



OPS of the Future
2018 Action Plan

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Message from the Secretary of the Cabinet

Ontarians need and deserve a leading public service that is inclusive, innovative, responsive and accountable. A public service that is efficient and one that continues to find new ways to collaborate and build partnerships – making us better at our work and how we serve the public.

Since February 2017, I have had the privilege of meeting with Ontario Public Service (OPS) employees from across the organization and province to ask: How can we transform the OPS for the future? Thousands of you weighed in to help answer this question at town halls, ministry engagement sessions and online. Community leaders and partners also provided their thoughts and perspectives.

We received an impressive amount of input across a diverse range of topics. The core message was clear: OPS employees overwhelmingly support transforming how we think, plan and work so that we can deliver public services in new and more efficient ways. Feedback focused on a number of key priorities, including:

- › Working across teams, divisions and ministries to take an all-of-government approach to delivering people-centred services in the most efficient manner possible
- › Co-designing programs and services with frontline staff, community partners and the people who will use them to achieve improved outcomes

- › Creating the space to try new ways of doing things and learning from both our successes and where we could have done better
- › Applying the right tools, training and technology to do our jobs more effectively
- › Building a more diverse, inclusive, accessible and respectful workplace where all employees can contribute to their full potential

All of this feedback has shaped this action plan to transform our organization and builds on concrete actions being implemented across the OPS. In the following pages, you will find an ambitious new vision statement for the OPS and three key pillars to support achieving it: passionately serving Ontarians, boldly enabling change and actively empowering employees.

I believe this action plan will help drive change to find new and better ways to deliver on our vision and mission as we create the OPS of the future.

Thank you.

Steve Orsini





Action Plan at a Glance

The world is increasingly complex and interconnected. Disruptive technologies, global uncertainty, scarce resources, changing demographics and increased public expectations mean that the Ontario Public Service (OPS) must constantly transform. To better position the organization for the future, the *OPS of the Future: 2018 Action Plan* was developed in consultation with employees from across the province and external partners.

In this action plan, the OPS is launching a new vision for the future:



To be a leading public service that is inclusive, innovative, responsive and accountable.

To achieve this new vision, the action plan focuses on three pillars, each consisting of specific initial commitments to drive transformation.

Passionately serve Ontarians:

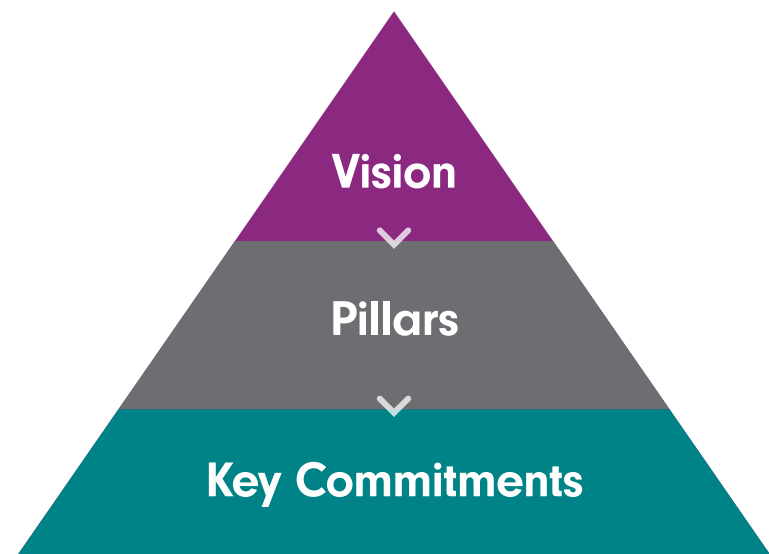
The OPS will deliver better services by working with and for Ontarians.

Boldly enable change:

The OPS will champion new ways of working and encourage new approaches to solving problems.

Actively empower employees:

The OPS will focus on providing employees with the necessary tools and support to succeed in the workplace.





