



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada



Change Management Program in-a-box: Optimization

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

VERSION 1

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Frequently asked questions about the optimization project (insert address/floors) - Change Management Program in-a-box: Optimization

To be removed before sending

Objective: To provide a general understanding of the project and answer employees questions in plain language.

Target audience for this document: The content of this FAQ can be presented to all staff.

Prerequisite: You should ideally have established your space utilization strategies before sharing this document. Specifically, your strategies for setting up: neighborhoods, special access zones, a reservation system, and finally your personal storage strategy. If these have not yet been established, you can share a lighter version of this document, which you will undertake to update as decisions are made.

When to use this document: The document should first be given to executives and managers to familiarize them with the project. It can then accompany the announcement to staff and any subsequent communications.

The **French** version of this document is available here: [French version](#)

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About the optimization project

What is our workplace optimization project?

Our organization will participate in a national effort to reduce the Government of Canada's office space portfolio by optimizing offices located at (address).

We'll be making changes to our workplace to reduce underused and vacant space, while taking into account the hybrid working model.

This means, among other things, that:

- we will be releasing (indicate the spaces to be released);
- workstations will become unassigned;
- closed offices will become focus rooms and meeting rooms **accessible to all**;
- quiet zones will be created to facilitate work requiring concentration.

What is the purpose of this project?

We are carrying out this exercise as part of the Government of Canada's [plan to optimize its real property portfolio](#). This is a national strategy, stemming from priorities set out in [Budget 2024](#), including converting underused federal office into homes. In concrete terms, this means that the government aims to:

- reduce its office portfolio by 50% over the next 10 years;
- assess the potential of surplus properties for housing and other community priorities.

To achieve these objectives, governmental organizations must apply::

- a hybrid work model;
- unassigned seating in office space as the default.

By participating in this initiative, **our organization is doing its part to:**

- reduce the government's footprint;
- manage public funds responsibly;
- contribute to strategies aimed at solving the housing crisis.

What is the timeline for the optimization project?

Indicate the timeline for releasing the space, moving into a transitional space if applicable, and adopting the optimized workplace.

It's all about reducing space, so why do we talk about optimization?

Indeed, the space our organization occupies will be reduced. We're talking about optimization because we'll be implementing new ways of working, such as the adoption of unassigned seating. These changes will enable us to make optimum use of the office space allocated to us.

If our organization has less space, does that mean we'll be condensed?

The main objective is to release underused space and ensure that work points are occupied on all our floors.

In addition, we continue to comply with the Government of Canada Workplace Fit-up Standards, which defines the size of workstations, and the National Building Code of Canada, which regulates maximum occupancy in buildings.

Optimization is based on the [Common Hybrid Work Model for the federal public service](#). What will happen if it is modified?

While the Hybrid Work Model directive has contributed to reducing office space occupancy, it's not the only element being considered to implement workplace optimization.

The adoption of unassigned seating makes a significant impact on optimizing the use of space.

As for our space requirements, should they change as a result of a change to the hybrid work model or for any other reason, PSPC will continue to provide us with the space we need to carry out our mandate.

The working environment

What is a neighborhood?

A neighbourhood serves as a hub for a branch, region or sector, and is a place where employees can come together to connect and collaborate. In a neighborhood, the entire floor is available to all; there are no floor sections or rooms reserved for specific teams.

It's possible to choose a workstation or a room in another neighborhood if you're collaborating with employees from other teams, or if there's no space left on your floor.

Employees from other regions can also use a work point in a neighborhood of their choice when they're on the move.

What is a quiet zone?

It's a portion of space intended to encourage individual work and support the need for tranquility.

Examples of preferred activities in a quiet zone:

- Work on files or answer e-mails;
- Take a course where all you have to do is listen;
- Attend virtual meetings in which you don't have to intervene.

Activities to avoid in a quiet zone include:

- Take a phone or a Teams call in which you will have to intervene frequently.
- Extended conversations with colleagues.

If you're working in a quiet zone and you receive a call or need to talk to a colleague for more than a **few minutes**, you need to move **out of respect** your colleagues who have chosen this location for its tranquility.

What about closed offices?

Closed offices will be transformed into focus rooms and small meeting rooms. They will be available to all to meet **short-term confidentiality** needs.

Closed offices and shared meeting rooms give everyone access to a private space when they need it, whatever their rank or title.

How does our optimization affect our special purpose space?

(Confirm this information with the PSPC project team).

Adopting unassigned seating by default

What is involved in adopting an unassigned workstation model?

Workstations and closed offices will be shared resources, available to all. This means that:

- every day you're in the office, you'll have the flexibility to choose a workstation that suits your needs and preferences;
- workstations will no longer be assigned to an employee, unless otherwise approved based on a duty to accommodate or an approved functional need;
- workstations will no longer be used to store business files and assets or personal effects.

What are the advantages of unassigned seating?

