

Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
2. Crisis Supplement UPDATED
3. Decampment
4. Cheque Issue Day
5. Together BC
6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
9. January Legislative Changes
10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
11. Communities in Transition
12. TCS Police Investigation
13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
15. ICBC Enhanced Care
16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
17. Basic Income
18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
- s.15; s.22
- s.13; s.15; s.22
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
22. Youth Homeless Report
23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension NEW

1

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
Date: June 3, 2020
Minister: Hon. Shane Simpson

SSSRT – Recruitment and Retention Funding

SUMMARY: The Budget 2020 commitment to support recruitment and retention and staffing challenges facing non-union or partially certified agencies in the community social services sector will partially address concerns about wage disparity between union and non-union employees in the sector. The overall differences in compensation (wages and benefits) between union and non-union employees in the community social services sector are long-standing and historical.

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE

- The social services sector is a broad and important sector that provides services for some of B.C.'s most vulnerable people.
- We're providing \$26.3 million for training and compensation in the social services sector – this is in addition to the \$10 million provided as part of 2019/20 year-end funding for recruitment and retention initiatives.
- This funding will help address recruitment and retention concerns as well as staffing challenges within the social services sector. Funding can be put towards training or compensation for non-union employees.
 - Funding is in addition to annual wage increases provided to non-union employees
 - Funding will not be directed towards compensation for excluded management positions.
- To help ensure the sector's overall and long-term strength, additional funding has been provided to develop a cross-sector human resources framework, including a compensation plan.

SSSRT and COVID-19

- Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, it has become even more clear how important this work is in protecting vulnerable people in B.C.
- Last year, I formed the Social Services Sector Roundtable specifically to address concerns of this diverse sector through regular collaboration and discussion with sector representatives.
- Since the onset of the pandemic, we've been meeting weekly. This forum has proven invaluable in addressing health-related concerns from the sector and sharing information from public health officials.

Program Area Contact: Teresa Kovacs, CSD

Created:

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

- Now as we're entering phase 2 of the recovery from this pandemic, the Roundtable is re-focusing its efforts on procurement and a sector human resources framework and compensation plan.

BACKGROUND

Budget 2020 Decision

- Government has approved access of \$26.27M from the 2020/21 Contingencies Vote for recruitment and retention initiatives. The table below shows the expected funding by ministry:

s.13; s.17

- The funding will be used for training initiatives and compensation for non-union employees in community social service agencies that are partially-certified or are not members of the Community Social Services Employers' Association. Funding is not available for compensation for excluded/management positions.
- While the expectation is that the funding will go mainly towards wage increases and will close the gap with the increases available to unionized employees, the funding is being provided for recruitment and retention more broadly (e.g. benefits, training).
- The funding is in addition to the \$10 million in one-time grant funding that was provided to the sector for training and occupational health and safety initiatives in 2019/20.
- An additional \$400,000 has been approved for the Public Sector Employers' Council Secretariat (PSEC Secretariat) to develop a community and social services sectoral human resources framework, including a compensation plan
- There are over 2,000 agencies that provide an array of social services throughout B.C. They receive an estimated \$2 billion per year in provincial funding that supports over 46,000 employees.
 - Approximately 17,000 are non-union employees, 79% of which are women
 - The sector has the lowest paid employees within the provincial public sector
- In May 2019, the Social Services Sector Roundtable (SSSRT) was convened with a group of representatives from the sector to discuss and work collaboratively on issues faced by the sector.

Program Area Contact: Teresa Kovacs, CSD
Created:

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

s.13; s.17

Program Area Contact: Teresa Kovacs, CSD

Created:

Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
 2. Crisis Supplement UPDATED
 3. Decampment
 4. Cheque Issue Day
 5. Together BC
 6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
 7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
 8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
 9. January Legislative Changes
 10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
 11. Communities in Transition
 12. TCS Police Investigation
 13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
 14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
 15. ICBC Enhanced Care
 16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
 17. Basic Income
 18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
- s.15; s.22
- s.13; s.15; s.22
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
 22. Youth Homeless Report
 23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
 24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
 25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension NEW

2

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

Questions & Answers

COVID-19 Crisis Supplement Extension

July 2020

Key Messages

- As the Province moves into phase three of the recovery plan, we are working to ensure that people on income and disability assistance and low-income seniors continue to have access to the supports they need during this pandemic.
- We have extended the temporary \$300 COVID-19 crisis supplement for two months – for cheques issued in July and August - and extended the federal employment insurance exemptions for people on income and disability assistance who are eligible for CERB and other federal emergency supports. The exemptions will continue for the duration of the CERB program.
- These extensions are to ensure that people on income and disability assistance, who are already experiencing poverty, do not face additional barriers and have what they need to stay healthy during this time.

Timeline

s.13; s.17

Costs

s.13; s.17

Temporary COVID Crisis Supplement

s.13; s.17

Federal Employment Services Support Exemptions

s.13; s.17

s.13; s.17

Additional Questions

s.13; s.17

s.12; s.13

s.13; s.17

June 16, 2020

Key Messages – COVID-19 Crisis Supplement

- The ministry provided a temporary \$300 COVID-19 crisis supplement to people on Income or Disability Assistance who did not receive federal employment insurance or the Canada Emergency Response Benefit.
- The supplement was automatically added to the April, May and June assistance cheques.
- The Province is looking at all options as we move forward, and we will work to ensure that we are doing everything we can to support people in need.

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
Date: June 11, 2020
Minister: Hon. Shane Simpson

COVID-19 Crisis Supplement & Opioid Crisis

SUMMARY

Advocates have expressed concerns for income and disability assistance recipients because of the increased amount of funds through provincial support and federal COVID payments, such as CERB. The existing opioid crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic are creating a greater risk of overdoses for clients due to a larger amount of cash in the streets and the toxicity in the illegal drug supply.

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE

- The increase in cash available through the provincial and federal COVID-19 assistance has, for people experiencing addictions, created an increased concern for overdoses.
- Unfortunately, the increase in the number of people dying from drug overdoses is because of an extremely toxic illegal drug supply.
- People who use substances need our support - not judgement and added stigma - now more than ever.
- The Province has been working to keep people as safe as possible during this unprecedented time.
- For example, as soon as Health Canada provided exemptions under the Controlled Substances Act, the Province and the BC Centre on Substance Use acted quickly to release new clinical guidance to help people at risk of withdrawal, overdose and/ or COVID-19 infection.

s.13

BACKGROUND

Program Area Contact: Pardip Bandechha, Issues Manager

Created: June 11, 2020

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

In the past, concerns have been expressed about potential linkages between cheque-issue day and increase in overdoses. While there is increase in the number of overdoses during cheque-issue week the bigger concern is in the increase in toxicity of the illegal drug supply.

Coroners Data Release – May 2020

- On June 11, the BC Coroner's Service released its latest data on deaths from illicit drugs.
- In May 2020, there were 170 suspected illicit drug toxicity deaths. This represent a 93% increase over the number of deaths seen in May 2019 (88) and a 44% increase over the number of deaths in April 2020 (118).
- The May 2020 total represents the highest number of illicit drug toxicity deaths ever recorded in a month in B.C.
- The number of illicit drug toxicity deaths in May 2020 equates to about 5.5 deaths per day for the year.

Toxic Drug Supply Information

- There are many likely factors contributing to the increase in overdose deaths, but further evidence is still needed to fully understand why. Factors may include:
 - Unpredictable and highly toxic drug supply.
 - Increase in drug toxicity, including high levels of fentanyl, due to decreased availability of the chemicals used to make drugs.
 - Less ability for people who use substances to test drugs because of reduced services.
 - Use of safe consumption sites have reduced. This may be due to:
 - Reduced capacity of sites because of COVID-19 physical distancing policies.
 - Staff shortages, reduced hours and, in some cases, sites closing.
 - Buddy system may be challenging because of changes to guest policies in some housing sites.
 - People may be choosing to use alone to protect their health from COVID-19.

Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
2. Crisis Supplement UPDATED
3. Decampment
4. Cheque Issue Day
5. Together BC
6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
9. January Legislative Changes
10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
11. Communities in Transition
12. TCS Police Investigation
13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
15. ICBC Enhanced Care
16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
17. Basic Income
18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
- s.15; s.22
- s.13; s.15; s.22
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
22. Youth Homeless Report
23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension NEW

3

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

COVID-19: Decampment

Highlights:

- The Opposition may ask about public safety concerns from residents living around hotels that homeless campers from Oppenheim, Topaz, and Pandora were moved to.
- Specifically, the Opposition is claiming that campers were moved with “no notification” and “without the necessary wrap-around supports and without a community plan to protect existing residents.”

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Solution:

- We inherited a crisis that demanded urgent action.
- Hundreds of vulnerable people living in unsafe tent cities in the middle of a pandemic was completely unacceptable to us.
- And know that especially in difficult times, having a roof over your head, access to food, health care and social support are all essential to finding a pathway to hope.
- That's why we worked with local governments and community groups to transition **over 600 people** to hotels, motels, and supportive housing—in less than a month.
- We also worked with health authorities and service providers to ensure that mental health and substance use supports are provided throughout the move and at the new interim housing sites.
- Providing safe, temporary accommodations and wraparound services for people facing homelessness has been an urgent priority for this government for a long time.
- Now, more than ever, it is time to implement long-term housing solutions that take care of and protect our most vulnerable people.

On concerns from neighbours:

- We understand that some living near these hotels and supportive housing locations have concerns.
- As with all new supportive housing buildings, it takes some time for residents to settle into the building.
- Many will be sleeping inside again for the first time in a very long time.
- It is our experience that after an initial period, residents stabilize, and disturbances decrease dramatically.
- BC Housing is working with local residents and business associations to create community advisory committees.
- In our experience, they have been very effective at helping communities work together to address concerns and build a positive connection with neighbours.
- We are committed to working with these communities to ensure these buildings and their residents integrate into these neighbourhoods.

Validators:

Lisa Helps, Mayor of Victoria:

Copyright

Kennedy Stewart, Mayor of Vancouver:

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Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer:

“We know that as well, the safe housing that has been provided with the appropriate supports for many of the people who have been in homeless, who have been in some of the very dangerous encampments, are also working to support people. “

Chief Terry Teegee, B.C. Assembly of First Nations:

Copyright

Background:

Vancouver Decampment:

- From April 25 to May 9, 261 people were moved from Oppenheimer park into temporary indoor accommodation and the park has closed for remediation.
- Everyone who was staying in Oppenheimer Park was offered a place to stay. Oppenheimer Park is now being remediated.
- In Vancouver, 94% of people who were moved into housing from Oppenheimer Park remain housed. The other 6% either left on their own accord or were offered other housing or shelter options.
- The Province worked with hotels in Vancouver to provide temporary accommodation as part of an interim solution to reduce homelessness until more permanent housing solutions can be made.
- The leases were negotiated on a site-by-site basis and the names of the hotels are not public to protect the personal privacy of residents.

Victoria Decampment:

- From April 25 to May 20, 344 people moved from Topaz Park and the Pandora Avenue Corridor in Victoria into indoor accommodation.
- Everyone who was living in Topaz Park or on Pandora Avenue has been offered indoor accommodation. Both sites are now being remediated.
- In Victoria, 95% of people who were housed during the decampment efforts at Topaz Park and Pandora Ave remain in their units/spaces. The remaining 5% left on their own accord or were offered other housing or shelter options.
- The Province purchased the Comfort Inn and Paul's Motor Inn and leased the Save-on Foods Memorial Arena and some other hotels to provide temporary accommodation.
- All the temporary accommodation in Victoria is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and offer supports to residents on-site such as access to mental health referrals. Daily meals are also provided.
- Overdose prevention and harm reduction services are available in each of the sites, as well as on-call physicians, psychiatry, MHSU outreach services.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS DECAMPMENT PROCESS

June 16, 2020

Key Messages:

- One of the Province's immediate concerns during COVID-19 was the safety of a growing number of vulnerable people moving into dense and unsafe encampments in Vancouver and Victoria.
- In the face of this emergency, we achieved the incredible feat of quickly moving people into safer, temporary housing and closing these encampments, while working within a people-first model built on respect and dignity for the people who lived there.
- From April 25 to May 20, the Province with BC Housing, health authorities, city staff, service providers and peers moved 344 people from encampments on Pandora Avenue and in Topaz Park in Victoria– and 261 people in Vancouver's Oppenheimer Park – to temporary accommodations with supports and services.
- We know more needs to be done and we are talking to the federal government about capital dollars for acquisitions, modular housing, and other long-term solutions. We haven't seen dollars yet, but are hopeful that they will come to the table. In fact, I know that Minister Robinson has been working with her federal counterpart and they will be meeting next week.
- The Province is working on long-term plans for more secure housing with appropriate supports for those that left encampments and moved into safe, temporary accommodations.
- These plans will build on the significant number of social housing and supportive housing buildings already underway through our 10-year housing plan and will include strategies that will mitigate a return to homelessness.
- Our Housing First model works, giving people dignity and hope by helping them find and maintain stable homes with supports, and improving their quality of life.
- The Province is now working with the City of Victoria and the City of Vancouver on remediation, community stewardship and future use plans for the former encampment sites.

Vancouver Decampment:

- From April 25 to May 9, 261 people were moved from Oppenheimer park into temporary indoor accommodation and the park has closed for remediation.
- Everyone who was staying in Oppenheimer Park was offered a place to stay. Oppenheimer Park is now being remediated.
- In Vancouver, 94% of people who were moved into housing from Oppenheimer Park remain housed. The other 6% either left on their own accord or were offered other housing or shelter options.
-
- The Province worked with hotels in Vancouver to provide temporary accommodation as part of an interim solution to reduce homelessness until more permanent housing solutions can be made.
- The leases were negotiated on a site-by-site basis and the names of the hotels are not public to protect the personal privacy of residents.
- The number of people housed as of June 5:
 - South Granville hotels – 280 people housed
 - Other Vancouver hotels – 54 people housed

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South Granville Neighbourhood Concerns

- BC Housing has leased space in a number of hotels in Vancouver, including some hotels along the Granville Street Corridor, that are currently being operated as temporary supportive housing, providing vulnerable people with a place to reside during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- These sites are critical to the health of those who are vulnerable in Vancouver, as well as in the broader community.

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Page 023 of 318

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Victoria Decampment:

- From April 25 to May 20, 344 people moved from Topaz Park and the Pandora Avenue Corridor in Victoria into indoor accommodation.
- Everyone who was living in Topaz Park or on Pandora Avenue has been offered indoor accommodation. Both sites are now being remediated.
- In Victoria, 95% of people who were housed during the decampment efforts at Topaz Park and Pandora Ave remain in their units/spaces. The remaining 5% left on their own accord or were offered other housing or shelter options.
- The Province purchased the Comfort Inn and Paul's Motor Inn and leased the Save-on Foods Memorial Arena and some other hotels to provide temporary accommodation.
- All the temporary accommodation in Victoria is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and offer supports to residents on-site such as access to mental health referrals. Daily meals are also provided.
- Overdose prevention and harm reduction services are available in each of the sites, as well as on-call physicians, psychiatry, MHSU inreach services.
- As of June 12, the number of people housed are:
 - Comfort Inn - 94 people housed
 - Paul's Motor Inn - 75 people (35 rooms already rented at time of purchase)
 - Save-on Foods – 48 people until the end of August
 - TravelLodge – 109 people
 - Other hotels – 83 people

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- Those who are homeless and would like indoor accommodation are encouraged to connect with an outreach worker, go to 941 Pandora Ave, or call BC Housing 1 877-257-7756.

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Neighbourhood Concerns

- BC Housing has created community advisory committees that will oversee the integration of supportive housing projects within the community.
- These committees are a key part of how we ensure that supportive housing buildings integrate well into their neighbourhoods. In our experience, they have

been very effective at helping communities work together to address concerns and build a positive connection with neighbours.