Foundation for Change

The work of the Ontario Public Service (OPS) has become increasingly complex. External social, economic, financial, and demographic factors are accelerating the urgency for organizations to transform even further. In order to respond effectively, we must continue to transform the way we work so that the OPS is better positioned to embrace and adapt to change.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS >

>30%

projected growth of Ontario's population over the next 25 years

25%

projected growth of Ontario seniors aged 65 and older by 2041

48%

of Ontario's population will be racialized by 2036

TECHNOLOGY USE >

92%

of Ontarians use the internet

175k+

daily visitors to Ontario.ca

66%

of Canadians feel technology saves them time

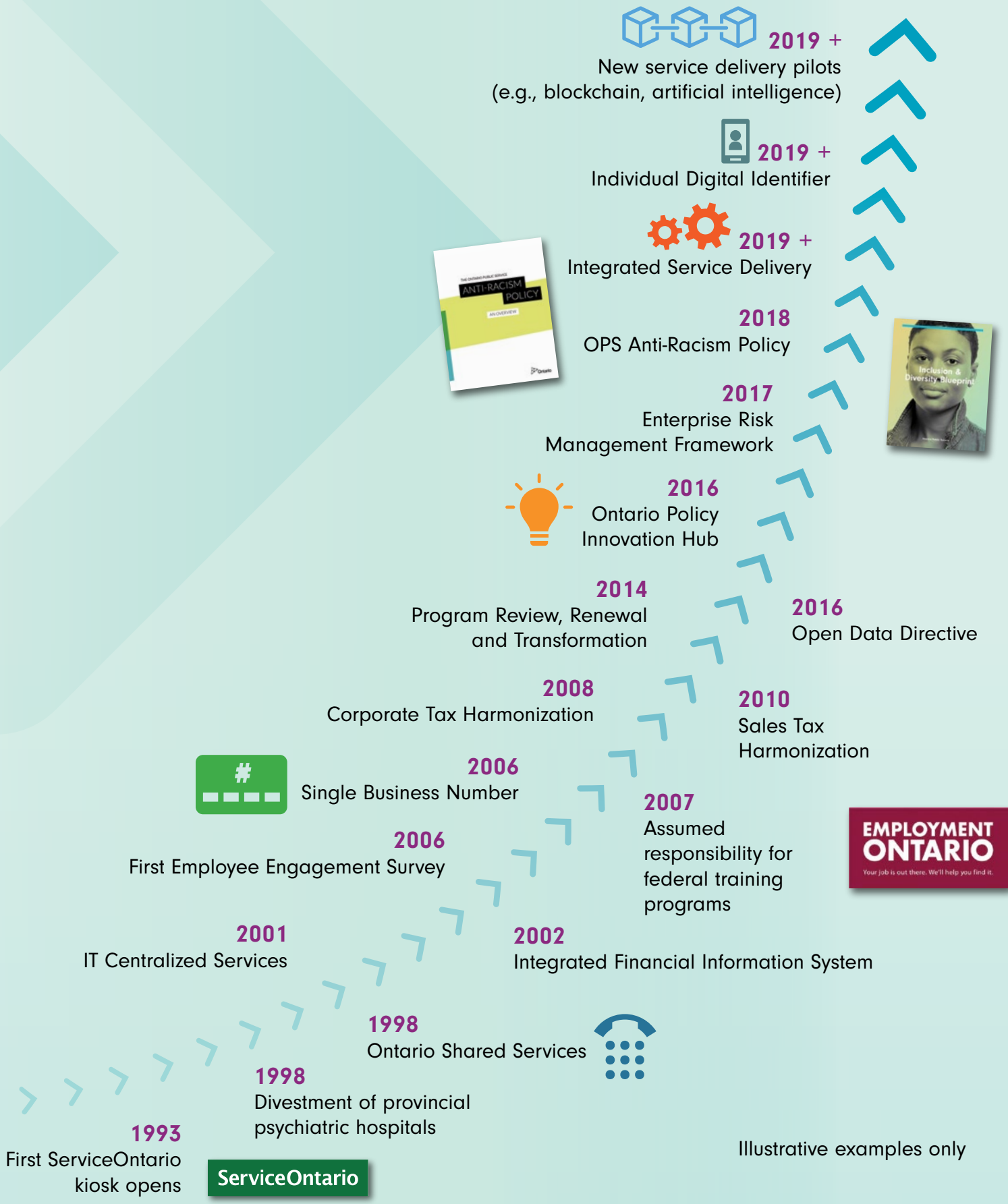
OPS employees share a common purpose – to deliver government policies and programs efficiently while serving the best interests of the public. From professional administrators, engineers, social workers, planners, correctional officers, economists, communications specialists, accountants, policy analysts and more – each employee brings different skills, knowledge and experience to the OPS.

