. This review aims to simplify and consolidate these hours of work regulations, making compliance easier for employers, including those in the sectors where operations run 24/7, and clarifying rights for employees. The review will also provide an opportunity to reformulate regulatory requirements using plain and inclusive language.


Part III of the *Canada Labour Code* (the Code) includes rules regarding employees' hours of work, including the standard hours of work employees can perform before being entitled to overtime pay or time off in lieu, maximum hours of work, and breaks and rest periods between shifts. Because the nature of work can vary across the federally regulated sectors, certain classes of employees have been exempted from certain hours of work rules, and in some cases, they are subject to modified rules. These exemptions and modifications have been established under the following regulations:

- *Motor Vehicle Operators Hours of Work Regulations*
- *Banking Industry Commission-paid Salespeople Hours of Work Regulations*
- *Broadcasting Industry Commission Salesmen Hours of Work Regulations*
- *Railway Running-Trades Employees Hours of Work Regulations*
- *West Coast Shipping Employees Hours of Work Regulations*
- *East Coast and Great Lakes Shipping Employees Hours of Work Regulations, 1985*
- *Exemptions from and Modifications to Hours of Work Provisions Regulations*

Apart from the regulations listed above, the *Canada Labour Standards Regulations* also include a number of definitions and specific rules related to hours of work requirements. This separation of provisions may be challenging to understand and apply for employers and employees.

Employment Equity Regulations – administrative amendments

The Labour Program will propose amendments to the *Employment Equity Regulations* to improve compliance outcomes as well as align with existing program practices. These amendments would help regulated entities better understand these regulations and avoid possible misinterpretation.



Additionally, they would clarify reporting requirements by reducing multiple reporting dates into a single date and updating required forms.

Proposed amendments would target coming into force in 2027 and would further reduce red tape by addressing unnecessary complexities with current definitions, clarifying record retention requirements, and streamlining the completion of forms.

Overall, these amendments would reduce reporting burden for employers while improving compliance outcomes.

Harmonizing forms and reports for hazardous occurrences

When a serious injury occurs in the workplace, employers are required to report it to the Labour Program within 24 hours of the occurrence. Employers then have 14 days to submit a Hazardous Occurrence Incidence Report which contains detailed information related to the workplace injury.

Once per calendar year, employers are required to submit an aggregate report (Employers Annual Hazardous Occurrence Report) which provides summary data on total workplace injuries, numbers of employees and hours worked. This report provides the data that the Labour Program requires to set operational plans to support improvements to occupational health and safety in the federally regulated workplaces.

The Labour Program is exploring the development of digital tools which would enable auto-filling of the Employers Annual Hazardous Occurrence Reports, minimizing effort of employers. This would also improve Labour Program's access to data to address occupational health and safety challenges.

This initiative would increase compliance and significantly reduce the administrative burden on employers.

Workplace inspection harmonization

ESDC regularly undertakes compliance activities to ensure that program integrity and policy objectives continue to be met. ESDC is exploring a review compliance activity to identify opportunities for enhanced data sharing and complementary activities to support workers and avoid duplication within the portfolio. This review is intended to reduce the burden on employers by facilitating the conduct of multiple inspections at the same time.

This review is in the planning phase and timelines have yet to be determined.

Harmonization with Transport Canada regulations

Many Transport Canada and Labour Program regulations apply to the same transportation sectors, including air transportation such as airlines and airports, marine shipping and port services, and certain railways and road transportation businesses. Transport Canada and the Labour Program have different goals in their regulations: Transport Canada focuses on keeping

passengers safe, and the Labour Program ensures workers are treated fairly and their health and safety is protected.

Employers in the transportation sector must often comply with both sets of regulations. This can result in joint compliance challenges, a need for harmonized guidance, collaborative enforcement or consultation efforts, and duplicate data collection.

The Labour Program and Transport Canada will collaborate to examine potential opportunities to harmonize regulatory regimes and guidance to reduce duplication and improve consistency for industries such as rail and air transportation.

This is expected to reduce overlap within the federal regulatory suite. It would also support the Government of Canada's One Canadian Economy priority, through regulatory harmonization.