- Neighbourhood questions can also be sent to communityrelations@bchousing.org

Other Victoria Supportive Housing Projects

- The Province is working on other affordable housing projects in the Burnside Gorge area, which are not targeted to those who are experiencing homelessness. We have consulted with the community association on these sites already and they include:

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- We are also working on a wide range of housing projects in other parts of the CRD, including affordable and supportive housing. In total, we have more than 3,000 affordable or supportive homes underway across the region.

Encampments – General:

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Page 027 of 318

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Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
2. Crisis Supplement UPDATED
3. Decampment
4. Cheque Issue Day
5. Together BC
6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
9. January Legislative Changes
10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
11. Communities in Transition
12. TCS Police Investigation
13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
15. ICBC Enhanced Care
16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
17. Basic Income
18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
s.15; s.22
s.13, s.15, s.22
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
22. Youth Homeless Report
23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
s.13; s.17

4

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
Date: June 17, 2020
Minister: Hon. Shane Simpson

COVID-19 – Cheque Issue Day

SUMMARY

June 24 is income and disability assistance cheque-issue day. Concern about proper physical distancing, especially in the Downtown Eastside, has been expressed in the past by organizations in anticipation of larger crowds of people receiving and cashing their assistance cheques in the area.

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE

- **We are following the advice of the Provincial Health and public health officials closely to keep British Columbians as safe as possible and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19.**
- **There have been three cheque-issue days since COVID-19 that went smoothly. People who needed to come into the office received their cheques and our call centre recorded average wait times of 3 minutes and 11 seconds.**
- **We have streamlined the process for clients to receive direct deposit assistance payments to encourage less people visiting our offices.**
- **In anticipation of a larger number of people visiting SDPR offices for cheque-issue day, we have developed a cheque issue week plan and taken the following steps:**
 - **We are limiting holds on any cheques and actively encouraging the use of phone and online for our clients.**
 - **We have created a new, temporary monthly reporting option for clients who are unable to report through other channels. Clients may submit their monthly reports by phone, including a verbal signature, so that they do not need to come into an office.**
 - **We have added tape on the floor to help clients maintain distance between each other and the front counter.**
 - **We have constructed temporary shields to support physical distancing.**
 - **We have reduced the number of people in the waiting room to allow for greater distance between people as much as we can, without creating large lines outside the offices.**
 - **We have increased social distancing for people waiting inside the office.**
 - **We are managing physical distancing in our offices with the support of our security guards.**
 - **We have enhanced cleaning protocols in our offices.**

Program Area Contact: Pardip Banddecha, Service Delivery Division

Created: June 15, 2020

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

(If asked about the COVID-19 Crisis Supplement)

- The ministry provided a temporary \$300 COVID-19 crisis supplement to people on Income or Disability Assistance who did not receive federal employment insurance or the Canada Emergency Response Benefit.
- The supplement was automatically added to the April, May and June assistance cheques.
- The Province is looking at all options and we will work to ensure that we are doing everything we can to support people in need.

(If asked about the DTES)

- We have worked closely with our partners the City of Vancouver and Vancity Credit Union to ensure safe cheque-issue days on the DTES during COVID-19 over the last three months.
- We know that Vancity has had a lot of success signing people up for direct deposit so that they do not have to wait in line to speak to a teller.
- They have also been an incredible support to our team in encouraging people on income and disability assistance to sign up for direct deposit.
- In recognition of the importance of clients accessing bank to cash their monthly assistance cheques, I sent a letter to financial institutions asking for their continued support and enhancement of their services in an effort to ease pressures on the DTES.
- If people are ill or self-isolating, they can access services by phone and online using My Self Serve.

(If asked why not stagger cheque-issue day)

- Changing this process in the middle of a crisis is not the best option.
- Staggering cheque-issue will create unnecessary confusion for some clients who, now more than ever, need their cheques right away. Our focus is getting these funds to them safely and in a timely manner so that they have this resource to help them through this time.

BACKGROUND

- Cheque issue day for income and disability assistance occurs once a month. The next cheque issue day is Wednesday, June 24. The last day a client can sign-up for direct deposit for the June cheque-issue day is Friday, June 19th.
- SDPR has worked to minimize the number of clients at SDPR offices to receive IA/DA cheques and lower the number of required office visits throughout the month.
- **Other SDPR COVID-19 protocols:**
 - A deep-cleaning protocol is in place for any suspected or confirmed contamination.

Program Area Contact: Pardip Banddecha, Service Delivery Division
Created: June 15, 2020

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

- Increased cleaning measures for high-touch surfaces.
- WSI is cleaning the waiting room and service counter equipment (phones, keyboards, terminals) for client-facing offices.
- The ministry has increased flexibility of intake, including accepting verbal consents where My Self Serve signatures are unavailable and delaying the collection of documentation to avoid clients coming into the office where possible.
- The ministry has waived Employment Plans, employment obligations for clients and 3-week work search requirements at intake.
- The ministry has developed a process to have reconsideration timelines reviewed on case by case basis to support COVID-19 impacts.
- Staff are allowed to defer all other non-urgent business during issue week to ensure that the focus in offices is to provide cheques.

Downtown East Side Cheque-Issue Day

- The Vulnerable Populations Working Group has been working on mitigating concerns for cheque-issue day in May, based on concerns raised by the City of Vancouver and Vancity around large crowds in the DTES and Pigeon Park area.
- In preparation for June 24, the Vancity Pigeon Park branch will use Peers support.
- As of June 17, there is no confirmation that cheque-issue day will include additional police support from the City of Vancouver.

Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
 2. Crisis Supplement UPDATED
 3. Decampment
 4. Cheque Issue Day
 5. Together BC
 6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
 7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
 8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
 9. January Legislative Changes
 10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
 11. Communities in Transition
 12. TCS Police Investigation
 13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
 14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
 15. ICBC Enhanced Care
 16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
 17. Basic Income
 18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
- s.15; s.22
- s.13; s.15; s.22
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
 22. Youth Homeless Report
 23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
 24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
 25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension NEW

5

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
Date: January 2020
Minister: Hon. Shane Simpson

TogetherBC – Poverty Reduction Strategy

SUMMARY

TogetherBC, the province's first poverty reduction strategy, was released in March 2019. The strategy outlines policies and programs across government that support poverty reduction and first steps toward reaching legislated targets. The strategy takes a whole of government approach and recognizes the need for coordination and partnership of all levels of government, business, labour, community organizations and individuals.

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE

- **Poverty does not stem from a single issue and it will not be fixed with a single solution. It requires the coordination and partnership of all levels of government, organizations, businesses, communities and individuals.**
- **We released TogetherBC, B.C.'s first poverty reduction strategy, in March of last year. It outlines the first steps toward reaching our targets to reduce the overall poverty rate by 25% and the child poverty rate by at least 50% by 2024.**
- **We are working across government to better connect people with the services they need, and continue to build a culture of empathy, understanding and respect for everyone.**
- **We will be releasing our first annual report for TogetherBC in October 2020.**

Accomplishments to date

Housing:

- **More than 22,000 new homes are completed, under construction or in the approvals process in communities throughout B.C. as part of a \$7-billion investment over 10 years in housing affordability.**
- **We've introduced stronger protections for renters, including cutting the maximum annual rent increases, introducing stronger protection for tenants from renovations or demolitions, and enhancing eligibility and benefits under the Rental Assistance Program and the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters.**

Child Care:

Program Area Contact:
File Created:
File Updated:

Darren Tannas
March 2019
January 2020

(778) 974-4067

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

- As of January 2020, almost 60,000 licensed child care spaces are seeing a fee reduction through the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative.
- Since launching in April 2018, the program has helped parents to save more than \$182 million on the cost of child care.
- As of January 15, 2020, more than 48,000 families have been approved for support through the Affordable Child Care Benefit. Since launching in September 2018, the program helped parents to save more than \$220 million.
- As of October 2020, 290,000 families will receive extra support from the new BC Child Opportunity Benefit. Families with one child will receive up to \$1,600 per year, those with two children will receive up to \$2,600, and those with three children will receive up to \$3,400. The new benefit will support children up to the age of 18 years.
- Government is increasing minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2021. As of June 1, 2019, the minimum wage in B.C. is \$13.85. The next scheduled increase takes effect on June 1, 2020 with an increase of \$0.75 to \$14.60 per hour.

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction:

- We have increased Income and Disability Assistance rates twice, for a total increase of \$150, since we came into office — the first increase to Income Assistance rates in over a decade.
- In September 2019, we provided \$5 million to UBCM for the Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program to help support local government poverty reduction plans and initiatives.
 - Local governments can apply for up to \$25,000 to develop poverty reduction plans and up to \$50,000 for poverty reduction projects. For regional applications, maximum funding is \$150,000.
 - The first application intake closes on February 28, 2020.
- Updates to Income and Disability Assistance went into effect on July 1, 2019 and January 1, 2020. Changes included removing the requirement to apply for early Canada Pension Plan retirement benefits, removing the

Program Area Contact:

Darren Tannas

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File Created:

March 2019

File Updated:

January 2020

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

two-year independence requirement for young adults to receive IA, expanding access to the identification supplement, and removing the \$10,000 asset limit on primary vehicle.

- **In June 2019, we provided a \$6 million to SPARC BC for Homelessness Community Action grants to help organizations address homelessness locally, in their communities.**
 - **Interested organizations can apply for up to \$50,000. As of November 2019, 20 projects have received a total of \$600,000.**
- **We granted \$10 million to Vancity to develop a province-wide rent bank system that will help support existing rent banks and expand services to new communities.**
 - **As of January 2020, existing rent banks have received \$262,930 and have been able to assist 379 people.**
 - **Vancity is working with several municipalities to develop new rent banks throughout the province.**
- **With BC Housing and other partners, we are coordinating the second provincial homeless count, to be conducted in the spring of 2020.**
- **As of April 1, 2019, changes to the WorkBC program offer better services for people who need support to re-enter the workforce, access training opportunities and find good jobs.**
- **Improvements include increasing the number of centres from 84 to 102 and providing an additional \$9 million in direct supports like skills training and helping people access tools so they can pursue a career in the trades.**
- **TogetherBC, through the *Poverty Reduction Strategy Act*, must reflect a commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, the TRC Calls to Action, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.**
- **We will continue to work collaboratively with Indigenous leaders and organizations to ensure our approach to poverty reduction considers Indigenous people's perspectives, experiences and ways of knowing.**

Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
2. Crisis Supplement UPDATED
3. Decampment
4. Cheque Issue Day
5. Together BC
6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
9. January Legislative Changes
10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
11. Communities in Transition
12. TCS Police Investigation
13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
15. ICBC Enhanced Care
16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
17. Basic Income
18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
- s.15; s.22
- s. 10, s. 10, s. 22
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
22. Youth Homeless Report
23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension NEW

6

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
Date: January 22, 2020
Minister: Hon. Shane Simpson

Homelessness | Office of Homelessness Coordination

SUMMARY

In response to the homelessness crisis affecting people throughout the province, the Province is working to create a more proactive and prevention-focused approach to homelessness in B.C., including forming the Office of Homelessness Coordination.

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE

- **Homelessness and tent cities demonstrate the severity of the housing crisis that was allowed to develop across the province.**
- **We're working hard to help communities recover from years of inadequate action by the previous government, which left many people without proper housing or supports.**
- **The Province, through the Office of Homelessness Coordination, is working as a partner in the local solutions that are happening in communities throughout the province.**

ACTIONS:

- **Our Community Integration Specialists (CIS) are in communities partnering with local organizations that work first-hand with people struggling with multiple barriers like homelessness and connect them with government supports and services.**
- **In spring 2019, we provided a \$6 million grant to SPARC BC for a Homelessness Community Action Grant program, to help organizations address homelessness locally, in their communities. As of Nov 2019, 20 projects had received a total of \$600,000.**
- **We granted \$10 million to Vancity Community Foundation to develop a sustainable, province-wide rent bank system to better support existing rent banks and expand services to new communities. As of January 22, 379 people had been helped with loans.**
- **We provided \$5 million to UBCM to support the Local Poverty Reduction Planning & Action program that provides grants to communities for local initiatives and plans that will help B.C. reduce poverty. The first application window closes February 28.**

Program Area Contact:
File Created:
File Updated:

Pardip Bandechha
September 2019
January 22, 2020

778 698-7661

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

- The Office of Homelessness Coordination is working with partners to coordinate a second province-wide homeless count that will take place in communities this spring.

BACKGROUND

- The first provincewide homeless-count report for B.C. was released in December 2018, based on counts from over 24 communities during 2017 and 2018.
- According to the report, at least 7,655 people were experiencing homelessness.
- Indigenous peoples and former children in care are significantly over-represented in the statistics.
- The City of Vancouver completed a new count in 2019 that found 2,223 residents in Vancouver identified as homeless.
- In 2017, Government launched a Rapid Response to Homelessness program, quickly building new supportive modular units in communities throughout the province.
- In spring 2019, the Office of Homelessness Coordination was formed and is taking a more systemic approach, focusing on prevention and team work to coordinate actions within government and engage with external partners, including local governments and non-profit organizations.
- The new approach is based on four pillars:
 - Prevention, to make homelessness a rare occurrence;
 - An immediate response, to make the experience brief;
 - Stability so that homelessness is a one-time occurrence; and
 - Working better together — to coordinate our actions.
- In addition to implementing new actions announced with Budget 2019, the Office is developing its policy and research agenda, as well as plans for engagement and coordination across government and with community partners.

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HOMELESSNESS COMMUNITY ACTION GRANTS:

Program Area Contact:	Pardip Bandechha
File Created:	September 2019
File Updated:	January 22, 2020

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Program Area Contact:
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File Updated:

Pardip Bandechha
September 2019
January 22, 2020

778 698-7661

Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
2. Crisis Supplement UPDATED
3. Decampment
4. Cheque Issue Day
5. Together BC
6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
9. January Legislative Changes
10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
11. Communities in Transition
12. TCS Police Investigation
13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
15. ICBC Enhanced Care
16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
17. Basic Income
18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
- s.15; s.22
- s.13; s.15; s.22
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
22. Youth Homeless Report
23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension NEW

7

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Date: Updated Sept. 24, 2019

Minister: Hon. Shane Simpson

Accessibility Legislation Consultation

SUMMARY: s.13

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ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- **The B.C. Government is committed to developing new laws, standards, and policies to better support people with disabilities to live with dignity and to meaningfully participate in their communities.**
- **To create truly inclusive communities for British Columbians with disabilities, people are invited to help shape B.C.'s first-ever accessibility legislation.**
- **Province-wide consultation takes place Sept. 16 – Nov. 29 with many convenient ways for British Columbians to share their feedback.**
- **Background information and information on ways to participate is available online at engage.gov.bc.ca/accessibility**
- **Accessibility legislation for B.C. will be guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the principle of 'nothing about us, without us.'**
- **Integrating accessibility into every area of life is central to creating livable communities including workplaces, buildings, neighbourhoods and businesses and building a better B.C. for everyone.**

BACKGROUND:

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Page 042 of 318

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s.13

Page 043 of 318

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Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
2. Crisis Supplement UPDATED
3. Decampment
4. Cheque Issue Day
5. Together BC
6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
9. January Legislative Changes
10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
11. Communities in Transition
12. TCS Police Investigation
13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
15. ICBC Enhanced Care
16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
17. Basic Income
18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
s.15; s.22
s.13; s.15; s.22
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
22. Youth Homeless Report
23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension NEW

8

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation





[REDACTED]

Contents

- 1** Contents
- 2** Minister's Message
- 4** Section 1: Introduction
- 6** Section 2: Engaging with British Columbians
- 9** Section 3: Key Themes
- 31** Section 4: Next Steps/Conclusion
- 33** Appendix 1: Accessibility Legislation –
Online Questionnaire
- 38** Appendix 2: List of Submissions
- 41** Appendix 3: Organizations and local governments that
received funding to host independent community
conversations

Minister's Message

I want to thank the 7,000 British Columbians who provided their input and feedback during our recent consultation on proposed accessibility legislation. We undertook public consultation with the United Nations principle of 'nothing about us, without us.'