The OPS mission is to serve the public interest and uphold the public's trust by:

- › Providing honest, objective and non-partisan advice to government.
- › Effectively implementing the decisions and policies of the government.
- › Conducting ourselves with integrity, in accordance with the law and public service ethics, and administering public service to the highest professional standards.
- › Being responsible stewards of public resources and information.
- › Being transparent and accountable for how we fulfill our public service roles.

Transformation is not new to the OPS. We have an excellent track record of evolving to meet the changing needs of the people, businesses and communities we serve. For example, starting in the 1990s, we made significant changes in the areas of health care delivery, social services, infrastructure and tax administration. Over the last two decades, we increased our focus on developing policy, managing transfer payments, and supporting legislation and regulation, while retaining substantial service delivery roles.

THE ACCELERATING JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATION



ServiceOntario



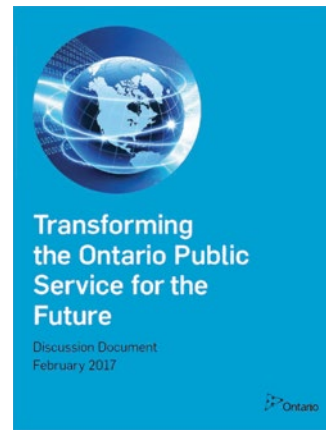
Illustrative examples only

We are not alone in transforming the OPS – in fact, many public service organizations across Canada and abroad are undertaking significant change in response to challenges such as aging populations, limited resources, global threats, increasing public expectations, competition for top talent and emerging disruptive technologies (e.g., artificial intelligence). These transformations must generate better outcomes, while resulting in higher efficiency and better use of resources.

The Declaration on Public Sector Innovation, signed by federal, provincial and territorial Clerks and Secretaries in 2017, is a collective federal, provincial and territorial commitment to support innovation in the public sector.

In February 2017, we launched the Transforming the Ontario Public Service for the Future discussion document to start a conversation with OPS employees about how to work together to transform our organization.

Over the course of the year following the discussion document’s release, thousands of employees from across the province submitted their ideas through town halls, ministry-led engagement sessions and the OPS of the Future website. Community leaders and partner organizations also provided their feedback on improving how the OPS works with our partners and the public. The combined feedback has been distilled into the new vision statement, key pillars and related commitments in this action plan.



OPS OF THE FUTURE PROJECT >

40k+

interactions with employees from across all ministries (in person, digitally or both)

YOU SAID:

“The public sees one government, not multiple ministries, and our service delivery and policy development must reflect that.”



Our New Vision



To be a leading public service that is inclusive, innovative, responsive and accountable.

Our new vision reflects the tremendous input we received from thousands of OPS employees. Based on what we heard from you, here are some of the key attributes of what the OPS of the future should look like:

All OPS workplaces will be *inclusive environments*. The OPS will be a more diverse, inclusive, accessible and respectful place to work, where everyone has a chance to not just participate, but also learn, advance and succeed. When our employees, policies and programs reflect the full diversity of the people of Ontario, we will be better equipped to deliver the best public services possible.

An *innovative mindset will be our norm*. Creativity – in the way we think, plan and work; the tools we use; how we engage with Ontarians – will improve the programs and services we deliver, while saving money. We will continue to challenge the status quo, seek new ideas, take smart risks and share our successes and learnings with each other.

The top 10 concepts you said are most important to capture in an OPS vision for the future:

RESPONSIVE
SERVICE
AGILE
INCLUSIVE
TRANSPARENT
CLIENT-CENTRED
INNOVATIVE
COLLABORATIVE
FLEXIBLE
TRUST

We will be responsive to how people access and use government programs and services. We will proactively seek and incorporate feedback and use data analytics throughout the process of designing and developing programs and services. This will help continue to ensure that they work for the people, businesses and communities of Ontario.

