

CHOOSE PUBLIC

Keep **ServiceOntario** safe and secure.

Key Messages on the Privatization of ServiceOntario

These are the main messages to raise when speaking with the public, the media and MPPs.

1. **There will be service cuts.** Finance Minister Dwight Duncan said on Feb. 13: “obviously greater efficiencies can be gained by driving customers to a low-cost online channel.” The government’s own figures show that 85 per cent of the most frequent transactions (such as license plate sticker renewals) are completed in-person by Ontarians at ServiceOntario counters.
2. **Further privatization will jeopardize the security of your personal information.** Dwight Duncan said on Feb. 13: “Two-thirds of ServiceOntario is already privatized,” implying it’s no big deal to privatize the whole operation. We say:
 - a. Further privatization will increase the risk of identity theft and fraud.
 - b. The 200 private issuers are making errors with transactions. We know this because the government has asked our members to go out to the private issuers and give them further training.
 - c. For the private issuers, it’s all about increasing the volume of transactions because they are paid a fee per transaction. It’s not about verifying documents and asking questions of people who want to obtain a health card or an enhanced driver’s license etc.
 - d. Two-thirds of ServiceOntario counters are run by private contractors, **not** two-thirds of all of ServiceOntario. See background below for more information on operations.
3. **All or part of the \$2.7 billion** that ServiceOntario currently contributes to government revenues will go to the profit of a private corporation instead of helping to fund the public services we all rely on.

Background Information

Note: *On July 25, 2011, the government issued a Request for Information for ServiceOntario, asking for comment from the private sector on an improved operating and financial model among other questions. The figures and much of the information below comes directly from the RFI.*

ServiceOntario is part of the Ministry of Government Services (MGS).

ServiceOntario will handle 48 million transactions in 2011-12.

Driver and vehicle services are the most frequent transactions at 20 million annually. Other services include:

- Information on government programs and referral services: 12.9 million.
- Property registrations, searches and title services: 4.1 million
- Health Card applications and renewal: 3.2 million
- Birth, marriage and death certificates: 1.1 million.

ServiceOntario's budget allocation from the government in 2011-12 is \$270.4 million. It contributes **\$2.7 billion in revenue** annually to the government. **This means it earns \$10 in revenue for every \$1 it spends!**

OPSEU estimates removing ServiceOntario from government and making it a "so-called public-private partnership" will impact about **2,000 OPSEU members in MGS**. This total includes members who work directly for ServiceOntario operations and those who provide back-office and Information and Information Technology support within MGS.

The components of ServiceOntario **currently operated within government:**

- **87 counters**;
- **4 contact centres in 8 locations** answering over 10 million calls annually, including help-line support to ServiceOntario counters, general inquiries about Ontario government programs (including specific Ministries such as Finance, Health and Long-Term Care, Labour, Natural Resources, Revenue, Transportation) and inquiries to the Premier's Office;
- **Online portal ServiceOntario.ca** handling close to 10 million transactions annually; and
- **Mailrooms** processing and/or imaging 22 million items annually, 18-19 million of those items are received from the counters.

*The government has not provided a total number of transactions handled by the publicly-operated counters. The government claimed in the RFI that 73% of all in-person transactions are carried out at the private issuers.

The government has deliberately put its own counters at a disadvantage by:

- Allowing the private issuers **to locate close to the public counters**, in some cases they are **within a five minute walk** or drive, (e.g. St. Catharines, London, North Bay and Sudbury);
- **Not being transparent** with the public as to which counters are publicly-operated and which are privately-operated for a profit: ServiceOntario.ca doesn't disclose this fact to the public and the same government signage is displayed in both public and private counters;
- **Not leveling the playing field:** the private issuers are generally in malls with free parking while the government-run counters are in government buildings where there is a fee for parking.

The components of ServiceOntario **currently operated by the private sector for a profit:**

- 220 counters; and
- 71 kiosks in malls, maintained and operated under contract with IBM.

The government noted on page 9 of its Request for Information, that "...there is room to improve utilization by Ontarians, particularly for the most frequent services such as license plate sticker renewals (approx 14% are currently ordered through online or kiosk self service channels, **with 85% completed at store-front locations**).

Clearly, Ontarians prefer to obtain valuable government documents in-person from a professional public employee rather than through an IBM-managed kiosk in a mall.

According to a public opinion survey commissioned by OPSEU last fall:

- **71 per cent of Ontarians oppose the privatization of ServiceOntario.**
- **75 per cent of Ontarians are concerned about a private company having access to and the ability to control and make changes to sensitive personal information.**
- **68 per cent of Ontarians prefer service delivery in-person.**

Oraclepoll Research interviewed 1,000 Ontarians during September 27 – October 4, 2011, a large enough sample size to give us confidence in the results.