For too long, I've heard from people with disabilities who feel disenfranchised by policies that are ineffective because they were not developed with a lens on accessibility. During the consultation period, I had the privilege of attending 10 community meetings around the province and one virtual townhall. The number one concern I heard in these meetings was the need to go beyond simply educating and raising awareness about people with disabilities and create a culture of inclusion where barriers are eliminated, and everyone feels welcome.

There are more than 926,000 British Columbians with some form of disability – representing almost 25% of the population (2017). As our population ages, the number of people with disabilities and the severity of their disabilities are likely to increase, underlining the need for British Columbia to develop its own accessibility legislation. We will be proceeding to draft legislation for introduction over the next year. The input received through the consultation process will be invaluable in shaping the B.C. legislation. It will also complement the recently passed Accessible Canada Act.

Again, I want to thank everyone who provided their ideas and input during the consultation period and look forward to introducing legislation that we can all be proud of.



Shane Simpson

Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Section 1: Introduction

The Government of British Columbia is committed to developing new accessibility and inclusion legislation that will work to identify, remove and prevent barriers that impede the full participation of people with disabilities in their communities. Province-wide public consultations on the development of proposed legislation were held between Sept. 16 and Nov. 29, 2019.

The ***British Columbia Framework for Accessibility Legislation*** served as a guiding document for these public consultations. The Framework proposes a legislative model informed by the principles in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and which complements the Accessible Canada Act (ACA). Additionally, the framework recognizes the importance of legislation based on the principles of inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration and self-determination.

The proposed legislation would guide the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards and would draw on the expertise and experience of people with disabilities. Accessibility standards could cover a variety of areas such as service delivery, education, employment, housing and the built environment, information and communication and transportation and would rely on having the appropriate mix of incentives, compliance and enforcement tools.

Citizens were asked to comment on the proposed model and scope of the legislation, principles and governance structures needed to help ensure that the legislation's objectives are met.

This report summarizes feedback received through community meetings, independent community conversations, a virtual townhall, the online questionnaire, phone calls and e-mails.

A copy of the online questionnaire is attached as Appendix 1.

Section 2: Engaging with British Columbians

Participation

Thousands of British Columbians shared their ideas, personal experiences, stories of struggles and successes living with disabilities and navigating barriers to access and inclusion. Family members and supporters of people with disabilities also shared their thoughts and ideas for a better B.C.

Feedback came from across the province and from people of all ages. In total, there were more than 23,700 visits to the accessibility engagement website ***Accessibility through Legislation*** between Sept. 16 – Nov. 29, 2019.

- ✓ Nearly **500** people attended 10 regional community meetings held in Prince George, Fort St. John, Terrace, Kamloops, Penticton, Nelson, Comox, Surrey, Vancouver and Victoria.
- ✓ **6,352** people filled out the online questionnaire with **3,776** identifying as having a disability
- ✓ **57** people attended a virtual town hall
- ✓ **765** emails and ASL video comments were sent to ***engageaccessibility@gov.bc.ca***
- ✓ **37** people called the Ministry's toll-free telephone number
- ✓ **75** independent community conversations were supported throughout the province



➤ **Accessibility Legislation Consultation Advisory Committee**

To support the engagement, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction also sought advice from the Accessibility Legislation Consultation Advisory Committee. This 14-member committee was formed with representatives from Barrier Free B.C., B.C. Aboriginal Network on Disability Society, B.C. Chamber of Commerce, B.C. Federation of Labour, B.C. Native Women's Association, Canadian Mental Health Association – B.C. Chapter, Communication Assistance for Youth and Adults, Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of B.C., Disability Alliance of B.C., Greater Vancouver Association of the Deaf, Inclusion BC, Presidents Group, Rick Hansen Foundation, Spinal Cord Injury B.C., Union of B.C. Municipalities. The committee helped provide leadership and guidance during the consultation process. These organizations offered advice to ensure that as many British Columbians as possible had their voices heard during this process.

Section 3: Key Themes

Why Legislation Matters

Breaking Down Barriers

During the consultation, people shared stories about the challenges that they experienced and the barriers that they faced everyday including physical, social, environmental, attitudinal, financial and communication and information-related. People were on the need for universal design, and that the definition of “disability” needs to be broad and inclusive and consider the full range of disabilities people experience – whether short-term, episodic or chronic. People with invisible disabilities including those with brain injuries, learning disabilities, mental health challenges, on the autism spectrum, also expressed the challenges they face in having their accessibility needs met.

Over 60% of survey respondents stated that they faced barriers to accessibility and inclusion in their daily life. Barriers to accessibility often profoundly impacted the ability of people with disabilities to be full participants in their communities. We heard about the importance

of legislation designed to help to identify and remove barriers with the overriding goal being to ensure the participation of people with disabilities.

People described the positive benefits of creating more accessible communities for everyone including people with strollers, children and seniors. Removing barriers and creating accessibility for all was emphasized as an important goal in creating an inclusive B.C.

"I have invisible disabilities. Everything I do has a barrier but because no one can see my disabilities it's hard to get accommodations."

"I would like to see this government start a cultural change in youth who are now in school around hidden disabilities such as ADHD, anxiety and some forms of physical disabilities such as autoimmune disorders. As a culture, our conversation is focused on what someone's physical challenges are (i.e. needing an access ramp) but there is a growing need to accommodate neurodiversity (such as having quieter workplaces)."

Advancing Human Rights

People shared the importance of the legislation in building on the human rights of British Columbians to ensure respect for the inherent dignity of the individual. Participants were clear that it is critical for new legislation to reflect the commitments set out in the UNCRPD, the principle of “nothing about us, without us” and to advance the rights of people with disabilities. Participants also highlighted the importance of adopting a broad and comprehensive approach – one that recognizes and responds to individual needs and helps to ensure the necessary resources are available. The importance of the legislation in identifying and removing barriers in a systemic way rather than barriers being removed in response to individual complaints was also identified as a key priority by those who participated.

“There should also be a place where people with disabilities who are experiencing discrimination in the workplace can get help and guidance . . .”

Promoting Fairness and Equity

People with disabilities are diverse in terms of their experiences, backgrounds and needs. The importance of considering the diversity of people's experiences in developing standards and the expertise that people with disabilities bring to the table was highlighted by many during the consultation. People expressed that equity and equal access to opportunities is a key component of accessibility and a fundamental part of inclusion.

Through the community events, participants also talked about the importance of ensuring that geographic differences are considered including equitable access to resources. Participants in the virtual townhall stated that a strong understanding of the diversity of people with disabilities as well as the intersectionality of experiences needs to be considered in developing accessibility legislation. Participants noted that individuals with disabilities come from a broad range of backgrounds and experiences and that this can play a role in terms of their access to opportunities. Many of those who participated in the community meetings and/or provided feedback through the consultation process spoke to the sense of stigma or judgement they face and the challenges this creates in terms of inclusion and participation.

We heard from people about the importance of considering the diversity of people's experiences when developing committees and consulting to ensure that all British Columbians have an opportunity to participate in ways that are meaningful to them and their family members. This includes having representation from a broad cross-section of individuals and organizations from across the province to continue the conversation and to ensure that the voices of people with disabilities are heard. This means ensuring that people with disabilities from a wide-range of backgrounds and experiences are included in helping to shape the legislation and guide its implementation.

We heard that to achieve equitable inclusion the legislation needs to have a broad definition of disability. People identified many different types of limitations or challenges including physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication and sensory, as well as temporary, permanent or episodic. The full range of disabilities and experiences needs to be considered when developing the legislation and related governance structures.

"Disabled individuals MUST be in the forefront of creating and implementing change. Giving voice to marginalized individuals is truly the only way to become inclusive and accessible. Abled individuals can never have the full capacity to understand the various challenges faced on a daily basis. And the pool of disabled individuals needs to be intersectional and diverse as well, as there are so many complex factors and differences in need."

"As a racialized person and 1.5 generation immigrant it is key to me that anything developed be done so in an intersectional way, to include gender, race, class and sexual orientation in addition to ability. This may mean working with existing communities or organizations to model inclusion or discuss change."

What Accessibility Legislation Could Look Like

Standards Development

British Columbians were clear that standards needed to be developed collaboratively between persons with disabilities, other experts and key stakeholders and partners. More than 85% of people responding to the survey felt that it was important or very important for people with disabilities to have a voice in the process of legislation and standards development. We heard that the principles of universal and adaptive design should help guide and inform the development of accessibility standards with the principles of universal design helping to ensure that the structure of the built environment can be accessed and used to the greatest extent possible by as many people as possible regardless of their age or ability. We also heard from people across the province about the importance of making sure that people with disabilities are involved in the development of standards.

The Framework for Accessibility Legislation suggested that accessibility standards could be developed in a variety of areas including:

✔ **Service delivery such as health services, customer services, education and retail.**

Lots of people noted that this was a large category and that it might work more effectively to break it into discrete areas of focus. For example, some participants suggested that it might be beneficial to have a separate area of focus for health and education. Within the area of service delivery, participants also noted that training for staff engaged in service delivery should be considered to help ensure positive communication and break down barriers. People also emphasized the importance of ensuring public events were delivered in an accessible way.

✔ **Employment including hiring and retention.**

During the consultation process people noted that access to employment is integral to inclusion and that suitable employment opportunities are needed to ensure that people with disabilities have access to the types of jobs and opportunities that take advantage of their skills, talents and abilities and that are meaningful to them. Many people with disabilities described difficulties accessing opportunities for

meaningful employment as well as described difficulties in securing the accommodations that they needed in the workplace to ensure their success. People also described the importance of flexibility in terms of the different potential arrangements designed to meet the needs of the individual and the business including employers considering part-time options, job-carving (reassigning certain aspects of a job to modifying or creating a new job for a person with disabilities).

- ✓ **Built environment such as entranceways, parks, sidewalks, and parking.** There was a lot of discussion about the inaccessibility of the built environment and the need for universal design. People described “curb cuts” that don’t line up with the sidewalk, ramps leading to doors without automatic openers as well as accessible washrooms that are not accessible. People emphasized the importance of working to remove barriers and to creating equitable access to spaces to ensure that they can be used by everyone. Participants talked about all of the different aspects of accessibility including the importance of on-going maintenance, signage and wayfinding as well as interior design. People shared stories of furniture that created barriers in otherwise accessible spaces and accessible washrooms blocked by maintenance supplies.

People also shared their difficulty in finding suitable affordable, accessible housing. Accessible parking was also an issue that was frequently identified both in terms of the quality and nature of the spaces available as well as the need for better enforcement.

- ✔ **Information and communication, for example websites, print materials, emergency information.** At many consultation events people shared their frustration with access to information and the fact that many websites are not accessible. This has created barriers for many people with disabilities in terms of their access to information and services. People also noted the importance of having information available in a range of formats to ensure accessibility for all users. For example, ASL users provided an insight into the difficulties they faced with accessing interpreters and having information in ASL. As well persons who were blind spoke to the importance of having access to information in braille or in an accessible word format. The complexity of the information was also highlighted as a barrier for some with participants at some of the community meetings suggesting that there is the need for additional resources to support people to gain access to the information and services that they need.

- ✓ **Transportation, for example buses, ferries and taxis.** People spoke to the importance of access to transportation services and shared their frustration with not being able to access the services that they need. This included the need for staff training as well as the need to book well in advance to have access to the services that they need. People also talked about the importance of access to transportation both in terms of getting to important appointments and services as well as in terms of the role that access to transportation plays in promoting and enabling true inclusion. Many participants also emphasized the importance of training, transportation providers so that they were able to safely secure wheelchairs or support individuals with communication barriers.

Most people (87%) responding to the survey said that all five of these areas were important.



"Individuals with intellectual disabilities and seniors are often asked to provide information or seek information on-line which is not always accessible because of barriers in the use of technology. This is especially an issue when trying to access health care communication."

"Elevator buttons should be lower so reachable by wheelchair users and also with braille for those sight impaired."

"Simplifying accommodations such as needing an interpreter or assistance device in order to be included in the work place or to access services. Less hoops to jump through, more streamlined processes to get what is needed."

"I feel that education shouldn't be lumped in to another category. Accessible education that is designed to help struggling students is so important. It sets the stage for children to grow into adults who can function independently."

Governance

People with disabilities, service organizations and businesses all highlighted the importance of having a single point of contact for questions, queries and complaints regarding the legislation. The need for oversight of the legislation was emphasized at the virtual townhall as well as in-person consultation events. Participants emphasized that any governance structure should draw on the expertise and include people with lived experience of disabilities. This includes ensuring that people with a diverse range of experience and different types of disabilities participate in the development of standards to support inclusion.

"We need a centralized group to provide oversight, governance and guidance, and the group MUST BE properly staffed and funded. You cannot expect us to adhere to accessibility standards and guidelines if the supports are not in place to help us address the uphill battles when they occur – and they always do."

"There needs to be diverse representation at the decision-making level."

Compliance, enforcement and incentives

During the engagement process, we heard about the importance of ensuring that the legislation could be implemented. We heard lots of great ideas about how to encourage and support individuals and organizations including ideas about the type of enforcement mechanisms. Ideas for potential incentives and measures included tax incentives or resource hubs where individuals and organizations could access appropriate information and support. There were also important discussions around possible training programs or certification programs as well as thoughts about ways to build on best practices and leading practices within government.



Over three-quarters of survey respondents stated that funding programs to support accessibility should be introduced to support compliance with new accessibility legislation. Survey respondents ranked the importance of suggestions for compliance in the following order:

- 1.** Funding programs to improve accessibility (**77%** of respondents)
- 2.** Creation of support, training, and/or resources for organizations (**67%** of respondents)
- 3.** Accessibility inspections (**63%** of respondents)
- 4.** Accessibility plans and progress reports (**58%** of respondents)
- 5.** Monetary penalties (**43%** of respondents)
- 6.** Creation of accessibility awards for people and organizations (**39%** of respondents)

Over three-quarters of survey respondents stated that funding programs to support accessibility should be introduced to support compliance with new accessibility legislation. Survey respondents ranked the importance of suggestions for compliance in the following order:

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- 3.** Accessibility inspections (**63%** of respondents)
- 4.** Accessibility plans and progress reports (**58%** of respondents)
- 5.** Monetary penalties (**43%** of respondents)
- 6.** Creation of accessibility awards for people and organizations (**39%** of respondents)

During the in-person consultation meetings, we heard about the need for new accessibility legislation to provide support, training, education and public awareness to help to create a culture of inclusion. We also heard about the difficulty of enforcing current laws and some of the challenges that this has created for people with disabilities. People shared their personal stories about the type of stigma and judgement that they face as well as the challenges that they experience in having their rights respected. This included everything from access to employment and other opportunities through to gaps in the current legislative framework around accessible parking.



"The new legislation needs to have teeth."

"An approved accessibility certification/ membership for organizations/companies to join that promotes exceeding minimum standards, such as WorksafeBC's COR certification. Membership could be an advantage or requirement when applying for funding, bidding on contracts, or seeking permits."

"Ensure that legislation is supported by reasonable enforcement action for non compliance. There must be a framework to hold organizations accountable for failing to meet legislated accessibility requirements from day 1. It would start with education and opportunities to fix the issue, but must quickly proceed to enforcement/ penalties for non compliance. Financial penalties are appropriate given what is at stake by being non compliant (exclusion)."