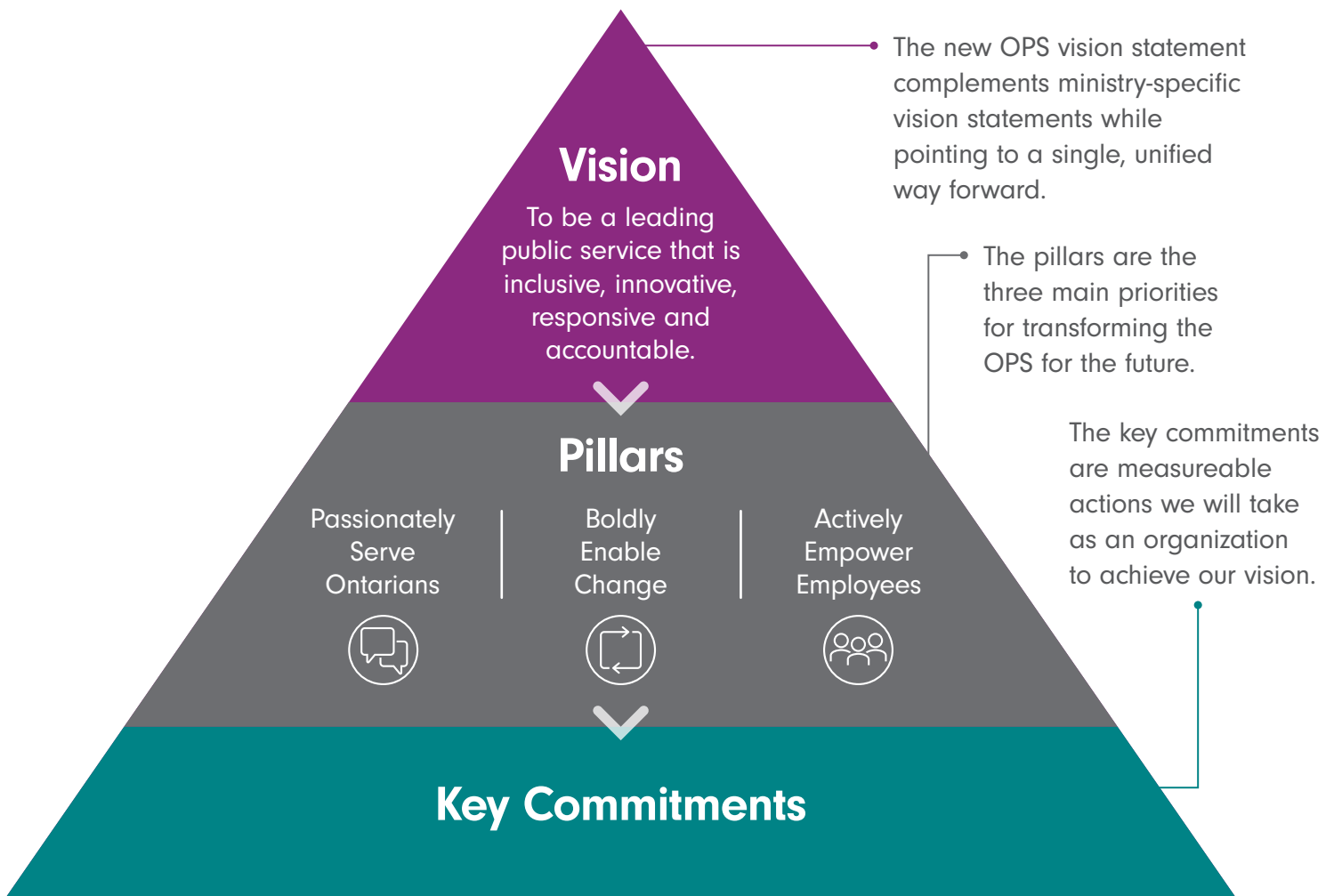
We will hold ourselves and each other accountable for our actions. We will continue to build a culture where employees feel trusted and empowered to make decisions about how best to do their work. We will also continue to commit to being more open and transparent in our work and demonstrate our commitment to excellence and value for money in all that we do. Management and bargaining agents will continue to collaborate proactively to identify issues and resolve them together wherever possible.



The Path Forward



To realize our mission and new vision, this action plan has three distinct pillars, each supported by specific, measurable commitments. Like the vision statement, these pillars and commitments were developed through engagement with employees.



The following pages outline the pillars and key commitments. Each pillar includes examples of transformational work that is already underway across the OPS – this action plan will build on, do more of, scale up and accelerate the transformations that ministries and employees have already started. You will also find a Making It Real appendix with practical ways to apply this action plan in your everyday work.



Passionately Serve Ontarians

Our service promise to the people of Ontario.

A key responsibility of the OPS is to deliver excellent public services, either directly or through service delivery partners, with and for people, businesses and communities throughout Ontario. We will use our experience, knowledge, technology and data to design and deliver services where, when and how Ontarians need them. That means working with people in all parts of the province to make sure we understand their needs as we shape policies and services.