Reducing red tape for beneficiaries and Canadians


Canada Learning Bond – automatic enrolment

The Canada Learning Bond, launched in 2004, provides up to the maximum of \$2,000 to the Registered Education Savings Plan of eligible low-income families to help them start saving early for their child's education after high school. The Canada Learning Bond provides recipients with \$500 for the first year of eligibility, plus \$100 for each subsequent year of eligibility.

In 2024, over 20 years after the introduction of the Canada Learning Bond, only 43.4% of eligible children have received the benefit. Research, outreach and program review found that families with low incomes and hard-to-reach groups, including Indigenous families and single parent families faced access barriers to receiving the Canada Learning Bond. Key barriers include low awareness of the benefits of Registered Education Savings Plans, the relatively complex process and requirements for opening Registered Education Savings Plans that can take time and incur costs, dealing with financial organizations that deliver Registered Education Savings Plans, and competing priorities among households struggling to address more immediate needs.

To simplify the process to access the Canada Learning Bond, the Government of Canada announced automatic enrolment in Budget 2024. ESDC will propose regulatory amendments so that for children born in 2024 and after, the Government will automatically open a Registered Education Savings Plan for eligible children if they have not been named a beneficiary of a Registered Education Savings Plan by the age of 4 and extend the age for retroactive claims to the Canada Learning Bond from 20 to 30. These measures are targeting implementation in 2028. It is estimated that 130,000 additional children would receive the Canada Learning Bond each year through automatic enrolment and approximately 40,000 additional children and currently eligible youth would access the Canada Learning Bond by opting in to the proposed service.

With no application forms required for automatic enrolment, there would be less administrative burden for the caregiver and adult Canada Learning Bond beneficiaries. Families would not have to first engage with a Registered Education Savings Plan provider to request the Canada Learning



Bond and households who are struggling with competing priorities could focus on their more immediate needs.

Permanently introducing a personal declaration for EI sickness claimants in quarantine

During the COVID-19 pandemic, temporary changes were made to the EI program to help people access sickness benefits more quickly. These changes included waiving the one-week waiting period and allowing claimants in quarantine to submit a personal declaration instead of a medical certificate.

These temporary measures are no longer in effect. As a result, people in quarantine must once again get a medical certificate to qualify for EI sickness benefits. This requirement creates unnecessary red tape—especially during public health emergencies when it is harder to access medical professionals. It may also encourage people who are contagious to break isolation just to get a doctor's note, which goes against public health advice.

In 2024, the EI Commissioners for Workers and Employers reviewed this issue. They agreed that the current rules are too complex and support a permanent change to allow:

- claimants in quarantine to submit a personal declaration instead of a medical certificate, if certain conditions are met
- the Commission to waive the one-week waiting period during future health crises

ESDC is exploring regulatory measures to make permanent the temporary measures introduced during the pandemic. Expected benefits include faster access to EI sickness benefits, less strain on healthcare providers, and better compliance with public health guidance.

Accessing EI benefits when in receipt of employer-provided cellphones

To receive regular EI benefits, a worker must have a break in earnings. This means they must stop working and not receive any pay for at least 7 days in a row. They also need to have a qualifying job loss, such as a layoff.

In some seasonal industries, employers provide cellphones to employees for work or personal use. Sometimes, laid-off seasonal workers are allowed to keep these phones during the off-season until they return to work. However, under current EI rules, keeping a non-cash benefit like a cellphone after a layoff may prevent the break in earnings from being recognized. This can make the worker ineligible for EI regular benefits. To meet the current rules, employees must return work items like cellphones after being laid off. This creates extra work for both employers and employees.

In 2024, the EI Commissioners for Workers and Employers discussed this issue. They agreed that the rules are too complex and support a change to exempt cellphones from the list of items that can block EI eligibility.

A proposed next step is to explore a permanent regulatory change. This change would:

- reduce red tape for seasonal workers and employers
- make it easier for laid-off workers to qualify for EI
- lower administrative costs for businesses

The goal is to make EI more accessible and responsive to the realities of seasonal work.