Cultural Change

During the engagement process we heard that legislation needs to be an important part of a broader accessibility strategy and that the goal is to help to bring about and support cultural change. People shared their ideas about the types of measures needed to support a culture of inclusion.

Education and awareness building

Education and awareness were emphasized as an integral part of a broader approach to accessibility and inclusion. Suggestions to help to build increased awareness and understanding included:

- ✓ Increased visibility of people with disabilities in the media
- ✓ Public education campaigns
- ✓ Ensuring that people with disabilities are reflected in the government's priorities and have opportunities to participate in the development of the legislation
- ✓ The development of targeted education and training programs for different professions that provide service to the public

- ✓ Ensure opportunities for integration in schools and university education programs
- ✓ Celebrate accessibility champions
- ✓ Empathy and sensitivity training

"Many disabilities are invisible. Public education programs to change attitudes. There is a stigma against being disabled that perceives us as being a burden on tax payers especially if these are not visible."

"There needs to be a cultural change that starts with government."

Inclusion – beyond accessibility

Across B.C., people emphasized the need to go beyond just removing barriers to create meaningful inclusion. People emphasized the importance of universal design of public spaces as well as the development of cultural programs and sports and recreation activities that help to promote and support a true culture of inclusion and that help to ensure that our communities are accessible to all.

"I do not want people to continue being inspired and surprised that I take part in normal activities. Promote para sports or art ventures."

"It's about changing our culture to include people who have accessibility challenges as part of the core group, not as an add-on."

Government leading the way

People shared that government must lead the way in creating a culture of inclusion and should develop accessibility and inclusion strategies for employment. During the consultation, people shared the importance of government services and information being accessible. People described the importance of removing physical barriers to government offices and ensuring that BC Public Service staff understand accessibility and are aware of appropriate supports. People also emphasized the importance of continuing to work collaboratively with key community partners and stakeholders in a way that recognizes and reflects a commitment to the idea of "nothing about us, without us".

"I think change needs to come from the top. For example, I recently was in my local emergency room and there was no space for a wheelchair user to be positioned without impeding traffic. No chairs could be moved because they were bolted to the wall. It just highlighted to me how if government provided facilities are not accessible then it isn't surprising that there are still challenges in private sector facilities."

"I also wish that the government made an effort to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities. I have been struggling to find an employment opportunity for the past five years despite having a degree and a post-baccalaureate diploma."

Consistency across jurisdictions

People emphasized the importance of collaboration in creating accessibility. We heard that all provincial government ministries need to work together, as well as working with federal and municipal partners, to make B.C. accessible. People shared with us their excitement at having provincial legislation to complement federal efforts (***Accessible Canada Act***) to promote inclusion and accessibility.

"Harmonization of legislation. Provincial and municipal legislation should not confound accessibility standards (i.e., the Strata Act, municipal parking by-laws)."



Section 4:

Next Steps/Conclusion

Through the many meetings, in-person and virtual, as well as the feedback received from the independent community conversations, we heard that British Columbians strongly support the development of accessibility legislation as outlined in the Framework for Accessibility Legislation. We also heard that more needs to be done to move towards a province that is inclusive of all people. We want to thank everyone for taking the time to participate and for sharing their ideas, passion and commitment. Whether it's the need for more education and awareness about the challenges that people with disabilities face, or the need for more inclusive and universal design in the way we plan our communities or in the way that services are delivered the ideas and feedback are invaluable. To make this a reality however as a Province we must continue to work toward developing and adopting leading practices in the areas of employment, transportation, housing, health care, education, the built environment as well as in the area of service delivery (public and private).

The input and feedback we heard through the public consultation will be considered by the B.C. Government and help inform the development of new accessibility legislation. As well, the B.C. Government will continue to engage with persons with disabilities, local governments, Indigenous peoples and key stakeholder groups and organizations in developing standards and subsequent regulations.



Appendix 1: Accessibility Legislation Questionnaire

People had the opportunity to complete the online questionnaire during the consultation period – Sept. 16 to Nov. 29, 2019.

1. Do you face barriers to accessibility and inclusion in your daily life? [single select]

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Someone who is close to me faces barriers on a regular basis.
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

1a. Optional: In a few sentences, please describe your experiences with accessibility and inclusion. Please do not include any information that would identify yourself or others. [1000 character open text box]

2. The province of British Columbia is developing new accessibility legislation that would allow for the creation of accessibility standards. These standards could cover a variety of areas including:

- Service delivery (e.g. health services, customer services, education)
- Employment (e.g. hiring and retention)
- Physical environment (e.g. entrance ways, parks, sidewalks, parking)
- Information and communication (e.g. websites, print materials, emergency information)
- Transportation (e.g. bus, ferries, taxis)

Please rank these areas in terms of their importance to you or those close to you. [rating, scaled response – Not at all Important to Very Important]

2a. Optional: Are there other areas of accessibility and inclusion that are important to you?
Please tell us more. [500 character open text box]

3. Of the options below, which measures do you think should be introduced to ensure individuals, public and private organizations comply with new accessibility legislation? Select all that apply.

[multiple choice response – check all that apply]

- ☐ Accessibility plans, and progress reports
- ☐ Monetary penalties
- ☐ Accessibility inspections
- ☐ Creation of support, training, and/or resources for organizations
- ☐ Creation of accessibility awards for people and organizations
- ☐ Funding programs to improve accessibility
- ☐ Other, please specify: [1000 character open text box].

4. Please indicate how important you consider each of the following to be for this legislation to be effective: [rating, scaled response – Not at all Important to Very Important]

- Timelines (e.g. I would like new legislation and standards to happen quickly)
- Involvement of people with disabilities (e.g. I would like people with disabilities to have a voice in this process of legislation and standards development)
- Involvement of organizations who support accessibility and inclusion (e.g. I would like accessibility experts and community organizations to be consulted as part of this process of legislation and standards development)
- Alignment with accessibility legislation and standards outside of British Columbia
- Tools to support general culture change around accessibility

5. In addition to creating accessibility legislation in B.C., what else can we do to support accessibility in our province? Do you have any additional comments? [1000 character open text box response]

6. Thank you for completing this survey. During this public consultation, the province of B.C. will be offering multiple ways for citizens to provide feedback. What other ways do you plan to participate in this process? [multiple choice response – check all that apply]

- ☐ Attending the online virtual townhall on accessibility legislation
- ☐ Attending in-person community meeting on accessibility legislation
- ☐ Preparing a written submission on my preferences and how this legislation will affect me
- ☐ I am unsure whether I will participate further
- ☐ I do not plan to participate further

Appendix 2:

List of Submissions

Submissions are available online at ***<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/accessibility/written-submissions/>***

The following organizations made formal written submissions during the public consultation period:

- ✓ Amalgamated Transit Union
- ✓ AODA Alliance
- ✓ B.C. Government Employees Union
- ✓ B.C. Housing Management Commission
- ✓ B.C. Hydro
- ✓ B.C. Public Service Employee Accessibility Advisory Council
- ✓ B.C. Schizophrenia Society
- ✓ B.C. School Trustees Association
- ✓ B.C. Spinal Cord Injury Network
- ✓ Beacon Community Services
- ✓ Broadbent Institute
- ✓ Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists B.C.
- ✓ Canadian Federation of the Blind
- ✓ Canadian Homebuilders Association

- ✓ Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association
- ✓ Canadian Mental Health Association B.C.
- ✓ Canadian National Institute for the Blind
- ✓ Centre for Accessible Post-Secondary Education Resources B.C.
- ✓ Community Legal Assistance Society
- ✓ Douglas College
- ✓ First Nations Health Authority
- ✓ Heritage BC
- ✓ Hidden Mobility Disabilities
- ✓ Huntington Society
- ✓ Inclusion B.C
- ✓ Information Technology Association of Canada
and Information Technology Industry Council
- ✓ International Collaboration on Repair Discovery
- ✓ Lyft
- ✓ March of Dimes Canada/Stroke Recovery Association of B.C.
- ✓ Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada
- ✓ Myalgic Encephalomyelitis and Fibromyalgia Society
- ✓ National Institute of Disability Management and Research
- ✓ Nidus
- ✓ North Shore Advisory Committee on Disability Issues
- ✓ Presidents Group
- ✓ Prisoners' Legal Services

- ✓ Provincial Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired and the Accessible Resource Centre B.C.
- ✓ Realwheels
- ✓ Rick Hansen Foundation
- ✓ School District 74
- ✓ Simon Fraser University Student Society
- ✓ Surrey Board of Trade
- ✓ The War Amps
- ✓ TransLink
- ✓ Travel For All
- ✓ Vancity
- ✓ VocalEye
- ✓ Voice of the Cerebral Palsied of Greater Vancouver
- ✓ Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility
- ✓ The following local governments made submissions:
- ✓ City of Vancouver
- ✓ City of Victoria
- ✓ Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM)
- ✓ Village of Cumberland

Appendix 3: Organizations and local governments that received funding to host independent community conversations

The following organizations received funding to support the Independent Community Conversations and prepared submissions:

- ✓ Autistics United Canada - Neurodiversity Listening Society
- ✓ BC Coalition of Guide Dogs/Canadian Council of the Blind
- ✓ BC People First
- ✓ BC Poverty Reduction Coalition
- ✓ Beacon Community Services
- ✓ Beta Collective/Greater Vancouver Association
- ✓ Canadian Hard of Hearing Association – BC Chapter
- ✓ Campbell River and District Association for Community Living
- ✓ Capilano Students' Union
- ✓ Chilliwack Society for Community Living
- ✓ Citizens for Accessible Neighbourhoods (CAN)
- ✓ Community Connections
- ✓ Community Council CLBC (Community Living BC)
- ✓ Coquitlam Public Library

- ✓ Disability Alliance BC
- ✓ Embers Eastside Works
- ✓ Footprints Centre Neil Squire Society and Penticton Indian Band
- ✓ Fostering Change (First Call BC)
- ✓ Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness
- ✓ Greater Vancouver Association of the Deaf
- ✓ Greenwood Board of Trade
- ✓ Hilary Marks (self advocate)
- ✓ Independent Living Centre (Vernon)
- ✓ Individualized Funding Resource Centre Society
- ✓ Inclusive Leadership Cooperative
- ✓ Kickstart Disability Arts and Culture
- ✓ Langley Community Services Society
- ✓ Lower Similkameen Community Services Society
- ✓ Lu'ma Native Housing and Health Society
- ✓ New Westminster and District Labour Council
- ✓ Mayne Island Assisted Living Society
- ✓ North Island Metis Association
- ✓ Okanagan Regional Library
- ✓ Osoyoos Accessibility Committee\ Pacific
Autism Family Network

- ✓ People in Motion (Kelowna)
- ✓ Pivot Legal Society
- ✓ Princeton & District Community Services Society
- ✓ Richmond Centre for Disability (RCD)
- ✓ Salt Spring Community Alliance Society
- ✓ Sooke Region Communities Health Network
- ✓ Sechelt Public Library
- ✓ Semiahmoo House Society (Uniti)
- ✓ Spectrum Society for Community Living
- ✓ Spring Hawes (self advocate)
- ✓ Square Peg Society
- ✓ Steps Forward
- ✓ The Disability Foundation
- ✓ UBC Faculty of Medicine Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy
- ✓ University of the Fraser Valley Teaching and Learning Centre
- ✓ University of Victoria Students' Union
- ✓ Unique Get Together Society
- ✓ Unity Centre Association for Black Cultures (UCABC)
- ✓ West End Seniors Network

The following local governments hosted independent community conversations:

- ✓ Town of Gibsons
- ✓ District of Mackenzie
- ✓ City of Maple Ridge
- ✓ City of Powell River
- ✓ City of Surrey, Support Services and Accessibility

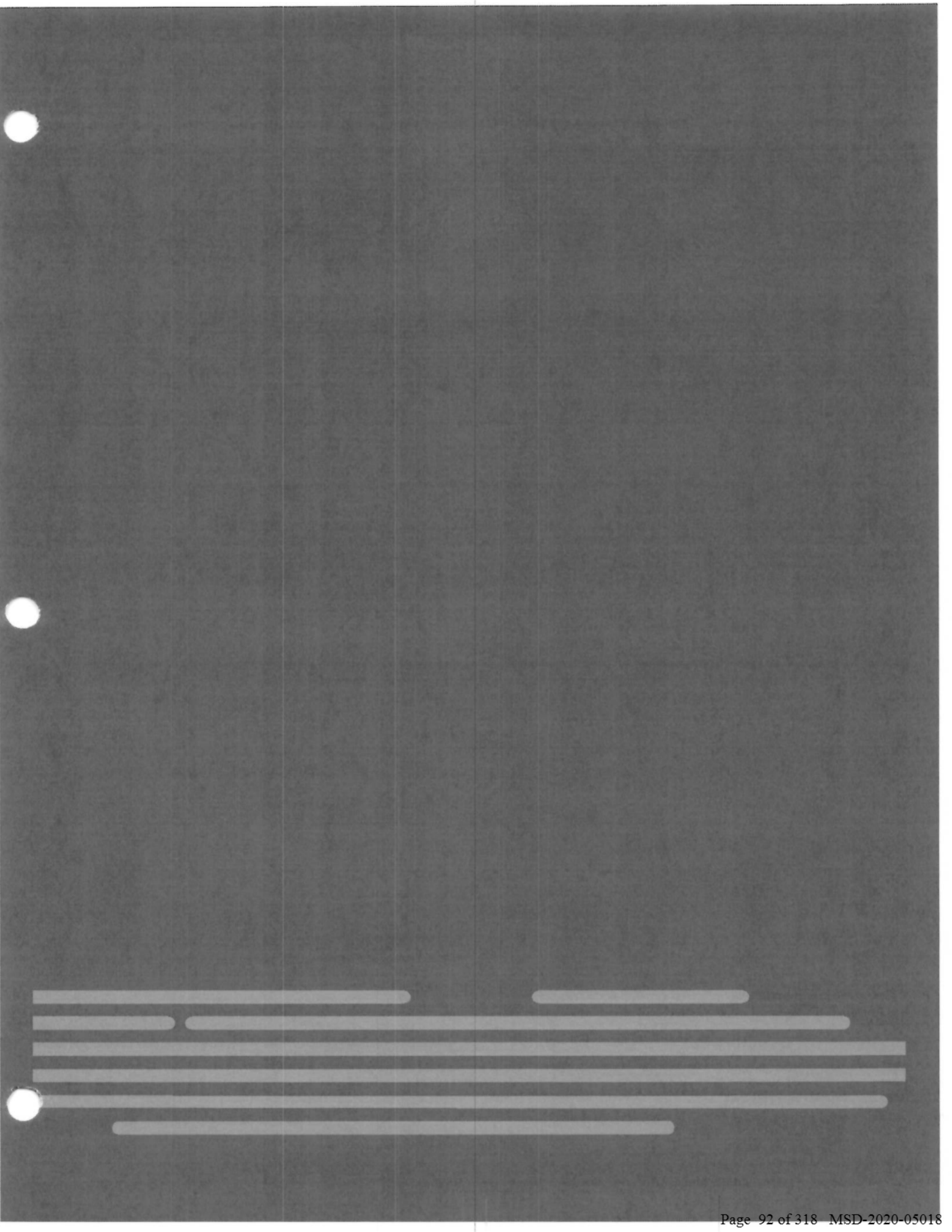




Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
2. Crisis Supplement UPDATED
3. Decampment
4. Cheque Issue Day
5. Together BC
6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
9. January Legislative Changes
10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
11. Communities in Transition
12. TCS Police Investigation
13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
15. ICBC Enhanced Care
16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
17. Basic Income
18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
- s.15; s.22
- s.13; s.15; s.22
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
22. Youth Homeless Report
23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension NEW

9

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

HOW THE LEGISLATIVE CHANGES WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR PEOPLE