YOU SAID:

“We need to strive for efficiency and accountability. We need to be open minded and be willing to collaborate.”

What we heard:

- › Government programs and services should be easy to access, use, and understand while making efficient use of public funds.
- › People often have to provide their information to the OPS several times because services are not integrated.
- › Government forms, instructions and websites are not always written or organized in a way that is easy to understand or follow.
- › Users and stakeholders are typically engaged in earlier stages of the policy or service design which does not take their evolving needs into account.
- › Government programs and services should be regularly and proactively evaluated, tested and improved in consultation with users and stakeholders.

YOU SAID:



“Pass customer feedback to appropriate teams to ensure awareness of feedback at senior levels and at operational levels.”

Our commitments:

- › **Create a digital identity:** Continue to develop and implement a secure, trusted digital identity for Ontarians. This optional service will enable people to use their digital ID just like physical government-issued ID (e.g., driver’s license) to access government services or provide proof of their identity, in person or online.
- › **Communicate clearly:** Apply plain language standards to all government communications to ensure the information is accessible, simple and easy to understand. This includes forms, web content, service transactions, reports, public strategies/papers and social media messages.
- › **Engage with stakeholders and seek continuous feedback:** Engage with the people who use OPS programs and services – along with the people who deliver the services and other stakeholders – at every step of developing policies, programs and services. Build on the process that is already used by organizations like ServiceOntario to survey people for immediate feedback after they interact with OPS services to help identify ways to further improve service delivery.
- › **Increase the use of evidence-based and iterative approaches:** Increase the number of projects that use evidence-based, agile, iterative (e.g., prototypes, pilots) and people-centred approaches where we test hypotheses and collect data and other information to build responsive policies, programs and services.

Examples of transformation in action

› **Working with partners to solve problems:**

The Ministry of Community and Social Services established the Human Services Integration Office (HSIO) to work with partner ministries and municipal service managers to better integrate, meet people's needs, and increase efficiency in service delivery and system management across the Ontario Works, childcare and early years, and affordable housing and homelessness programs. To achieve this, together with its partners, HSIO used new innovative methods such as design thinking, Lean Six Sigma and ethnography to test approaches that simplify and align access and rules across programs, streamline administration, strengthen cross-program connections and move towards outcomes-based accountability.

› **Engaging with communities to meet their needs:**

Since 2009, the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation has partnered with international not-for-profit Right to Play and more than 85 First Nation communities and urban Indigenous organizations across Canada to deliver the Promoting Life Skills in Aboriginal Youth (PLAY) initiative. PLAY teaches essential life skills through four programs in 60 communities across Ontario. Each program is designed to enhance educational outcomes, improve peer-to-peer relationships, increase employability and improve physical and mental health amongst Indigenous children and youth.

› **Making programs easier to use:** The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development conducted extensive consultations with students, colleges and universities and other key stakeholders to deliver a new Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP). Based on feedback from stakeholders and students that the previous loan program was too complex, the new OSAP is simpler and easier for students to access and use.

› **Accelerating our digital transformation:**

Ontario's Digital Action Plan, launched by the Ontario Digital Service, serves as the public road map for Ontario's digital transformation. It focuses on providing better online services designed around people's needs and equipping the province to lead in the digital era.



Boldly Enable Change

A relentless commitment to embrace and champion change.

To continue delivering innovative solutions to Ontarians, we need to change the way we plan and work. We need to build strong, collaborative and networked teams that use the knowledge and experiences from people across various ministry program and functional areas in order to provide more efficient and responsive solutions. We need to create a culture that encourages trying new approaches and sharing what we have learned.

YOU SAID:

"...create a culture where internal collaboration is a given."

What we heard:

- › We have a culture of risk aversion that often does not support trying new approaches – we need to evaluate and share the results of our projects and initiatives, whether they succeeded or not, so we can learn from each other.
- › We are encountering more complex problems that require skills and experiences from different ministries, teams and partners. However, logistical challenges make it difficult to bring together a team for a project or a new business area.
- › It can be difficult to encourage collaboration and integration because teams often operate in silos, have competing priorities, are not equipped to share data, and cannot share information until it has gone through a lengthy approvals process.
- › We have redundant and unnecessary processes that contribute to inefficiencies and bureaucracy.

