

Partnership for Improved Service

With its extensive network of service outlets, Canada Post is ideally suited to help the Passport Office increase the number of our points of service. Recognizing the mutual benefits of a partnership, the Passport Office and Canada Post soon arrived at a memorandum of understanding.

In mid-January 2001, fifteen postal outlets in Montréal, Toronto, Windsor and Ottawa began to accept completed passport applications. Fifteen more outlets will offer the service beginning in the fall of 2001.

As receiving agents, Canada Post officers review the submitted application to ensure it is duly completed and that all the required supporting documents are included. Applicants pay a \$10 handling fee to Canada Post for the service. The application is then forwarded to the Passport Office for processing. The newly-issued passport and original documents are sent to the applicant within seven working days.

The project has been jointly promoted by the Passport Office and Canada Post. Some 3,500 applications have been submitted since it was launched, and the feedback has been overwhelmingly favourable.

The Alternative Service Delivery section spearheaded the Canada Post project and continues to investigate other government agencies for potential partnerships.

Secure Cards

A Passport Office-Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) partnership project was originally conceived to come up with a common card format for producing CIC's permanent resident citizenship card, a passport card and other secure cards for other government departments. Funding to build and operate our in-house secure card production centre was to have been provided through the partnership with CIC. However, the project has been indefinitely postponed.

We have maintained our partnership with Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) for the Expedited Passenger Processing Services (CANPASS) initiative. This is an automated means of expediting border crossing for frequent air travellers. A card coded with personal information and biometric details (fingerprints or hand geometry) is swiped to confirm the cardholder's identity and citizenship. The information is transferred electronically to the CANPASS Registration Centre to approve entry.

The pilot project still operates at the Vancouver airport where response has been positive. However, due to the expense of implementing the system, CCRA has put the project on hold.

The Passport Office continues to study the potential of a passport card. Used in conjunction with the passport booklet or by itself, the automated card system would simplify border crossing, particularly at heavily frequented US-border-crossing points.