Ending the need for people on assistance to pursue early CPP retirement benefits

- This change will improve financial security for low-income seniors. Currently, they are forced to take CPP retirement benefits before age 65, which can significantly reduce their lifetime pension amount. If they refuse, they face having their assistance reduced or cut off.
- This change will stop forcing low-income seniors to make this trade off, allowing them to wait until age 65 and get their full pension without impacting their eligibility for assistance.

s.13

Eliminating the two-year independence rule as a barrier to assistance

- This change will protect vulnerable youth, who are hardest hit by this requirement.
- Example: A young woman who met the financial need and other eligibility tests was denied assistance only because she failed to meet the threshold of 840 hours and \$7000 gross income. She had been in school during that time and only worked part-time as a result. This requirement put a vulnerable young person - who was otherwise eligible - deeper into poverty and at risk of homelessness.

s.13

Modernizing the ministry's definition of spouse

- These changes will better support people entering and leaving relationships in two ways:
- First, increasing the amount of time people can live together in a common-law relationship, from three months to a year, will give people a fairer and more realistic time frame to establish their relationship status, before having their assistance reduced to the couples rate.
- Second, obtaining a divorce takes time and can be costly, and finding housing can be difficult. As a result, separated couples sometimes need to live in the same home. Providing the singles' assistance rate to married people who have separated but not yet divorced and are living in the same residence independently will ensure fair treatment as between married and common-law couples (currently this is only possible for common-law).

s.13

Definition of dependant (removing "parental role")

- This change will ensure people retain their status as a stand-alone recipient (and thereby do not have their rate reduced or are not cut off assistance) unless they are truly in a dependency relationship.
- Under the current definition, people – mostly women – have been found ineligible because a roommate sometimes helps out with children and the help is characterized by the ministry as co-parenting.
- Example: In one case, the occasional purchase of diapers and baby formula was enough to deem a dependency relationship, despite the fact that the two adults intentionally maintained separate finances and did not support each other financially. The inference from the decision was that the woman should be forced to rely on her co-resident, and that the co-resident somehow had an obligation to provide for her and her child because of this minimal, sporadic support. The change will ensure this situation does not result in a finding of dependency.

s.13

Definition of dependent child

- The current definition does not fully recognize shared parenting situations where separated spouses continue to live together – which has become much more common since the Acts were first done in 2002.
- Providing certainty on this in regulation will make sure no child loses out on the full range of supports they are entitled to receive.
- We will ensure the definition addresses various shared parenting situations, including those where parents are former spouses who live as separate family units in the same home.

s.13

Ensuring documentation requirements do not create homelessness

- This change will eliminate the current practice of automatically cutting clients who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness off of assistance, if they are unable to provide documentation for eligibility and replace the practice with the ability to take no action or impose a modest monetary penalty.
- It makes assistance more compassionate by recognizing the difficulty vulnerable groups may face in obtaining documentation. For example, a homeless person might struggle to connect with the necessary offices to obtain documents related to income they have earned.
- 500 clients per year are expected to benefit from this change.

Enabling maximum repayment amounts

- This change supports clients by providing assurance that they cannot be forced to repay any amounts owing to the ministry at a rate that is higher than what Cabinet determines is reasonable in regulation. They will always have the option to repay faster if they want, but the amount will otherwise be set in regulation, ensuring clear, consistent treatment.
- For example, if a client receives a supplement or assistance that is repayable, or if they receive too much assistance due to an error in the information they provided to the ministry, that amount needs to be repaid. Currently, the regulations set out *minimum* repayment amounts, but not maximums, meaning there is room for uncertainty.

s.13

Clarifying rules for admissibility of evidence on appeal

- This change will help people who are appealing a ministry decision to receive assistance sooner. By being able to bring forward new evidence at an appeal, they will avoid having to reapply for assistance and submit new evidence at that time.
- Under the current rules, appellants sometimes have to go back and reapply for assistance because the Tribunal cannot consider new evidence that was not before the minister at the time of the decision. This results in significant delay before people receive the assistance they are entitled to.
- It also aligns the tribunal's practices with many other administrative tribunals across BC (the Employment Standards Tribunal and the Health Professions Review Board, for example).

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Page 097 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Page 098 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Page 099 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
2. Crisis Supplement UPDATED
3. Decampment
4. Cheque Issue Day
5. Together BC
6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
9. January Legislative Changes
10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
11. Communities in Transition
12. TCS Police Investigation
13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
15. ICBC Enhanced Care
16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
17. Basic Income
18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
- s.15; s.22
- s.13; s.15; s.22
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
22. Youth Homeless Report
23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension NEW

#10

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

Reconciliation Highlights

- This fall, BC made history as the first province in Canada to pass legislation to implement the **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**.
- While there is much more we need to do together, we're proud of the progress we've made so far:
 - **Protecting our shared environment.** Modernizing the Environmental Assessment process to include indigenous participation in assessments and working collaboratively on land-use planning.
 - **Revenue sharing with Indigenous governments.** Commitment to sharing \$100 million annually in stable, long-term new revenues so First Nations can invest in their communities.
 - **Delivering more affordable housing.** \$550M over 10 years to support the construction of 1,750 units both on and off reserve.
 - **Supporting language revitalization.** \$50M through the First Peoples' Cultural Council toward the work of First Nations communities.
 - **Groundbreaking agreement with Carrier-Sekani First Nations.** A path to self-government and meaningful opportunities for shared-decision making and economic development in their territories.
 - **Ensuring children are cared for in Indigenous communities—where that care belongs.** Implementing recommendations to modernize BC laws to help keep Indigenous children in their communities, with their families, and out of government care.
 - **Supporting Indigenous Health and Healing.** In partnership with the First Nations Health Authority, provided \$40 million to build two new urban Indigenous treatment centres and rebuild or renovate six more in rural communities.

Reconciliation legislation to implement the UN Declaration

SUMMARY: s.13
s.13; s.16

TOP KEY MESSAGES – Reconciliation Legislation

- **We're working with Indigenous peoples and local communities to put the principles of UNDRIP into action.**
- **We're creating a predictable path forward for everyone — that means good jobs and opportunities, while protecting our environment.**
- **Meaningful reconciliation takes time, but we're committed to getting there with a balanced approach and a real plan.**

KEY TERMS – Reconciliation

Predictability. Path forward. Meaningful. For everyone. Good jobs and opportunities. A balanced approach. Reconciliation. Collaboration. Certainty.

KEY MESSAGES – Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

- **In keeping with government's commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Province engaged in meaningful dialogue with Indigenous leaders, organizations and people in developing B.C.'s first poverty reduction strategy.**
- **TogetherBC, B.C.'s first poverty reduction strategy, is built on a foundation of four principles: increase affordability, create more opportunities, embrace greater social inclusion, and reconciliation through working in partnership with Indigenous peoples.**
- **The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act says government's poverty reduction strategy must reflect a commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, the TRC Calls to Action, and the UN Declaration.**
- **The B.C. government will continue to work collaboratively with Indigenous leaders and organizations to meet these requirements, including ongoing engagement with the Indigenous members of the Poverty Reduction Advisory Forum.**
- **Government is mindful of incorporating Indigenous perspectives into all services and supports offered by the Province, ensuring they are welcoming, culturally safe, and non-discriminatory for everyone.**
- **Government recognizes that Indigenous peoples have unique constitutionally protected rights, interests and circumstances that must be considered in the implementation of all government policies, including those contained in this poverty reduction strategy.**

KEY MESSAGES – Reconciliation Accomplishments

- **This commitment to advance reconciliation builds on the other work we are doing across government, including:**
 - **Modernizing the environmental assessment process;**
 - **Implementing Grand Chief Ed John's recommendations to help keep Indigenous children out of care, and with their families and communities;**
 - **Committing \$550 million over 10 years to support the construction of 1,750 affordable housing units for on- and off-reserve;**
 - **Dedicating \$50 million toward the work of the First Peoples' Cultural Council and First Nations communities to revitalize Indigenous languages;**
 - **Implementing a new K-12 curriculum that makes sure all children in B.C. are taught about Indigenous culture and history.**
 - **Sharing a stable, long-term source of revenue of approx. \$100 million per year so First Nations can invest in self-government, cultural revitalization and services that make life better for families.**

Page 104 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 105 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 106 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 107 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 108 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 109 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 110 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 111 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 112 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 113 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 114 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 115 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 116 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 117 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 118 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 119 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 120 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 121 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 122 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 123 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 124 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 125 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 126 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Page 127 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Reconciliation legislation to implement the UN Declaration

s.13; s.16

KEY MESSAGES

We're working with Indigenous peoples and local communities to put the principles of UNDRIP into action.

- Reconciliation has been one of government's key commitments, and new legislation will help provide all of us with a way forward.
- We're reaching out to Indigenous, business, labour and municipal leaders across BC to work together and make sure BC gets this right.

We're creating a predictable path forward for everyone — that means good jobs and opportunities, while protecting our environment.

- The courts have been clear, Indigenous peoples have rights on their traditional territories and legislation will provide a path forward for all of us.
- Instead of uncertainty and lawsuits, we can work together to make the most of B.C.'s natural resources, to create opportunities for B.C. families, businesses and Indigenous peoples.

Meaningful reconciliation takes time, but we're committed to getting there with a balanced approach and a real plan.

- We are making progress working together with Indigenous peoples to build a more prosperous future, through agreements with First Nations like shíshálh and Nisga'a – agreements that support economic development that's making a difference on the ground to benefit everyone who lives in the region.
- Whole communities get lasting benefits from our work together to support healthy families and healthy children, like more affordable housing for Indigenous families and reducing the number of Indigenous children in care.
- Bringing provincial laws and the principles of UNDRIP into alignment won't happen overnight, but we're committed to a real plan that will report our progress.

KEY TERMS

Predictability. Path forward. Meaningful. For everyone. Good jobs and opportunities. A balanced approach. Reconciliation. Collaboration. Certainty.

Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
2. Crisis Supplement UPDATED
3. Decampment
4. Cheque Issue Day
5. Together BC
6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
9. January Legislative Changes
10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
11. Communities in Transition
12. TCS Police Investigation
13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
15. ICBC Enhanced Care
16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
17. Basic Income
18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
- s.15; s.22
- s.13
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
22. Youth Homeless Report
23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension NEW

11

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION

INFORMATION NOTE

DATE: February 12, 2020

PREPARED FOR: The Honourable Shane Simpson, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

ISSUE: Communities in Transition

BACKGROUND:

The Community Transition Program facilitated by the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources and Rural Operations Development (FLNRORD), provides a coordinated response to rural communities facing significant job loss and a one-window access to government programs.

Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR) has a protocol in place with FLNRORD which outlines our coordinated response to economic dislocations in rural communities. These coordinated responses are limited to rural communities as larger urban communities have more services available and local governments have capacity to respond to such situations.

The primary driver of the significant job loss being accessed is mill closures and curtailments (both permanent and temporary). FLNRORD and SDPR recognize the necessity for rapid responsiveness with transition communities and are working together to achieve efficiencies and identify opportunities to expedite responses for communities.

Currently, there are eight actively managed Communities in Transition (CIT): 100 Mile House, Williams Lake, Fort St. John, Fort St. James, Quesnel, Clearwater, Mackenzie, and Merritt.

WorkBC service providers are supporting clients who have been impacted by closures or curtailments. (see Appendix 1).

In September 2019, FLNRORD announced the Forest Worker Support Program which will provide \$69 million to support mill workers and contractors impacted by permanent and indefinite mill closures in the BC Interior. The funds are aimed at addressing short-term challenges faced by impacted workers and include:

- \$2M for a new job placement coordination office that will track the transition of and assist the re-employment of impacted forest workers on an individual basis;
- \$40M for a cost-shared early-retirement bridging program for older forestry workers;
- \$15M for a short-term forest employment program focussed on fire prevention and community resilience projects;
- \$10M for worker training and community mental health support programs; and

Cliff#: 202574

Version #:

Updated:

Page 1

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION INFORMATION NOTE

- community support grants aimed at providing short term assistance to communities more profoundly impacted by the closure of a major forest employer.

DISCUSSION:

s.13; s.16

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION

INFORMATION NOTE

s.13

Attachments:

s.13

Prepared by:

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Cliff#: 202574

Version #:

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Page 3

Page 133 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.17

Page 134 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Coastal Forestry

Highlights:

- On February 18, forest workers are expected to hold a rally at the Legislature and present a petition to Minister Donaldson calling for BC to support forestry and jobs in this sector.
- February 10, Western Forest Products and United Steel Workers announced a tentative agreement had been reached. The agreement has now been ratified.

s.13

Main Message on Coastal Forestry:

- Our government will defend the thousands of people who rely on the forest sector for their jobs and livelihoods.
- We will continue to work with the sector to address challenges and ensure a bright and sustainable future.
- Our government is working hard on our coastal forest revitalization plan.
- We want to make sure more logs are processed in our province.
- We also want to reduce wood waste by redirecting it to our pulp and paper mills.
- Our government is dedicated to putting people first when it comes to how we manage our forests.
- That's why we've made changes to ensure proper oversight to tenure agreement transfers.
- This is good for workers, communities and companies, large and small.

Main Message on WFP Strike:

s.13

- I was heartened to see the membership and board ratify the agreement.
- Our government knows people want to get back to work as soon as possible.
- Additionally, our government provided \$5 million in bridging loans to help contractors make payments for their logging equipment.
- We will continue to support our coastal forest sector.
- Our government will continue talking to the federal government about what help they can provide to forest workers and contractors.

Background:

- The coastal forest sector is an integral part of B.C.'s economy, and in 2018 generated more than 24,000 direct jobs and \$3.1 billion in GDP.
- Over the past 20 years, industry has focused on harvesting higher-value species, there's been a significant increase in waste fibre being left in cut blocks and a concentration of tenure and processing.
- As well, pulp and paper operations have faced difficulties accessing economic fibre, de-integration has caused a loss of synergy between solid wood and pulp operations, and remanufacturers have expressed concern about fibre supply.
- Given these challenges, government developed the Coast Forest Sector Revitalization Initiative to revitalize the coastal forest sector and ensure that public timber generates good jobs in forest-dependent communities.
- There are six objectives within the strategy:
 1. Diversify tenure and increase First Nations participation;
 2. Increase domestic log processing;
 3. Enable greater harvest of the allowable annual cut and reduce amount of wood waste by redirecting to secondary manufacturers;
 4. Ensure competitive forces prevail;
 5. Better business-to-business relationships; and,
 6. Restore public confidence in forest sector decisions.
- On February 10, Western Forest Products announced a tentative agreement had been reached with the United Steelworkers Union and on February 15, USW announced the agreement had been ratified.
- On February 6, Minister Bains appointed Vince Ready and Amanda Rogers as special mediators in the negotiations between WFP and USW.
- As of January 31, coastal contractors can apply to the Province for bridging loans to help make payments on their logging equipment.
- This funding comes from BC's new \$5 million Coast Logging Equipment Support Trust, which was announced on January 16.

Forestry

Highlights:

s.13

- Government has provided \$69 million for new supports for forest workers and communities, which includes \$875,000 in community grants.
- The first Timber Supply Area coalition started in the Kootenays in November 2019, and the second got underway in Mackenzie in January 2020.
- In October 2019, coastal stumpage rates declined by 24% and in the Interior, rates declined by 12%. In January 2020, rates went down again – on the coast by 4.4% and in the Interior by 19%.

s.13

Solution:

- We will continue to defend the thousands of people who rely on the forestry sector for their jobs and livelihoods and will work with the sector to address the challenges and ensure a sustainable future.
- That's why we've been growing markets for BC wood products at home and abroad through innovation.
- Last year, the Minister of Forests and senior executives from forest companies and associations promoted BC's innovative wood products during our trade mission to China and Japan.
 - They met with construction, business and association representatives to enhance and expand business opportunities for BC wood.
- When it comes to growing the market at home, we want to make sure more logs are processed in BC.
- Our Coast Forest Revitalization Plan aims to have more BC logs processed on the coast and reduce wood waste by redirecting it to our mills.
- Our locally driven renewal of BC's interior forest sector is led by industry, labour and First Nations to strengthen forest dependent communities.
- I'm pleased to say there's now two Timber Supply Area coalitions – one in the Mackenzie area and the other in the Kootenays.