YOU SAID:



“We need to move the yardstick on risk tolerance and trust. Both of these are critical to fostering innovation and inclusion.”

Our commitments:

- › **Encourage and support innovation:** Build tolerance, create safe spaces, and recognize the willingness to be open to new ideas, try new approaches and take smart risks. Approach risk-taking as a learning opportunity, and build a culture where teams can share their experiences across the OPS and learn from each other.
- › **Explore ways to digitally identify skills and create flexible work teams:** Develop new approaches to creating flexible teams that are cross-ministry and multidisciplinary. For example, create a way for employees to post their key skills so that managers throughout the organization can search for them when forming project-specific teams, allowing for greater and fairer access to team projects.
- › **Integrate and share our data:** Develop better ways of integrating and sharing data and data analytics across divisions and ministries to improve policy development, system planning, and program monitoring and evaluation, while ensuring strict privacy standards are maintained.
- › **Drive greater efficiencies:** Work collaboratively to identify and eliminate unnecessary costs and redundant processes and improve our efficiency.

Examples of transformation in action

- › **Involving youth in government:** The Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) created YouthVoiceON, a dedicated, policy-driven website and Twitter account that engages with Ontario's youth (ages 14–29) and collects their feedback on government policy. MCYS is currently partnering with the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change to gather feedback on how the government can support young people in taking action on climate change.
- › **Harnessing new technology:** In January 2018, the Ministry of Economic Development and Growth and the Ministry of Research, Innovation and Science hosted a three-day blockchain hackathon. More than 65 participants from seven ministries and one agency, with backgrounds ranging from policy, IT and operations, formed teams to address ministry challenges by coding unique solutions from scratch. Each team addressed a different problem and explored how blockchain could be used to improve outcomes. The hackathon has laid the foundation for continued policy development, and for the viable solutions to have proof-of-concept and pilot projects to be undertaken as next steps, by engaging blockchain experts in the Ontario business community, supporting innovation and the growth of emerging companies and technologies in the province.
- › **Crowdsourcing ideas to improve efficiency with employees:** Every two years since 2013, the Ideas and Innovation Fund (IF..) team at the Ministry of the Attorney General has invited staff to submit ideas and solutions to help the ministry support an innovative, sustainable and responsive justice system. This year the ministry used InsideOPS as a crowdsourcing platform to allow all employees – including frontline staff and lawyers working in agencies, tribunals and courthouses – to participate, share ideas and best practices, and offer constructive comments and insights on each other's ideas. Crowdsourcing ideas resulted in meaningful improvements to service delivery, increased access to justice and even cost savings for the ministry.
- › **Creating an internal consulting team:** In September 2017, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS) created the Transformation + Delivery Office (TDO). The TDO is an internal management consultancy team that uses an agile, innovative and people-centred approach to rapidly deploy team members with the right skills to deliver on the ministry's priority projects. Some of TDO's projects include building a solution for a ticketing system for MTCS agencies and attractions, and involving staff in identifying and implementing continuous improvement initiatives.



Actively Empower Employees

Giving employees the tools and decision-making power they need to do their best work to achieve better outcomes for Ontarians.

To be resilient, responsive and adaptable, we need to strengthen our learning culture, embrace new approaches to our work, and encourage leaders to trust their teams and hold them accountable as they support transformation initiatives. We also need to build a modern workplace that is more diverse, inclusive and accessible, where everyone feels safe and valued, and is able to participate fully, learn and succeed.


YOU SAID:

"... listen to and empower staff... provide feedback, suggest new ideas, and give them opportunities to change their environment."

What we heard:

- › We need leadership that fosters an environment of trust, openness and continuous learning.
- › Learning and development often focuses on mandatory and introductory-level courses. Employees would benefit from greater access to other forms of learning, such as special projects or workplace experiences, to build their skills and their OPS career.
- › The tools and technologies that many employees work with are old and outdated.
- › Flexible work arrangements have not been adopted consistently across the organization; we need to trust employees to work in different ways.
- › Employees need to feel trusted to make decisions on how best to do their work.

YOU SAID:



“Leadership happens at all levels of the organization. Empower informal leaders.”

