

PBO releases the “Federal Employment Tracking Tool”

This note provides an overview of the Parliamentary Budget Office’s (PBO) new Federal Employment Tracking Tool as well as analysis of recent trends in the federal public service workforce.

In Budget 2025, the government announced reductions in the size of the federal public service through the Comprehensive Expenditure Review (CER) starting in 2026-27. The government stated that the CER would contribute to ongoing reductions in the size of the federal public service, resulting in “a decline of about 40,000 positions or 10 per cent”¹ by 2028-29 relative to its 2023-24 level. This marks a shift from the trend observed over the previous decade, during which the federal public service expanded continuously at an average annual growth rate of 4.1 per cent, rising from 249,000 full-time equivalents (FTEs) in 2015-16 to 358,000 FTEs in 2024-25.

PBO developed the [Federal Employment Tracking Tool](#) to support the oversight and analysis of employment trends on a timely basis. The tool provides detailed data and interactive visualizations by quarter and fiscal year for all departments and agencies, as well as insights on recent changes in federal government staffing levels. Information is based on underlying monthly data and will be updated quarterly as new data is available from departments. The federal government currently provides public employment data by department and agency on an annual basis only.

The information presented by quarter and fiscal year in the tool reflects monthly employment data obtained from the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS), the Department of National Defence (DND) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).² The data provided by TBS from federal pay systems details the monthly **headcount** as well as the sum of monthly hours worked for each department in the Core Public Administration and Separate Agencies of the federal public service. Using this data, PBO calculated the number of **full-time equivalents** (FTEs) by department, converting the total hours worked into an equivalent number of full-time positions. The data is further broken down by **employment tenure**.

Key concept definitions

There are two concepts to measure the size of the federal public service:

1. **Headcount:** Number of individuals employed by the federal public service
2. **Full-time equivalents (FTEs):** Number of full-time positions based on total hours worked by all employees

The concept of **employment tenure** corresponds to the nature of the appointment to the public service. There are four types of federal employment tenure:

1. **Indeterminate:** an employee appointed for an unspecified duration
2. **Term:** an employee appointed for a specified duration
3. **Casual:** an employee appointed for a period not exceeding 90 working days in one calendar year
4. **Student:** an employee appointed under one of the federal government’s student employment programs

Additional data was provided by DND and RCMP on the monthly headcount of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Regular Force and RCMP members. ³

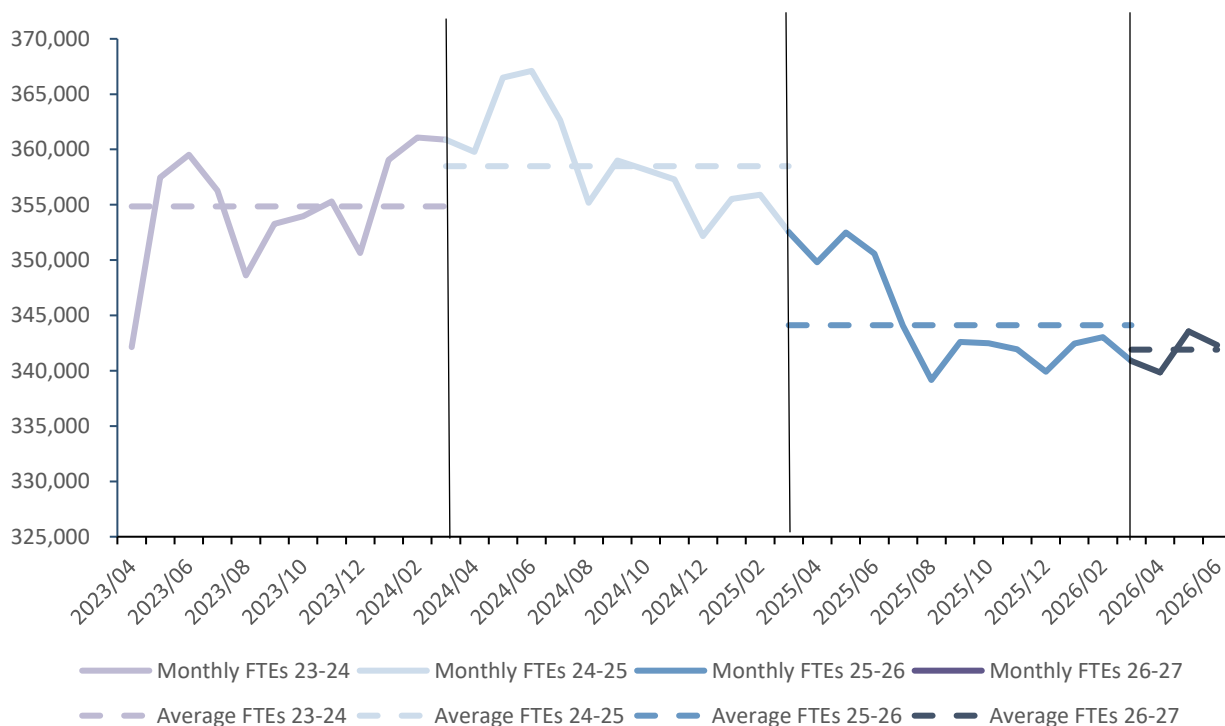
The [Federal Employment Tracking Tool](#) allows users to explore recent federal workforce developments and historical staffing trends through the following features:

- A dashboard providing an overview of recent quarterly and annual changes in the total headcount and number of FTEs in the federal public service, including a breakdown by employment tenure as well as details on departments with the largest variations over the reference period.
- An interactive chart displaying historical trends in the total headcount and number of FTEs in the federal public service broken down by employment tenure, from 2015-16 to the latest quarter available.
- An interactive chart allowing a side-by-side comparison of trends in headcount and FTEs between selected federal departments. Users can also select the employment tenure for additional insights.

The interactive data visualizations show a long-standing growth trend in the size of the federal public service between 2015 and 2024, peaking on a monthly basis at 367,000 FTEs in June 2024⁴, followed by a sustained decline to 342,000 FTEs in June 2026. On a fiscal year basis, the average annual number of FTEs fell from 358,000 in 2024-25 to 344,000 in 2025-26.

Figure 1

Monthly Full-Time Equivalents, April 2024 to June 2026



Source:

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat and Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer

Note:

Monthly totals of FTEs exclude Regular Force members of the Canadian Armed Forces, regular and civilian members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police as well as employees locally engaged outside of Canada. As a result, monthly FTE counts differ from the annual total number of FTEs reported in the 2026-27 Departmental Plans.

Between the second quarter of 2025 and 2026, the size of the federal public service decreased by about 9,000 FTEs. Most federal departments recorded year-over-year workforce reductions, with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) recording the largest decrease, at about 3,000 FTEs. Approximately 90 per cent of the reductions across departments were among indeterminate positions over the last year,

marking a shift from the previous fiscal year, during which the reductions were concentrated among term, casual and student positions.⁵

The government-wide reductions were partly offset by significant increases in civilian employees of the Department of National Defence (DND) as well as in CAF Regular Force members. Between June 2025 and 2026, DND recorded an increase of about 3,000 FTEs in its civilian workforce and 3,000 CAF Regular Force members.

Moving forward, PBO will explore the feasibility of releasing monthly data for each department and agency through the [Federal Employment Tracking Tool](#).

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Notes

¹ Department of Finance. [Budget 2025 – Chapter 5](#), p. 206.

² [IR0822](#), [IR0824](#) and [IR0826](#).

³ The federal public service employment tenures are not applicable to positions held by the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Regular Force members and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) members. PBO could not calculate the number of FTEs for those organizations using the data provided, therefore it is assumed that all members of the CAF and RCMP hold full-time positions in the tool.

⁴ This figure excludes CAF Regular Force members and RCMP members.

⁵ [Full-Time Equivalents in the Federal Public Service – 2025-26 Departmental Plans](#)