Solution Continued:

- Our Wood First Program allows forest communities throughout BC to see economic benefits of increased production from BC mass timber manufactures.
 - We are supporting communities across the province as they adopt innovative and safe mass timber technology for taller wood buildings.
 - For example, Abbotsford-based StructureCraft engineers and builds mass timber structures using BC wood, creating local jobs.
 - And thirteen communities across BC, as well as the University of BC, have signed on to become early adopters to bring mass timber technology for buildings up to 12 stories.
- We brought in new legislation to put people at the heart of tenure transfers.
 - These changes led to a commitment by Hampton to rebuild the sawmill in Fort St. James and protect jobs for rural workers.
 - I'm happy with the seriousness that Hampton approached this new process - it's good news for First Nations and workers in the region.
- We will keep working hard to engage with industry, workers, communities and First Nations to build a sustainable future for forestry in BC.

On mill closures and curtailments:

- Our government is putting workers, their families and communities first when it comes to the challenges, that have been decades in the making, facing the forest sector.
- That's why we took action and announced \$69 million in funding for new supports for workers, contractors and communities in BC's interior.
- This funding will ensure that workers have access to the services they need – from training, to work placement, to early retirement.
- We are actively processing approximately 550 applications for the early retirement program.
- To help workers find new employment opportunities, we've opened job placement offices in 100 Mile House, Fort St. James, Fort St. John, Mackenzie and Clearwater.
- To date, over 350 workers have been supported by the job placement offices.
- Our supports also includes \$875,000 in grants to 11 Interior communities that have been hardest hit by the challenges facing the forestry sector.
- We will continue to support workers and their families to make sure our forest communities remain resilient.

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- The reality is that stumpage fees are set independently and based on timber prices.
- It's important to show that publicly owned timber is priced fairly, based on a market price system.
- We have shown this repeatedly in international tribunals.
- BC's stumpage rates are reviewed quarterly.
- Last October, rates went down in the Interior by 12% and on the Coast, they were reduced by 24%.
- In January, they went down again. On the Coast, they were reduced by 4.4% and in the Interior, by 19%.

MLA Rustad, Nechako Lakes:

- On Conifex License Transfer (CHNL, November 2019)
 - “First of all, the commitment to do a new mill in Fort St James is a really positive move for the community and for all the people in that area.”
 - “It is very good news for the community and, I think, for the industry in general.”
- On Stumpage (CHNL, November 2019)
 - “Our stumpage system, if it were to be artificially adjusted, we would be in trouble in terms of our neighbours south of the border and the tariffs and duties that are in place.”
- On Jimmy Pattison Canfor Deal (CHNL, October 2019)
 - “What this offer does do is show that there is confidence in the long-term of our forest sector. And I support that perspective. I think there is lots of potential for our forest sector over the long-term.”
 - “But those losses won't last forever, and those circumstances will change.”
- On Mill Closures (Tyee, April 2014)
 - “What I said was that there was an estimated drop of about 8 million cubic metres of wood, which would be about the equivalent of 10 reasonably sized mills.”

Old Government and Opposition Record:

- Mayor Bob Simpson, Quesnel (June 2019)

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- Dan Battistella, President and Ken Kalesnikoff, Board Chair, Interior Lumber Manufacturers' Association (September 2019)

Copyright



Forest Worker Supports:

- Dan Battistella, President and Ken Kalesnikoff, Board Chair, Interior Lumber Manufacturers' Association (September 2019)

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- Ray Ferris, CEO, West Fraser (September 2019)

Copyright



Forest Worker Supports:

- Gary Fiege, president, Public and Private Workers of Canada (September 2019)

Copyright



- Gavin McGarrigle, western regional director, Unifor (September 2019)

Copyright



Stumpage:

- Harry Nelson, Associate Professor, Department of Forest Resource Management, UBC (September 2019)

Copyright



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Background:

- Throughout 2019, a number of major Interior forestry companies in British Columbia announced curtailments at their BC sawmills.
- Companies said this was due to lower lumber prices, reduced demand, high log costs, softwood lumber border tariffs and issues in accessing timber.
- Media has reported on a leaked consultant's report prepared for the old government in 2015 that warned of significant impacts from the end of the mountain pine beetle harvest would cause on the sector and predicted the closure of up to 13 mills.
- While forest companies had seen record high lumber prices (upwards of \$600 per thousand board feet) for the first half of 2018, by the fall of 2018, prices had declined to the \$300 per thousand board feet range.
- In September 2019, BC announced it was providing \$69 million to fund a new series of measures aimed at supporting BC forest workers and contractors impacted by mill closures and shift reduction's in the Interior. These measures include the following:
 - \$40 million to establish a new cost-shared, early-retirement bridging program for older forest workers;
 - \$15 million to establish a new short-term forest employment program, focused on fire prevention and community resiliency projects;
 - \$12 million for workers to access skills training, and for employer and community grants for training;
 - \$2 million to establish a new job placement co-ordination office that will track the transition and employment of impacted forest workers on an individual basis; and
 - Community support grants aimed at providing short-term assistance to communities more profoundly impacted by the closure of a major forest employer.
- Earlier this year, BC introduced changes to the Forest Act to ensure public interest is considered in tenure transfers and launched a renewed Interior forestry strategy and Coastal forest strategy.
- In October 2019, coastal stumpage rates declined by 24% and in the Interior, rates declined by 12%. In January 2020, rates went down again – on the coast by 4.4% and in the Interior by 19%.

Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
 2. Crisis Supplement UPDATED
 3. Decampment
 4. Cheque Issue Day
 5. Together BC
 6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
 7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
 8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
 9. January Legislative Changes
 10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
 11. Communities in Transition
 12. TCS Police Investigation
 13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
 14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
 15. ICBC Enhanced Care
 16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
 17. Basic Income
 18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
- s.15; s.22
- s.13; s.15; s.22
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
 22. Youth Homeless Report
 23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
 24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
 25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension NEW

#12

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

Community Living BC
Date: May 30, 2019 – UPDATED Feb. 12, 2020
Minister: Hon. Shane Simpson

s.13; s.15

SUMMARY

s.13; s.15; s.22

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE

- These allegations are concerning and the ministry and CLBC take them very seriously.
- CLBC and the contracted agency reviewed this situation and have made changes to improve management and monitoring.
- For privacy reasons and while this is before the courts, I cannot provide any further comment.

BACKGROUND

s.13; s.15; s.22

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

s.13; s.15; s.22

Communications contact: Randy Schmidt, 604-209-7608

Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
 2. Crisis Supplement **UPDATED**
 3. Decampment
 4. Cheque Issue Day
 5. Together BC
 6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
 7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
 8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
 9. January Legislative Changes
 10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
 11. Communities in Transition
 12. TCS Police Investigation
 13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
 14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
 15. ICBC Enhanced Care
 16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
 17. Basic Income
 18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
- s.15; s.22
- s.10, s.10, s.22
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
 22. Youth Homeless Report
 23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
 24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
 25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension **NEW**

#13

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

Gaming Control Amendment Act

SUGGESTED RESPONSE:

- Our government is proud to introduce the Gaming Control Amendment Act.
- The Act will entitle BC First Nations to a portion of the B.C. Lottery Corporation's net income for 23 years.
- It also increases the maximum number of directors of the B.C. Lottery Corporation to 11 to facilitate the appointment of one position for a First Nation's nominee.
- This will create a reliable, long-term, revenue stream for First Nations as part of our commitment to reconciliation.
- It will ensure First Nations have a stable, predictable source of income to fund economic, social and cultural activities that directly benefit the people who live in their communities.
- Each First Nation can use the gaming revenue to support their own priorities - like enhancing social services, education, infrastructure, cultural revitalization and self-government capacity.
- We have already transferred nearly \$200 million to the newly formed B.C. First Nations Gaming Revenue Sharing Limited Partnership -- providing the first two years of shared gaming revenue.

On funds that currently go to municipalities:

- This new gaming revenue-sharing arrangement will NOT affect the funds that currently go to municipalities, including First Nations who host gaming facilities, community organizations and health services.

BACKGROUND:

Revenue Sharing Agreement

- First Nations have been asking for gaming revenue sharing to be negotiated by the Province for years. In 2007, First Nations leaders presented the previous government with the B.C. First Nations Investment Plan. The plan recommended allocating 3% of B.C.'s gross gambling revenue directly toward economic

and community development initiatives in Indigenous communities.

- At the time, First Nations leaders described the plan as the “single most important” action the provincial government could take to “ease First Nations poverty and begin to close the economic and social gap for all First Nations.”
- In Budget 2019, the province committed to sharing 7% of net provincial revenue from gaming with B.C.’s First Nations for 25 years.
- The agreement is expected to provide participating First Nations communities with approximately \$100 million per year. Factoring in an expected 2% annual growth rate, the Province expects to share \$3 billion with B.C.’s First Nations over the term of the agreement.
- Earlier this fall, the Province shared \$194.84 million in revenue, which accounts for the first two years of the agreement while the longer-term (23-year) agreement is being re-negotiated.
- An additional \$2 million was provided to the Limited Partnership for legal costs. This is accounted for in the legislation.
- The First Nations Gaming Revenue Sharing Limited Partnership is responsible for receiving, managing and distributing these funds to participating First Nations.
- The Limited Partnership was set up at the direction of leadership from the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit and Union of BC Indian Chiefs, through the First Nations Gaming Commission.
- First Nations must become a partner of the First Nations Gaming Revenue Sharing Limited Partnership to receive a share of revenue.
- Participating First Nations can obtain their share of the gaming revenue based on the following formula:
 - 50 per cent base funding (divided equally per community);
 - 40 per cent based on population; and
 - 10 per cent for geographically remote communities.
- These funds may be used by individual Nations for:
 - Health and wellness;
 - Infrastructure, safety, transportation and housing;
 - Economic and business development;
 - Education, language, culture and training;
 - Community development and environmental protection; and
 - Capacity building, fiscal management and governance.
- All funds provided through the revenue sharing agreement must be directed to the community purposes outlined in the agreement. Direct distribution of gaming revenue to individuals is not permitted.
- Participating First Nations will be required to provide the Limited Partnership with annual financial statements that confirm how gaming revenue is spent.
- This revenue sharing agreement aligns British Columbia with Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Nova Scotia, which already share gaming revenue with First Nations.
- In 2017/18, the province collected \$1.391 billion in net revenue from gaming activities.

s.12; s.13; s.16; s.17

BCLC Board of Directors

- The Gaming Control Amendment Act allows the BC. Lottery Corporation to increase its Board of

ISSUES NOTE: Attorney General 2019-10-07

s.13

Program Area	Deputy / ADM	GCPE
R. Cheng – 10/07/19 My Anh Truong – 10/07/19	A/ADM Skrine– DATE 10/07/19 M. Harris – 10/07/19	C. Dargie – 10/06/19 T. Chu – 10/05/19

Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
 2. Crisis Supplement UPDATED
 3. Decampment
 4. Cheque Issue Day
 5. Together BC
 6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
 7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
 8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
 9. January Legislative Changes
 10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
 11. Communities in Transition
 12. TCS Police Investigation
 13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
 14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
 15. ICBC Enhanced Care
 16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
 17. Basic Income
 18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
- s.15; s.22
-
- s.13
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
 22. Youth Homeless Report
 23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
 24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
 25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension NEW

14

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

PlayNow.com deposit and account balance increases

SUGGESTED RESPONSE:

s.13

- By increasing PlayNow.com's weekly deposit limit to \$100,000 and account balance limit to \$250,000 we hope to encourage the people who already gamble at these levels in the grey market to transition to the legal market here in B.C.
- By attracting these high limit players to PlayNow.com, we can offer them a safe, regulated online gambling experience with numerous responsible gambling measures.
- The change will also help increase B.C.'s gambling revenue, which supports core government programs like healthcare and education.

If asked whether higher limits will increase risks of problem gambling

s.13

- This level of play is already happening on grey market sites. Our goal is to attract these players to PlayNow.com where there are more responsible gambling safeguards in place.
- More than half the players on PlayNow.com maintain accounts of \$100 or less and BCLC expects most players will continue to play well below the new limits.

If asked how PlayNow.com supports healthy play

- PlayNow.com provides a suite of tools to support healthy play – like age control, voluntary short-term lock-out and self-exclusion.
- When the new limits come into effect on Feb. 4, PlayNow.com will also send automatic emails to players every time they transfer in \$10,000 within seven-day period, to encourage budgeting and use of Responsible Gambling resources.

If asked whether the new PlayNow.com limits will increase money laundering risks.

- PlayNow.com has stringent anti-money laundering controls.
- As the platform provides cashless, 100% account-based play, BCLC can easily view and track every

transaction on PlayNow.com

- Anyone who registers on PlayNow.com must also make deposits using their registered Canadian bank accounts or credit cards, which have robust financial oversight and controls.

If asked what the Province is doing to address unregulated gambling websites

- It is very hard to control unregulated online gambling because most sites operate from other countries.
- Other provinces face similar challenges and we are working with our federal and provincial counterparts to find ways to address this issue nationally.
- In the meantime, I have directed my staff to explore every available option to respond to unregulated online gambling.

BACKGROUND:

On Feb. 4, 2020 the BC Lottery Corporation (BCLC) will increase the PlayNow.com weekly deposit (transfer-in) limit from \$9,999 to \$100,000 and the player account balance limit from \$9,999 to \$250,000. This marks the first change since August 2009, when BCLC increased the weekly deposit limit from \$120 to \$9,999.

The new limits match gambling activity in the grey market. BCLC is introducing them to attract players who already gamble at these levels through some of the 2,000+ unregulated off shore (grey market) sites, which do not pay taxes, provide local jobs or share profits with the Province.

BCLC estimates the change will generate \$5 million in additional gambling revenue annually.

Statistics:

Approximately 20% of the BC population currently gambles online and 73% of these people use unregulated grey market sites (Source: BCLC and Ipsos Reid survey, 2019).

In 2019, 55% of players (64,230), maintained PlayNow.com accounts of less than \$100. Thirty-three per cent (38,198) maintained accounts of \$101 to \$499, and 6% (6,572) maintained accounts of \$400 - \$999. Only 368 (0.3%) maintained accounts of \$9,999.

Responsible Gambling Safeguards

PlayNow.com has robust responsible gambling safeguards, including age control, a play session log, purchase history, a weekly transfer-in limit, voluntary short-term lock-out and self-exclusion.

Limit increases take 24 hours to come into effect – which gives players time to reconsider their gambling decisions. Players can also reduce their limit at any time.

Once the new limits come into effect, PlayNow.com will send email notifications to players each time they transfer in \$10,000 or more in a seven-day period. The notifications will include information about how to set budget limits and provide links to GameSense materials and resources.

ISSUES NOTE: Attorney General 2020-01-28

s.13; s.14

Program Area	Deputy / AD	GCPE
GPEB – January 20/20 BCLC – L. Gerrits – Jan. 24/20 S. MacLeod – Jan. 27/20 Megan Harris – Jan. 28/20	D. Scott – DATE	C. Dargie – Jan. 14/ 20 R. Duffus – DATE T. Chu – DATE



Information Bulletin

PlayNow.com Making Changes to Compete with Unregulated Online Sites Operating in B.C.