Our commitments:

- › **Strengthen our learning organization:** Invest in employee growth and development in up-to-date skills that will help them do their work and grow their OPS career. Provide hands-on opportunities for employees to apply and practice new skills, broaden their perspectives and expand their networks by engaging in short-term, voluntary projects.
- › **Provide a modern workplace and flexible work options:** Provide employees with a suite of digital collaboration and social media tools to support efficient and effective engagement with the people they serve. This also allows employees to work seamlessly across teams anywhere, anytime, with secure devices. Provide modern mobile technologies (e.g., notebooks, tablets, smartphones) and a modernized experience to order IT products and services. Expand the adoption of flexible work arrangements that are beneficial to both individuals and teams.
- › **Establish accountability at the right level and make risk-based decisions:** Embrace a risk-based approach to decision-making, and rationalize internal processes to ensure the right person makes the right decision at the right time. This will empower employees to make decisions that are relevant to their work, and will also reduce administrative burden and cost.
- › **Foster greater diversity and inclusion:** Strengthen leadership and organizational capacity by building a more diverse talent pipeline and enhancing literacy regarding inclusion and diversity to support the OPS’s goal to create a more respectful, diverse, inclusive and accessible workplace.

Examples of transformation in action

- › **Speeding up approvals:** In 2014, the Ministry of Francophone Affairs (MFA) implemented an Electronic Approval System (EAS): a modern, paperless approval system. What initially started as a single employee's idea has led to every employee of the ministry using the EAS, including the Office of the Deputy Minister. By creating a safe space for employees to propose new ideas, and by demonstrating a willingness to try new approaches, MFA has modernized its back-office functions, reduced approval times for internal documents and supported a more flexible work environment for employees.
- › **Using Facebook Live to reach more people:** In January 2018, the Ministry of Labour hosted a two-hour Facebook Live event about Ontario's new rules for personal emergency leave. Participants who attended in person and online submitted around 400 questions and comments. The video was watched over 4,000 times during the broadcast, shared by 170 people, and to date, has received an additional 7,000 views and 100 questions and comments on the ministry's Facebook page.
- › **Listening to employees:** The OPS introduced the OPS Employee Experience Survey more than a decade ago. It has been modified and updated regularly to better inform policies and programs, allow employees to share their workplace experiences, and to enable managers to apply those insights into improving the employee experience. In 2017, Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) launched a short questionnaire through Topical to ask employees for their feedback on the employee survey. From the pool of over 1,500 employees who responded, 100 volunteers were also randomly selected to test different aspects of the survey. TBS then incorporated the results of this feedback and testing into the 2018 Employee Experience Survey.
- › **Engaging OPS employees on organizational change:** Throughout 2017, the OPS of the Future project asked employees to share their ideas and feedback online and at in-person town halls and ministry engagement sessions. The project engaged employees in every region of the province and at all levels of the organization. Employee feedback directly supported the creation of this action plan, which includes a Making It Real appendix to help employees carry out change. Specific commitments will be acted upon by the organization to ultimately better support employees.



What Success Looks Like

This plan has been developed for and by OPS employees from every corner of Ontario.

To ensure we are making progress in realizing our new vision – to become a leading public service that is inclusive, innovative, responsive and accountable – and efficiently delivering on our mission, we need to define what success looks like. Success will come in coordination with the other transformation initiatives that are either in progress or development, such as the HR Plan 2015-2020, the Inclusion & Diversity Blueprint, the I&T Plan 2016-2020, the Digital Action Plan, the Digital Enterprise Services Transformation Review and many others.

These are the outcomes that will allow us to measure and demonstrate progress on achieving this plan:

Inclusive and diverse: We mirror Ontario's diversity in our workplaces and are inclusive and respectful of each other.

Innovative and creative: We embrace change and create an environment for innovation. Employees are encouraged to take smart, responsible risks and share lessons learned.

Responsive and agile: We are agile and nimble. We rapidly adapt to changing circumstances.

Accountable and responsible: We are responsible stewards of public resources and practice sound financial management. We are accountable for our actions.

People-centred: We are outcomes-focused and provide services for the unique needs of people, businesses and communities across the province. We are working together to make services more accessible and easier to use.

Open and transparent: We release quality information publicly, and Ontarians believe we are open and transparent.

Collaborative and integrated: We work together, breaking down organizational boundaries to deliver better solutions and outcomes.



The OPS of the Future...and now



This project started with talking to OPS employees across the province. Thanks to your participation and input, and building on the great transformative work that is already underway, we have created a unifying vision statement and an action plan for how to achieve it.