Legislative amendment to the Government Annuities Improvement Act to remove the audit requirement

This proposal is seeking an amendment to the *Government Annuities Improvement Act* to revoke Section 16 of the Act which requires an audit of the Government Annuities Account. This audit provides no value added to Canadians as the Office of the Chief Actuary already prepares an annual Actuarial Report on the Government Annuities. The Office of the Auditor General has also expressed support for the revocation of this duplicative audit. Canadians and annuitants would continue to have access to information on the program through the Public Accounts and the actuarial reports published by the Office of the Chief Actuary. The proposed amendment would enable the Department and the Office of the Auditor General to reallocate resources to better serve Canadians.


Program delivery and service modernization

Service Canada and Labour Program are working to modernize program delivery by making application processes easier, improving user experiences, enabling more self-serve options and finding operational efficiencies and savings. These modernization efforts are critical for the delivery of essential benefits and services to Canadians, helping to reduce processing times, eliminate paper-based processes and support a “tell us once” approach, all of which saves time for both businesses and Canadians, including allowing them to more easily access benefits.

Passport Program Modernization

Service Canada delivers the Passport Program domestically on behalf of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. These services include providing information to applicants, validating identity, processing applications, and issuing and printing passports. To better manage the demand of passports after the post-pandemic surge in 2022, the Department expanded capacity at 25 Service Canada Centres, upgrading from a 20-day processing time service standard to an expedited 10-day service standard. There is now a total of 61 sites across Canada offering 10-day service. This expanded service means that Canadians can now pick up their passports closer to their homes, which has reduced wait times for in-person services at sites in urban centres. About 93% of Canadians now have access to passport services within 50 kilometres of where they live.

On August 30th, 2024, the Passport Program Modernization Initiative was successfully completed, with Service Canada Centres and passport sites having onboarded new intake and processing



tools enabling automation of passport renewal applications. On December 11, 2024, the soft launch of Passport Online through the new Online Account began with simplified passport renewals for adults. This initial rollout was implemented for a small group of eligible applicants. A gradual onboarding approach will continue over time to significantly expand access. Passport Online simplifies and accelerates passport services by offering a secure, user-friendly digital platform—eliminating the need to visit Service Canada Centres or send applications by mail. As of August 18, 2025, over 17,000 applicants have received their passports by applying online.

Estimated wait times for all Service Canada Centre locations, including passport offices, are published on the Service Canada website and online appointment scheduling is available up to 60 days in advance. In May 2025, Service Canada introduced further improvements to the Passport Application Status Checker, including expanding the information available to clients and design changes for an improved client experience. Each of these modernization initiatives have significantly improved passport services to Canadians.

Canada Disability Benefit – application simplification

The Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) aims to improve financial and social security for working-age persons with disabilities. To support access, a new application process was co-designed with persons with disabilities, Indigenous governments, and provincial and territorial partners, reflecting the principle of “Nothing Without Us.”

The process offers multiple ways to apply—online, by phone, or in person—and includes support through a dedicated call centre and Service Canada Centres. A data-sharing agreement with the Canada Revenue Agency allowed eligible individuals with a valid Disability Tax Credit to receive a personalized invitation to apply, helping to speed up processing.

The new application process launched in June 2025. By July 31, 2025, over 189,550 applications had been received. The first payments in July 2025 were issued to 98,000 recipients, and the second payments in August 2025 were issued to approximately 155,000 recipients. Over 175,000 applicants applied online, and over 9,700 used the Interactive Voice Response self-serve option – as of August 6, 2025, there was a 97.3% self-serve rate (via the automated phone system and online).

The streamlined approach is improving uptake, faster processing, and better service for clients.

Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security application simplification

The *Canada Pension Plan Regulations* and *Old Age Security Regulations* were developed in the pre-digital era. For ESDC to evaluate applications for Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Old Age Security (OAS) benefits, applicants have been required to provide supporting documents, such as proof of age, marriage, or death, as applicable. Much of this information is currently available from third-party authoritative government data sources, such as the Social Insurance Registry. However, except for date of birth, the CPP Regulations have not permitted the Department to rely

upon those sources, and it has had to ask individuals to provide original copies of marriage or death certificates. In the case of the OAS program, OAS regulations prescribe that evidence of age and identity be provided as an original document or certified copy. While individuals can apply electronically for a CPP or OAS benefit using their My Service Canada Accounts, they need to send their supporting documentation by mail or bring it in person at a Service Canada office.

ESDC will propose regulatory amendments to modernize the application process by enabling the use of digital technology. For CPP purposes, in addition to date of birth, ESDC would be able to validate date of death based on information from the Social Insurance Registry and marital status using information from other government departments, supporting a “tell us once” approach while maintaining applicants’ privacy. When such validation is not possible, applicants would be able to securely upload digital copies of birth, marriage or death certificates through their My Service Canada Accounts. These changes would simplify the application process for benefit claimants by eliminating or reducing the need for applicants to make frequent or unnecessary trips to Service Canada offices. These measures are targeting implementation in January 2026.

In addition, ESDC is reviewing and simplifying the CPP-Disability application process and is leading a set of improvement measures to address simplification of administrative processes. This work is aimed at easing administrative burden, improving productivity, and reducing red tape. ESDC is proposing to implement a simplified medical report that incorporates feedback from medical professionals, and streamlines the information needed to adjudicate benefits – thus increasing productivity. Coupled with this, ESDC will be working with partners through information sharing agreements (for example, private disability insurance providers and provincial/territorial agencies) to better leverage medical information provided to these partners, so that applicants would no longer be required to provide the medical portion of the CPP-Disability application.

Forms and correspondence review for Employment Insurance and Canada Pension Plan Programs

Service Canada is leading a project to improve government forms and letters. The goal is to reduce paperwork, make services easier to access online, and measure results in a way that can be scaled across processes and programs.

The project is currently in the planning phase. This fall, Service Canada plans to begin testing redesigned forms and letters with clients. Forms under consideration for re-design and testing include (but are not limited to) the CPP application including supplementary forms, EI reporting of earnings form, and denial letters for EI, CPP, CPP-Disability, and OAS).

The new designs would be measured against current performance indicators to track improvements in cost savings and service quality. The project would focus on changes that are easy to implement and that would deliver strong results, with improvements to operational productivity and efficiency, reduction of red tape, and alignment with the Department’s broader business data modernization efforts.



Sludge audits

Service Canada plans to conduct Sludge audits in 2025 to identify and eliminate unnecessary complexity, duplication, and procedural red tape. Priority programs are under consideration and, once established, these sludge audits would build a baseline, helping to identify costs associated with current processes and associated client behaviours.

These reviews would focus on reducing client burden, especially at points in the client journey where confusion leads to delays, or unnecessary repeat contacts, supporting a “tell us once” approach. The goal of these audits is to simplify service delivery by informing targeted redesigns that improve clarity and ease of access for essential services and improve internal operational efficiency.

Enhancements to My Service Canada Account

A new dashboard was added to the My Service Canada Account portal, supporting an improved client experience as well as representing efficiency and cost-savings for ESDC. Clients can now also view their Social Insurance Number in their My Service Canada Account. After their online Social Insurance Number application is processed, they can use their application number to register for a My Service Canada Account.

This new feature was rolled out in 3 phases:

- **August 2023:** clients could use a Birth Registration Number or Unique Client Identifier to create an account and access their Social Insurance Number confirmation online or by mail
- **January 2024:** clients could choose not to receive a mailed Social Insurance Number confirmation letter, helping reduce mailing costs and demand at Service Canada Centres
- **May 2025:** a digital Social Insurance Number confirmation letter became available directly in My Service Canada Account

This project improves access to services by giving Canadians a faster, more secure way to receive their Social Insurance Number confirmation online. It reduces reliance on mail and in-person visits, making it easier to manage Social Insurance Number information efficiently.