- This creates spaces that are accessible to all, promoting equity in the use of space;
- You can choose your work point according to your preferences, opting for a sunnier, quieter or cooler location;
- This model reduces the number of unoccupied work points due to telework, vacations, or other reasons.

Is our optimized workplace done according to the GCworkplace standard?

The optimized workplace will have some elements of the GCworkplace standard, such as unassigned seating and diversified work points with equal access for all employees.

In adopting these elements of GCworkplace, the optimized workplace will seek many benefits over older models of workplace. The optimized workplace will offer greater flexibility and space efficiency than older assigned cubicle workplaces. At the same time it will reduce issues associated with open layout offices such as noise, lack of privacy, and insufficient space to meet.

Do executives and managers keep an assigned office?

The requirement of unassigned seating by default applies to **everyone**, including executives.

The only offices assigned are those of (indicate whether the office is the President's or the Minister's and deputy Minister's), as indicated in the Government of Canada Workplace Fit-up Standards.

Executives and managers are often required to hold confidential meetings and conversations. It will therefore be possible to reserve meeting rooms or closed offices for these needs.

(Indicate if you implement a priority access strategy for executives)

Executives with administrative teams can also sit nearby in shared areas.

Adopting the model of unassigned seating at **all levels** and a common operating mode is crucial to a successful transition to our optimized workplace and to fostering a **positive employee experience for all**.

Failure to do so will cause issues of space management, accessibility and employee experience, to name but a few.

How are teams distributed in the optimized space?

Each floor will become the neighborhood of one or more (branch, unit, team). The size of the teams and the nature of their work helped determine their location.

The entire floor will be available **to all**, there will be no portion of the floor reserved for specific teams. All employees in a neighborhood will be able to move around and choose any workstation or reserve any room within it.

(Indicate on which floors the different teams will work)

How will we collaborate with our colleagues if the teams don't have a designated space?

- Consult your colleagues to choose side-by-side work points.
- Update your MS Teams status to show where you're sitting.
- Book a room for your meetings and discussions.

What happens if our organization expands and we need to hire?

PSPC is committed to providing us with the space we need to carry out our mandate and programs. Should these evolve significantly, we will evaluate solutions with PSPC at the appropriate time.

Ways of working and etiquette

How can we ensure that employees respect civility in the workplace?

- Workplace etiquette and community norms will be shared. Community norms or good manners means behaving **respectfully and courteously** in the workplace. A positive atmosphere at work requires consideration for others.
- Various means of communication will be used to ensure that everyone knows the best practices and good habits to adopt in a shared environment.

Can I book a workstation?

(To be adjusted according to your reservation system strategy)

ARCHIBUS will allow you to book work points (modify if you adopt the general admission format) before going to the workplace. Further information on how to use this application will be provided.

(Indicate whether meeting rooms and closed offices can be booked via Outlook).

Where can I store my belongings?

Your personal belongings will need to be taken home. Prior to our Workplace Transformation, we will be undergoing initiatives to clean-up and digitize our existing storage and make decisions on the future retention of our business assets. Updates around these activities will be determined and communicated with you soon *(To be adjusted according to your personal storage strategy)*

Day lockers (or other personal storage) will be provided as part of the program for you to store personal effects. Coat closets will also be available for larger items such as winter boots, gym bags and coats.

Will I be able to have a permanent locker?

Assigned lockers will be limited.

We'll be sharing a locker strategy shortly. You may wish to request a permanent locker if you have ergonomic needs, an accommodation, or use an alternative mode of transportation.

How are noise issues handled?

There will be quiet zones, where employees can concentrate and perform routine tasks with little or no noise.

This is in addition to the enclosed work points which will also be available for employees who require acoustic privacy for short periods.

What about disinfection and hygiene?

Cleaning wipes will be provided so that you can disinfect surfaces before and after use. We also follow a clean desk policy, where everyone is responsible for ensuring that their work point is cleared each day.

Ergonomics and accommodation

(To be adjusted according to what will be implemented in your organization)

What happens to my ergonomic equipment?

- Ergonomic keyboard and mouse

In an unassigned seating environment, everyone has to carry their own keyboard and mouse.

Ergonomic keyboards and mice can be stored at the end of the working day (indicate location, or if there will be assigned lockers).

- Ergonomic chairs

Indicate whether the organization will provide ergonomic chairs at each workstation, at certain work points, or whether there will be parking for employees' ergonomic chairs.

- Sit-stand desks

Indicate whether the organization will install sit-stand desks at each workstation, or whether employees will have to reserve specific workstations to access them.

Is the optimized workplace accessible?

The workplace continues to meet the accessibility standards set by the Government of Canada.

What about employees with Duty to Accommodate requests?

The optimized workplace does not impact our organization's requirements for Duty to Accommodate. Employees with existing Duty to Accommodate requests will be maintained in the new space.

However, the proposed measures may evolve and differ from those previously favored.

Those concerned can consult the page (insert page from your intranet) to find out more about accommodation requests.