This action plan is just the beginning: now it's time for all of us to work together to make the OPS of the future a reality. The success of our transformation depends on all of us embracing this new vision and action plan, and being open to changing the way we think, plan and work, and still provide value for money in everything we do.

Ministries, divisions and teams should find ways to align with and build upon the three pillars in their strategies and initiatives. The commitments in this action plan are just a start, and are meant to model a new way of working together to deliver services.

Employees and teams can use the ideas from the Making It Real appendix to begin a dialogue about how they can lead transformation. But don't stop there! Brainstorm and share additional ideas. Connect and work with colleagues to make changes – big or small.

Stay tuned for ongoing communications and progress updates. As we move forward, we will take stock of how we are doing and how we can do even better.

Visit the OPS of the Future website to share your thoughts and ideas, and to find out what other people across the organization are doing and how you might work together.

By continuing to build momentum through action and continuously asking how we can improve, we will better serve Ontarians, enable change and empower employees.

A man with a beard and mustache, wearing a grey suit and a patterned tie, is looking intently at a laptop screen. He is sitting at a desk in a meeting room. In the background, there is a whiteboard with various charts and diagrams, including a pie chart and a bar chart. The room is dimly lit, and the overall color scheme is a mix of teal and purple. The word "Appendices" is overlaid in large white text on the left side of the image.

Appendices

Appendix A: Making It Real

Below are some ways you and your team members can work together and take action to lead transformation in your everyday work:

- › Review communications (e.g., instructions, forms, websites) from the perspective of the people using them. Are they easy to understand and follow? If not, work with your team to rewrite or redesign them. Test your communications with a small group of colleagues or stakeholders prior to release of the communication, and incorporate their feedback.
- › Challenge yourself and your team members to engage with people who will use or deliver your product or service at the start of a project and fully consider their needs before proposing a solution.
- › Seek and share real-time feedback with and from colleagues about interactions with the public.
- › Challenge yourself and your team members to seek regular feedback from those who use and deliver programs and services, and apply it to improve policy, program development and service delivery on an iterative basis.
- › Engage in open and ongoing dialogue within your teams about trying new approaches. Ask thoughtful questions, actively listen to new ideas, and consider alternative points of view.
- › Find colleagues who work with similar stakeholders and start a small, informal cross-ministry team to solve a specific service problem.
- › Share and ask for information, ideas and advice from anyone in the organization in order to solve work challenges.
- › Ask yourself and your team members why you are completing a process the way it is currently being performed. Then, with your teams, review your business processes from start to finish, and identify and remove any steps that do not add value.
- › Learn about a new emerging trend in your area and host a lunch-and-learn with your team to share your findings.
- › Share your areas of expertise and interests with your colleagues and find more opportunities to develop your skills and expertise.
- › Challenge yourself and your team members about whether the right people are currently reviewing and approving documents and decisions. If not, redesign the process so that those who are closest to the process are accountable to review and approve.
- › Challenge yourself and your team members about whether you are each contributing to an inclusive, diverse and accessible environment, and what more can be done.
- › Come up with some measurable steps you can take to contribute to the OPS of the Future and add them to your annual performance plan.

Appendix B: Acknowledgements

Thank you to all who contributed to the development of this action plan – all who took the time to attend town halls, to submit ideas and reactions online, to participate in polls and pop-ups, to discuss within their teams, to provide stories and examples, to review draft materials, and the many other ways that you found to share your perspectives and thoughts. Input was enthusiastic, thoughtful and plentiful – shaping this action plan for the future. This included:

- › OPS employees from all ministries and all regions throughout the province
- › Provincial Inter-Ministerial Council members
- › Deputy Ministers' Council
- › Assistant Deputy Minister committees
- › Public Service Renewal Reference Group
- › Employee Networks

We also appreciated the sage advice of our partners collaborating with us from outside the OPS and providing their insight based on a unique view of the OPS:

- › Participants from the Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship Engagement Session
- › External Advisory Group
- › Legislative Officers

Finally, thank you to the groups that worked tirelessly to develop this document and to champion change to better our organization:

- › Cabinet Office and Treasury Board Secretariat Communications
- › Centre of Excellence for Evidence-Based Decision Making
- › Chief Talent Officer and her office
- › Policy Innovation Hub
- › Public Service Renewal Project Team

**Thank you for your
commitment to building
the OPS of the future!**

