



Centre for the Study
of Living Standards

CSLS Big Ideas Seminar Series

Public Sector Productivity in Canada

Date and Time

Wednesday, May 27, 2026
3:30 - 5:00 PM ET

Location

Alt Hotel Ottawa Downtown
Rose Fuchsia Room (2nd floor)
185 Slater Street
Ottawa, Ontario

[RSVP](#)

RSVP by May 25, 2026.

Event Description

Productivity in Canada's public sector is a critical issue, yet measuring it remains a fundamental challenge. Unlike the private sector, government outputs are often difficult to quantify, outcomes are complex, and traditional metrics can fall short. At the same time, new opportunities from the emergence of artificial intelligence to ongoing public sector workforce reforms are reshaping what can be achieved.

This CSLS seminar brings together three leading experts to examine how public sector productivity can be measured more effectively, the key barriers to change, and where the biggest opportunities lie. The discussion will focus on concrete recommendations and practical approaches to improving performance and delivering better results for Canadians.

Presenters



Benoît Robidoux is an economist, who was recently a member of the Government of Canada's Working Group on Public Service Productivity. He worked in the public service for 35 years, including as Senior Associate Deputy Minister of Employment and Social Development Canada. He also held various positions at Finance Canada, including Assistant Deputy Minister of the Economic and Fiscal Policy Branch, where he oversaw the analysis and forecasting of the country's economic and fiscal situation.



Michael Wernick is one of Canada's most experienced and influential public sector leaders, with a 38-year career in the federal public service. His career included 17 years as a deputy minister and culminated in his role as Clerk of the Privy Council from 2016 to 2019. Since his retirement, he has worked as a consultant and adjunct professor, and in 2022 became the Jarislowsky Chair in Public Sector Management at the University of Ottawa. He is the author of *Governing Canada: A Guide to the Tradecraft of Politics* (UBC Press, 2021).



Jennifer Withington is the Assistant Chief Statistician for Economic Statistics at Statistics Canada, where she is responsible for key economic indicators such as the CPI, GDP, and international trade. She has held various roles at StatCan since 1996, including Director General of the Macroeconomic Accounts and Director of International Accounts and Trade. She represents StatCan on international committees, including the UN Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts. She holds a bachelor's in economics and political science, as well as a master's degree in economics from McGill University.



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