

**Backgrounder**  
**CRA Strategic Directions**  
**Assessment Benefit and Service**

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this document is to provide you with an understanding of the strategic direction of the Assessment, Benefit and Service Branch (ABSB) to be used as part of the consultative process on the development of a new organizational model in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

**Organizational Context:**

ABSB is responsible for three key workloads:

- The processing of tax returns and benefit payments
- Managing call centres for inbound calls
- Outreach and the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP)

The operations of processing of tax returns and benefits have recently been consolidated (as part of the Service Renewal initiative) into four tax centres, to reflect the high and growing rate of electronic filing. No significant processing operations currently take place in the GTA.

The call centre activities located in the Toronto Centre have been moved to Hamilton, Montreal and St. Johns, in order to consolidate the Individual Enquiries call centres from six to five. No further consolidation is envisaged at this point. The only call centre that remains in the GTA is the Toronto East Business Enquiries Call Centre.

Outreach and CVITP activities have been expanded, consistent with the Minister's mandate to ensure that Canadians are getting the benefits they are entitled to. In the GTA, Outreach and CVITP officials are currently located in the Toronto Centre Tax Services Office (TSO) in the Front Street Building.

**Drivers for Change:**

Electronic take up is rising, necessitating a consolidation of our processing centres, which is nearly complete under Service Renewal.

There has also been a modest consolidation of call centres, which is nearly complete under Service Renewal. The Toronto Centre Call Centre will cease operating on September 8, 2017.

Outreach and CVITP will likely continue to expand both in size and importance, given the Minister's mandate.

**People Considerations:**

Depending on the taxpayer work can be performed from CRA offices, the taxpayer's location, or remotely via telework. Therefore, flexibility is critical to the effective delivery of the program.

Employee commutes and hours of work have significant impacts: on costs, on people, on morale and productivity, and entire families.

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Employee development is enhanced when more senior employees work in the same area, facilitating peer-learning and professional development.

Performance and retirement plans are relevant factors, but not the only factor, in making decisions about work location for workloads and people.

**Implications for the GTA:**

The call centre currently located in Toronto East may need to be relocated due to the lease expiration, but activities should remain in a single building.

Outreach and CVITP will need to be relocated as a result of the sale of the Front Street building. They should continue to report to one TSO to be consistent with the model in all other regions. Ideally they would be in a centrally located TSO to facilitate coverage of the GTA.

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