Vancouver, B.C. February 5, 2020 – Copyright
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Page 162 of 318

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The Breaker News, Feb. 6, 2020

Bob Mackin

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Page 164 of 318

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Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
2. Crisis Supplement UPDATED
3. Decampment
4. Cheque Issue Day
5. Together BC
6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
9. January Legislative Changes
10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
11. Communities in Transition
12. TCS Police Investigation
13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
15. ICBC Enhanced Care
16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
17. Basic Income
18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
- s.15; s.22
- s.13
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
22. Youth Homeless Report
23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension NEW

#15

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

ICBC – Enhanced Care Model MLA Kit

Key Messages

s.13

- That's why we're making major changes to ICBC to save you 20% on your insurance and to take better care of you when you're injured in a crash.
- We're going to reduce your rates by removing expensive lawyers and legal costs from the system – saving you 20% on your insurance - an average of \$400.
- And we're going to provide better care so anyone injured in a crash gets the care they need – without having to hire a lawyer to get the benefits they paid for.

Questions and Answers

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Page 167 of 318

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s.13

Page 168 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Page 169 of 318

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s.13

Page 170 of 318

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Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
2. Crisis Supplement UPDATED
3. Decampment
4. Cheque Issue Day
5. Together BC
6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
9. January Legislative Changes
10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
11. Communities in Transition
12. TCS Police Investigation
13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
15. ICBC Enhanced Care
16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
17. Basic Income
18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
- s.15; s.22
- s.13
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
22. Youth Homeless Report
23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension NEW

16

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

Disability and Income Assistance Rates

Highlights:

- In a year-end interview with Premier Horgan, journalist Richard Zussman asked when the government would be raising the Disability Assistance Rates.
- While the shelter rate has been frozen at \$375 since 2007, our government has raised the general amount by \$150 a month.
- Advocates have argued that given rising housing prices and cost of living that rates should be increased significantly and indexed to inflation.

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Solution:

- Our government is different.
- We're committed to making life better for all British Columbians—especially for the most vulnerable.
- That's why we immediately raised income and disability assistance rates by \$100 a month when we took office and raised them again by \$50 last year.
- With the new rates, a single person now receives \$1,800 more a year and a couple receive an additional \$2,400 per year.
- That has meant more money for groceries, transportation, and life's basic necessities.

s.13

- Decreasing the work search from five weeks to three weeks.
- Ending penalties for families providing room and board to a family member.
- Removing the \$10,000 asset limit on a primary vehicle.
- Our government is making real progress—but we know that much more needs to be done.

Background:

- On Oct. 1, 2017, Government raised monthly income and disability assistance rates by \$100 to \$710 and \$1,133 respectively – it was the first rate increase for income assistance since 2007.
- On April 1, 2019, Government raised income and disability rates by an additional \$50 per month per adult, meaning a total increase of \$150 per month, or \$1,800 per year since Budget Update 2017.
- In 2017, the annual earning exemption for people on income and disability assistance was increased by \$200 a month.
- B.C.'s current assistance rates for single people who can work and single people with a disability are now the third highest in Canada.
- As of December 2019, there were 45,696 cases on regular Income Assistance(December 2016 caseload was 44,378).
- As of December 2019, the current Disability Assistance (DA) caseload is 110,548. December 2016 caseload was 98,123).
- The DA caseload increases at a historical rate of 4% per year.
- DA caseloads are expected to increase due to population growth and a higher incidence of persons with disabilities.
- People who receive income assistance also receive other supports and benefits such as subsidized housing, dental and optical care for children, free Pharmacare, and employment services through WorkBC Employment Services.
- Parents on assistance can also receive provincial and federal tax benefits. Currently, a single parent with one child under six could receive up to \$1,790 in monthly income including tax benefits, and a couple with two children may receive up to \$2,354.39.

Ministry of Social Development and
Poverty Reduction
Date: January 2020
Minister: Hon. Shane Simpson

Income and Disability Assistance Rates

SUMMARY:

Government raised income and Disability assistance rates in October 2017 and April 2019 for a total increase of \$150. Poverty advocates continue to criticize that the rates are too low.

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- **We have increased Income and Disability Assistance rates twice since we came into office — the first increase to Income Assistance rates in over a decade.**
- **With the new rates, a single person now has an additional \$1,800 a year and a couple has an additional \$2,400 per year.**
- **As part of TogetherBC, B.C.'s first poverty reduction strategy, we're removing harmful and mean-spirited policies that created barriers for the most vulnerable people in B.C.**
- **The first changes, effective, on July 1, 2019, included decreasing the work search from five weeks to three weeks and removing the \$10,000 asset limit on a primary vehicle.**
- **A second set of changes, effective January 1st, 2020, included 12 policy changes, that, together create a stronger, more easily accessible system of supports for people when they need it most.**
- **We are continuing to build a culture of empathy, understanding and respect that puts people first in everything we do — not just in my ministry, but across our government and in our communities.**

Program Area Contact:
File Created:
File Updated:

Darren Tannas
January 2019
January 2020

(778) 974-4067

BACKGROUND:

- On Oct. 1, 2017, Government raised monthly income and disability assistance rates by \$100 to \$710 and \$1,133 respectively – it was the first rate increase for income assistance since 2007.
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Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
2. Crisis Supplement UPDATED
3. Decampment
4. Cheque Issue Day
5. Together BC
6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
9. January Legislative Changes
10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
11. Communities in Transition
12. TCS Police Investigation
13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
15. ICBC Enhanced Care
16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
17. Basic Income
18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
- s.15; s.22
- s.13; s.17
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
22. Youth Homeless Report
23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension NEW

17

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
 Date: January 2020
 Minister: Hon. Shane Simpson

Basic Income Pilot

SUMMARY

As part of the CASA and to support work government is doing to reduce poverty, the Province appointed an Expert Committee (WHEN) to oversee research on a basic income for British Columbia. The researchers will look at whether a basic income is an effective way to improve income security, reduce poverty and address the impact of technological change to labour markets. B.C.

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- **B.C. has one of the highest poverty rates in Canada, yet we are also one of the wealthiest provinces. It is vital that we look at every option and every opportunity to make life better for the 481,000 (2017 data) people who are living in poverty here in B.C.**
- **We appointed an expert committee in 2018 to work with researchers to test the feasibility of Basic Income for our province.**
- **While the broader aspects of a basic income are being explored, the research team will also consider how basic-income principles might be used to improve our existing income support system.**
- **It is an independent study and I look forward to seeing the findings when the committee reports back to government in Fall 2020.**

BACKGROUND:

- Government agreed to explore whether a basic income program could work in British Columbia, as part of its Confidence and Supply Agreement (CASA) with the Green Party.
- In the fall of 2017, ministry staff met with experts to get advice on how to implement a basic income pilot in B.C. They also consulted with officials in Ontario, studied the different basic income pilots currently underway or in development in other jurisdictions, and looked at other approaches to improving income support systems and applying basic income concepts, especially the recent work in Quebec.
- B.C. determined that the most effective approach would be to convene an independent expert committee whose mandate would be to study basic incomes in the B.C. context and apply basic income concepts to B.C.'s current income support system.
- Budget 2018 provided \$4M over two years to test the feasibility of a basic income in B.C.
- On July 3, 2018, the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction appointed an Expert Committee to oversee research on Basic Income for British Columbia:

Program Area Contact:
 File Created:
 File Updated:

Darren Tannas
 February 2018
 January 2020

778-698-7713

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

- Chair, Professor David Green, Vancouver School of Economics;
 - Jonathan Rhys Kesselman, School of Public Policy at Simon Fraser University; and
 - Lindsay Tedds, School of Public Policy at the University of Calgary.
- The Committee oversees researchers at UBC and is working with ministry staff to:
 - Research the various basic income models and assess implications for B.C.
 - Conduct simulations of basic income models on the B.C. population to assess their impact on low income, identify benefits and any unintended consequences, and estimate cost implications.
 - Analyze B.C.'s existing income support system, including assessing strengths and weaknesses.
 - Describe B.C.'s future labour market outlook with a focus on potential job losses and other challenges related to technological change and other trends.
 - Identify and evaluate options for improving B.C.'s income support system to incorporate many of the ideals of a basic income.
 - Provide recommendations for changes to government (provincial and federal) programs and services, with emphasis on recommendations that mitigate gaps when transitioning between income support programs and between income support and employment as applicable.
- Between November 15, 2018 and February 15, 2019, organizations and individuals with an interest in basic income were invited to share their input with the Committee. Information will be included in the final report in Fall 2020.
- The basic income expert committee hosted a workshop in December 2019 to have a discussion about their research and the role of a basic income in poverty reduction.

Program Area Contact:

Darren Tannas

778-698-7713

File Created:

February 2018

File Updated:

January 2020

Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
2. Crisis Supplement UPDATED
3. Decampment
4. Cheque Issue Day
5. Together BC
6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
9. January Legislative Changes
10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
11. Communities in Transition
12. TCS Police Investigation
13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
15. ICBC Enhanced Care
16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
17. Basic Income
18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
s.15; s.22
s.13
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
22. Youth Homeless Report
23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension NEW

18

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers

Highlights:

- In Budget 2019, government announced it would increase funding for home sharing providers by \$8.8M in 2019/20, \$18.3M in 2020/21, and \$18.3M in 2021/2022 (a total of \$45.4M over three years).
- CLBC revised its rate structure to better reflect the complexity of supporting individuals. The first set of increases will be completed by March 2020, with rates retroactive to April 2019.
- Some providers are unsatisfied with the time it is taking for new rates to be distributed and others are expressing concerns they may not get an increase.

s.13

Solution:

- Home sharing helps people to live independently and be fully included in their community.
- Home sharing providers deserve our support for the important role they play.
- After 10 years of no increases, I'm very proud that our government increased funding to home sharing providers - \$45.4 million over three years.
- We made a commitment to improve services for the people of B.C. – and we are delivering.

If asked about implementation

- The increased contract amounts that home sharing providers are receiving depends on the level of an individual's needs, and existing funding levels.
- Community Living BC is working as quickly as possible with agencies to review contracts for services to more than 4,000 supported individuals.
- They are now working with their coordinating agencies to implement the second year of increases by October 2020.
- All increases will be retroactive to April 1, 2020 and no contracts will be decreased.
- If providers have concerns about their updated contracts, Community Living BC will review them.

Validators:

Bev Bradley, who has housed up to three people with developmental disabilities at a time in her Victoria home over the last 16 years, said while the rate increase is desperately needed, what means more is Horgan's acknowledgment of care providers' hard work:

Copyright

[Bev Bradley, Vancouver Sun, March 1, 2019]

Selena Martin, who is a member of the B.C. Home Share Providers Association, said the additional funding could allow home-share providers to take a break through respite services:

Copyright

[Selena Martin, Vancouver Sun, March 1, 2019]

Background:

- In Budget 2019, government provided \$8.8M in 2019/20, \$18.3M in 2020/21, and \$18.3M in 2021/22 to increase funding for CLBC's Home Sharing program – a total of \$45.4M over three years.
- CLBC required time to implement rate increases in an equitable way with dozens of coordinating agencies. Some individual files were missing current assessment information, and many contracts were negotiated over 10 years ago and needed to be reviewed.
- CLBC revised the home sharing rate structure so it is more detailed and reflects people's unique needs. Each of the 11 levels of compensation received an increase.
 - Home sharing providers being paid within the policy rates (about 3,200) received increases in the first year between 7% and 29%.
 - Some CLBC home sharing providers are already paid above the policy rates due to exceptional circumstances. In the first year, these providers (about 1,000) did not receive an increase.
- On Feb. 19, 2020, CLBC will announce increases for the second year of funding. All home sharing providers will receive a minimum increase of \$100 per month. Those within policy rates will also receive an additional 4.5% increase.
- Once fully implemented, all providers will have received a minimum of \$1,200 more per year, and those within policy rates will have received cumulative increases over two years between 15% and 42%.

About Home Sharing

- Home sharing is a residential service provided through CLBC where an individual with a developmental disability shares a home with someone contracted to provide ongoing supports.
- The current rate structure for payments is significantly lower than payments to other parts of the community living sector. This disparity makes it difficult for CLBC and agencies to recruit and retain qualified shared living providers.

- CLBC research and independent studies have shown that home share enhances overall quality of life.
- Home sharing now accounts for 61% of all residential settings (compared to 51% in 2010). It is a positive residential method both for quality of life outcomes and financial commitment. Sustainment of this model is critical.
- Over the past few years, the BC Home Share Providers Association (BCHSPA) and the Central Okanagan Professional Caregivers Society (COPCS) have written to the previous and current Premier and Minister, MLAs and CLBC's CEO to express concern over the lack of a rate increase including suggestions for improvements to the delivery and support of home sharing services.
- In 2016 and 2017, CLBC provided analysis and recommendations to the Ministry for funding to increase home sharing rates.
- In spring 2018, CLBC engaged with home sharing providers, as requested by the Minister via CLBC's February 2018 Mandate Letter and provided findings in a report to the Minister.
- Compensation/rate increases was the main concern identified. Concerns also included increasing support for someone with complex behaviours, someone who is aging, or has significant health care needs.
- CLBC's revised rate structure addresses this need by increasing rates particularly for those who support people living with multiple and complex needs.
- CLBC established a Home Sharing Working Group in October 2018 that includes home sharing providers and service providers to work on the non-financial issues identified in the engagement.

Community Living BC
Updated: Jan. 24, 2020
Minister: Hon. Shane Simpson

Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers

SUMMARY

In Budget 2019, government announced it would increase funding for home sharing providers by \$18.3 million over two years. CLBC revised its rate structure and increased compensation at every level. The first set of increases will be completed by March 2020, with rates retroactive to April 2019. In February, CLBC will announce the second set of increases for which all providers will receive between \$100 and \$434 more per month by October 2020, retroactive to April 2020.^{s.13}

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ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE

- Home sharing is an important service, one that helps people to live independently and be fully included in their community. CLBC supports over 4,000 people to access home sharing services.
- After 10 years of no increases, in 2019 this government increased funding to CLBC's home sharing providers by \$18.3M over two years. The funding increases are going directly to home sharing providers.
- CLBC is now implementing the second year of improvements effective April 1, 2020, when all home sharing providers will receive an increase of between \$100 and \$434 per month.
- The increased contract amounts depend on the level of an individual's disability-related needs and the existing levels of funding they are receiving.
- Our government made a commitment to improve services for the people of B.C. – and we are delivering on that promise.

s.13

Background on home sharing rates

- In Budget 2019, government provided \$8.8M in 2019/20, \$18.3M in 2020/21, and \$18.3M in 2021/22 to increase funding for CLBC's Home Sharing program – a total of \$45.4M over three years.
- CLBC required time to implement rate increases in an equitable way with dozens of coordinating

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agencies. Some individual files were missing current assessment information, and many contracts were negotiated over 10 years ago and needed to be reviewed.

- CLBC revised the home sharing rate structure so it is more detailed and reflects people's unique needs. Each of the 11 levels of compensation received an increase.
 - Home sharing providers being paid within the policy rates (about 3,200) received increases in the first year between 7% and 29%.
 - Some CLBC home sharing providers are already paid above the policy rates due to exceptional circumstances. In the first year, these providers (about 1,000) did not receive an increase.
- On Feb. 19, 2020, CLBC will announce increases for the second year of funding. All home sharing providers will receive a minimum increase of \$100 per month. Those within policy rates will also receive an additional 4.5% increase.
- Once fully implemented, all providers will have received a minimum of \$1,200 more per year, and those within policy rates will have received cumulative increases over two years between 15% and 42%.