As part of the continuum of ESDC’s transformation goals, the Department is continually looking for opportunities to advance service delivery to clients. For instance, ESDC will now provide clients with the option of accessing their Notice of Debt or Monthly Statement of Account online through the My Service Canada Account portal. These statements provide clients information on any debts owed to the Crown and are part of the collection process to recover the Department's accounts receivable, which totals \$5.7 billion/1.5 million accounts. Annually, approximately 10 million statements are mailed out through Canada Post services at a cost of approximately \$12 million.

Issuing these statements electronically now presents the opportunity to:

- reduce ESDC's reliance on physical assets, labor-intensive processes, and postal services
- reduce ESDC's overall financial burden of producing and managing Notice of Debt and Monthly Statement of Account
- improving security by reducing the risk of paper statements being delivered to the wrong address and identity theft
- reduce pressures on client-facing service delivery agents, and the need for human resources to process returned mail
- improve client experience through fast and secure digital access to their current and historical debt statements

The Labour Program is also leveraging technology to improve services to Canadian workers, including by reducing reliance on paper processes, and ensuring secure and transparent communications.

Labour Complaint Online Portal

Part III of the *Canada Labour Code* protects workers in federally regulated workplaces by setting employment conditions for fair treatment at work. If employees believe their rights have been violated, they can file a complaint with the Labour Program. Currently, the complaint process is manual using paper forms and email. This makes it difficult for Canadians to get help quickly. It also means important information can be missed or delayed.

The Labour Program is proposing to build a new online Employee Portal to make it easier for Canadians to report workplace issues. This secure digital tool would allow employees to submit and follow up on complaints from anywhere, at any time.

Implementing the Labour Program Online Employee portal would ensure:

- **faster service:** workers in federally regulated workplaces would be able to fill out forms online, save their progress, and get updates as their complaint moves through the investigation process—helping reduce wait times and improve service
- **reduced paperwork:** the portal would connect directly with the Labour Program's case management system, resulting in less time spent on administrative tasks and more time helping Canadians
- **improved usability:** the portal would use clear language, have an intuitive design, and include a tool to help users assess if their issue falls under federal labour rules—making it easier for everyone to get the help they need
- **security and transparency:** Canadians would be able to safely upload documents, communicate with officers, and receive updates. All actions would be tracked to ensure accountability



Enhancing Equi'Vision with artificial intelligence

To promote pay transparency and reduce workplace inequities, the Government of Canada committed \$3 million in Budget 2018 to introduce pay gap reporting for private-sector employers under the *Employment Equity Act*. This reporting focuses on women, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and visible minorities.

This led to the launch of Equi'Vision in February 2024, a public website that displays representation and pay gap data for federally regulated employers with 100 or more employees. The platform began with 2021 data and will be updated annually.

In summer 2024, a 24-month project began to integrate Artificial Intelligence into Equi'Vision. The goal is to improve how users access, analyze, and understand the data – making it easier to spot trends, identify barriers, and support employers in taking meaningful action. This would be the first time ESDC uses Artificial Intelligence on a public-facing website.

These enhancements will help users explore data more quickly and uncover patterns that might otherwise be missed. This supports better decision-making, encourages stronger employer action, and helps anticipate future challenges.

Moving forward

Reducing red tape remains a key priority for ESDC, the Labour Program, and Service Canada. Through targeted initiatives, we are making it easier for Canadians and businesses to access services, comply with regulations, and interact with government programs.

Reducing regulatory and associated administrative burden is an ongoing exercise and ESDC continues to explore innovative ways to harmonize regulations, reduce burden for businesses and Canadians and improve operational efficiencies and costs within the Department. This report highlights meaningful progress—from simplifying processes and modernizing service delivery to improving coordination across programs. These efforts are already delivering results, including faster processing times, reduced administrative burden, and improved client experiences.

Looking ahead, ESDC will continue to build on this momentum. Planned activities will focus on expanding digital services, streamlining forms and correspondence, and strengthening collaboration across departments and with stakeholders. These actions will help ensure that red tape reduction remains practical, measurable, and responsive to the needs of Canadians.

Together, these efforts support a more efficient, accessible, and client-centered public service.