General Background

- Home sharing is a residential service provided through CLBC where an individual with a developmental disability shares a home with someone contracted to provide ongoing supports.
- CLBC research and independent studies have shown that home share enhances overall quality of life.
- Home sharing now accounts for 61% of all funded residential settings (compared to 51% in 2010).
- Over the past few years, the BC Home Share Providers Association and the Central Okanagan Professional Caregivers Society have written to CLBC and previous and current provincial elected officials to express concern over the lack of a rate increase.
- In spring 2018, CLBC engaged with home sharing providers, as requested by the Minister via CLBC's Mandate Letter and provided findings in a report to the Minister.
- Compensation/rate increases was the main concern identified. Concerns also included increasing support for someone with complex behaviours, someone who is aging or has significant health care needs.
- CLBC's revised rate structure addresses this need by increasing rates particularly for those who support people living with multiple and complex needs.
- CLBC established the Home Sharing Working Group in October 2018 to work on non-financial issues identified as priorities. The group is currently working on a range of improvements to supports, including updating the Home Sharing Providers' handbook, improving the process for home sharing referrals, and strengthening the protocols for supporting home sharing providers and individuals in crisis.

Communications Contact: Randy Schmidt, 604-209-7608

Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
s.13
3. Decampment
4. Cheque Issue Day
5. Together BC
6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
9. January Legislative Changes
10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
11. Communities in Transition
12. TCS Police Investigation
13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
15. ICBC Enhanced Care
16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
17. Basic Income
18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
s.15; s.22
s.13
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
22. Youth Homeless Report
23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension NEW

19

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

Page 189 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.15 ; s.22

Page 190 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.15 ; s.22

Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
2. Crisis Supplement UPDATED
3. Decampment
4. Cheque Issue Day
5. Together BC
6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
9. January Legislative Changes
10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
11. Communities in Transition
12. TCS Police Investigation
13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
15. ICBC Enhanced Care
16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
17. Basic Income
18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
s.15; s.22
- s.13; s.15; s.22
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
22. Youth Homeless Report
23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension NEW

#20

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

Community Living BC
Date: July 24, 2020
Minister: Hon. Shane Simpson

Police Investigation

s.22

SUMMARY

s.13; s.15; s.22

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE

- CLBC's priority is the health, well-being and safety of the people it serves.
- CLBC is designated under Part 3 of the *Adult Guardianship Act* with authority to take appropriate action to ensure a person's health and safety.
- CLBC works closely with individuals, families, community agencies and other government departments to ensure appropriate supports for a person's disability-related needs are in place.
- For privacy reasons, I can't go into details about this specific case.

BACKGROUND

s.13; s.15; s.22

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

s.13; s.15; s.22

Communications contact: Randy Schmidt, 604-209-7608

Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
2. Crisis Supplement UPDATED
3. Decampment
4. Cheque Issue Day
5. Together BC
6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
9. January Legislative Changes
10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
11. Communities in Transition
12. TCS Police Investigation
13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
15. ICBC Enhanced Care
16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
17. Basic Income
18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
s.15; s.22
- s.13; s.15; s.22
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
22. Youth Homeless Report
23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension NEW

21

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Date: Feb. 14, 2020

Minister: Hon. Shane Simpson

Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update

SUMMARY:

On February 14, 2020, the Ombudsperson released an update to April 2018's "Holding Pattern: Call Wait Time for Income and Disability Assistance" report. The report provides progress on the recommendations set out in "Holding Pattern."

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- We appreciate the recommendations of the Ombudsperson's 2018 report on call wait times for income and disability assistance — and their recent progress update.
- We take the recommendations of the report very seriously. The report acknowledges there has been significant improvement in call wait times since 2018.
 - Wait times fluctuate with longer wait times occurring Mondays and Fridays and during cheque issue week.
- We're committed to reducing wait times and are aiming to answer 80% of calls in 10 minutes or less so people can receive the help they need, faster.
- At the same time, we are also working to rebuild a culture of empathy and people-first support.

BACKGROUND:

2018 "Holding Pattern" Report recommendations, SDPR response and 2020 Ombudsperson progress report updates below:

- **Recommendation 1:** By May 31, 2018, the ministry report the daily average speed of answer and the daily longest call wait time statistics on its website for each day in the previous month.
 - **2020 Ombudsperson Update:** Fully implemented
- **Recommendation 2:** By October 31, 2018, the ministry hire sufficient additional employment and assistance workers to ensure that it has a minimum of 220 full-time staff dedicated to answering calls to the centralized telephone line. The incremental staffing is not to be offset from elsewhere in the ministry's income and disability assistance programs.
 - **SDPR Response:** Not accepted. SDPR committed to hire 30 new employment and assistance workers, with 20 being allocated to the phones, and committed to meeting service standards. The ministry has hired the 30 new staff and when the phone lines are particularly busy the ministry also continues to temporarily assign non client facing staff to answers calls in order to provide timely

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

service and minimizing the need for clients to travel to a local office.

- **2020 Ombudsperson Update:** On-going monitoring
 - The 2020 report recognizes the ministry's pilot project to support staff working from home. The pilot is working to address higher call volumes on Mondays and Fridays. The report also acknowledges that the Ministry has hired 30 additional staff, with 20 staff dedicated to the centralized call centre for a total of 200 staff (original recommendation was for 220 full-time staff dedicated to answering calls).
- **Recommendation 3:** By March 31, 2019, for 95 percent of the days of each month, the ministry answer calls to the centralized telephone line at a daily average speed of answer of 10 minutes or less and attain a longest call wait time for each day of 30 minutes or less.
 - **SDPR Response:** Not accepted. SDPR committed to a modified recommendation 2 of aiming to answer 80% of calls in 10 minutes or less. The ministry has updated the public service standards to reflect this commitment.
 - **2020 Ombudsperson Update:** On-going monitoring
 - The 2020 report acknowledges "significant improvements in reducing overall call wait times compared to previous two years," but states that there are ongoing challenges to meet the average answer speed for phones. The report also states that some people are still experiencing wait times of over 30 minutes.
- **Recommendation 4:** Beginning May 31, 2018, the ministry report when the provincial contact centre is operating in Tier 1 mode by including an announcement on its centralized telephone line and posting on its website.
 - **2020 Ombudsperson Update:** Fully implemented
- **Recommendation 5:** By March 31, 2019, the ministry phase out and cease to use its Tier 1 call-sweeping strategy, and any other strategies for reducing call wait times that result in reduced service levels, except in unforeseen and extraordinary circumstances such as provincial emergencies.
 - **2020 Ombudsperson Update:** Fully implemented
- **Recommendation 6:** By March 31, 2020, the ministry phase out its practice of resolving only one request per call when people contact the centralized telephone line with multiple requests, so that it is able to resolve multiple issues while continuing to achieve the timeliness standards in Recommendation 3.
 - **2020 Ombudsperson Update:** Fully implemented
- **Recommendation 7:** By September 30, 2018, the ministry establish and make public service standards for the timeliness of service delivery and monitor wait times for in-person services at all local offices.
 - **SDPR Response:** Ministry has established and made public service standards for the timeliness of service delivery for many key areas including phone wait times, PWD applications, etc.

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

- The ministry agrees with the importance of providing responsive service, and local office supervisors continue to monitor in-person wait times.
- The ministry has now installed display monitors into all ministry office waiting rooms to provide relevant and up-to-date information to citizens about government services, such as reminders on key dates and options to access service (in-person, by phone or online)
- The ministry is currently exploring options to further monitoring wait times in local offices including the following:
 - Service BC's Queue Management System pilot that tracks service times (meaning the time from first contact with front counter to when the service is complete).
 - Piloting a manual wait time tracking mechanism for SDPR offices with security guards (wait time means the time from when a client joins a line until they make first contact with front counter staff).

- **2020 Ombudsperson Update:** On-going monitoring

- The report states that the ministry has yet to establish a service standard for in-person wait times; however, it notes that the ministry has begun to pilot a queue management system to track service delivery items in several offices that will be completed in Fall 2020. The ministry will share the results of this pilot with the Ombudsperson.

- **Recommendation 8:** By October 31, 2018, the ministry report on its website the average daily individual wait times for in-person service at every local office for the previous month.

- **2020 Ombudsperson Update:** Not accepted — see R7 2020 Update

- **Recommendation 9:** By June 30, 2019, June 30, 2020 and June 30, 2021, the ministry make public the report of an independent performance audit of the ministry's public reporting of the performance information in Recommendation 1 and Recommendation 3 for the prior year.

- **2020 Ombudsperson Update:** On-going monitoring

- The report states that, while the ministry did publish a summary report of an independent audit of its "Call Wait Times Reports" for the fiscal year and provided the Ombudsperson with a copy, the full audit is not publicly available. The Ombudsperson expects the full audit report that is due for June 30, 2020 to be made public.

- **SDPR Response to 2020 Report:** The ministry believes it met the spirit and intent of the recommendation and notes that the Ombudsperson confirmed that the summary audit report is consistent with the findings in the full audit report (both reports were completed by MNP (an accounting and consulting firm)).

2018 "Holding Pattern" report background information:

- The initial "Holding Pattern" report included nine key recommendations to improve wait times on SDPR's 1-866 phone number. (<https://www.bcombudsperson.ca/documents/holding-pattern-call-wait-times-income-and-disability-assistance>)

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

- The ministry accepted six of the nine recommendations and agreed with the intent of the other three recommendations.
- The [2018 News Release](#) from the Ombudsperson states, "The Ombudsperson initiated the systemic investigation in July 2017 in response to a range of complaints about long wait times, disconnected calls, call time limits, and other challenges recipients of income and disability assistance face in communicating with the ministry by telephone."



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News Release

February 14th, 2020

Ombudsperson investigative update finds call wait times for most vulnerable still too long

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Systemic Investigation Update

HOLDING PATTERN:

Call Wait Times for Income
and Disability Assistance

Page 201 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

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Page 202 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removal as

Copyright

Page 203 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removal as

Copyright

Page 204 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removal as

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Page 205 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removal as

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Page 206 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removal as

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Page 207 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removal as

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Page 208 of 318

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Page 209 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removal as

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Page 210 of 318

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Page 211 of 318

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Page 212 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removal as

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Page 213 of 318

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Page 214 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

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Page 215 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removal as

Copyright

Page 216 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

Copyright

Page 217 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

Copyright

Page 218 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removal as

Copyright

Page 219 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

Copyright

Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
2. Crisis Supplement UPDATED
3. Decampment
4. Cheque Issue Day
5. Together BC
6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
9. January Legislative Changes
10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
11. Communities in Transition
12. TCS Police Investigation
13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
15. ICBC Enhanced Care
16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
17. Basic Income
18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
s.15; s.22
- s.13; s.15; s.22
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
22. Youth Homeless Report
23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension NEW

22

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTERS

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Youth Homelessness Report

GCPE HQ

February 20, 2020

Key Messages:

- I want to thank Katherine McParland, the Office of the Representative Children and Youth, and all the youth who were part of creating this very important report.
- We need to hear the voices of young people about the things that matter to them.
- Every child and youth deserves a home.
- People in British Columbia have a duty to report when a child is in danger – that includes when a child or youth does not have a safe place to stay.
- We recognize that a more effective and comprehensive response to homelessness is needed – it has many causes and we need to work across government on solutions.
- That is one of the reasons we established the Office of Homelessness Coordination specifically to work across government ministries and with local community agencies on a proactive approach to help prevent homelessness, including youth homelessness.

Questions & Answers:

Q1. Do you accept the recommendations of this report?

- The recommendations in this report will provide a good foundation for policy work as we take steps to address youth homelessness.
- We are grateful for the efforts Katherine McParland, the Office of the Representative Children and Youth, and all the youth who were part of creating this very important report.

Q2. The report calls for government to release a strategy to end child and youth homelessness by January 2021. Will you do that?

- We are not waiting to get started on addressing child and youth homelessness.
- We are committed to working with community partners and youth on a plan to address youth homelessness that builds on our actions to date. In fact, we're working with Katherine McParland and A Way Home Kamloops to coordinate a 2-day youth-led conference this fall. The conference will seek to bring together youth, government, and community partners to better understand the challenges faced by youth in their experiences of homelessness.

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CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTERS

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ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE

Prepared by GCPE HQ
JJ Jones, Director of Cabinet Priorities
Date: Feb. 18, 2020
Ministers Responsible: Katrine Conroy,
Shane Simpson, Selina Robinson

Youth homelessness

"From Marginalized to Magnified" Report

BACKGROUND:

- On February 20, 2020 the Representative for Children and Youth (RCY) will publicly release a report on youth homelessness featuring the voices and perspectives of youth who have experienced homelessness in urban and rural communities across B.C. In the report, youth refers to people up to 24 years of age.
- The report outlines a number of pathways into homelessness, including addictions and mental health problems, discrimination and stigma, and a lack of affordable rentals.
- It describes barriers to children and youth who are trying to access help such as a shortage of youth specific housing options, waitlists for services, inflexible and restrictive eligibility requirements, and a lack of information about what supports are available.
- The report makes recommendations to 10 B.C. ministries. and calls for the creation of a provincial youth homelessness strategy; specifically, that the provincial government develop a plan to end youth homelessness in B.C. with an implementation date of January 2021.
- The report lists 11 overarching solutions provided by youth as well as a number of more specific recommendations. These solutions are:
 - Listen to youth and invest in lived expertise leadership
 - Provide access to a continuum of government-funded distinct youth housing options
 - Improve foster care placements to ensure they meet needs of youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness
 - Change MCFD policies regarding youth agreements and aging out as a strategy to prevent and respond to youth homelessness
 - Increase cultural services available to youth at risk or experiencing homelessness
 - Improve emergency responses to youth homelessness
 - Increase financial supports, including raising government income assistance rates and providing rental subsidies
 - Increase wraparound community supports available for youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness
 - Foster young people's connections to natural supports and a sense of community
 - Improve education opportunities for youth at risk or experiencing homelessness
 - Increase opportunities for youth employment

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- I want to thank Katherine McParland, the Office of the Representative Children and Youth, and all the youth who were part of creating this very important report.
- We need to hear the voices of young people about the things that matter to them.
- Every child and youth deserves a home.
- People in British Columbia have a duty to report when a child is in danger – that includes when a child or youth does not have a safe place to stay.
- We recognize that a more effective and comprehensive response to youth homelessness is needed – we established the Office of Homelessness Coordination specifically to work across government ministries and with local community agencies on a proactive approach to help prevent homelessness, including youth homelessness.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

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If asked what MAH/BC Housing is currently doing for youth experiencing homelessness:

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KEY FACTS AND QUOTES FROM THE REPORT

- "The child welfare system has been framed as the "super highway to homelessness"... a Vancouver study identified that street-involved youth were 160 times more likely to have been from government care than the general population of youth and that street-involved youth who were formerly in government care were twice as likely to be Indigenous." (p13)
- 84 per cent of youth surveyed "reported having their first experience of homelessness before they turned 19, and 53 per cent before the age of 16." (p27)
- "The youth advisory group for this report requested that the word "care" be removed from the term "foster-care system" because, in members' experiences, the care was missing. The youth who informed this report have endured some of the most challenging experiences in care, which in many cases contributed to their experience of homelessness." (page 28)
- "Youth cited inappropriate and unsafe placements in the foster system most often as their pathway to homelessness... (p34)
- "A Youth Agreement is a contractual experience that requires a youth to prove their eligibility rather than a recognition that a basic income should be a human right for young people without a home. Youth...felt that adults need to recognize that they may need support to secure housing before being able to work on the goals of education and employment against which Youth Agreement eligibility is assessed." (p39)
- "Youth reported that their particular family experiences were not validated. They said they were told they were not eligible for a Youth Agreement and should return home, resulting in homelessness." (p40)
- "Youth felt that AYA is infused with problematic ideas around "deserving youth" versus those who are perceived as "undeserving" of support and shared their feelings that the program needs to be inclusive of all youth who age out of care." (p44)

- “Some youth discussed experiences of being sexually assaulted while they were homeless and not having the stable emotional supports necessary to report it.” (p53)
- “In some cases, youth reported continuing physical abuse as a result of the investigation process in which the parent was told that the youth had reported abuse in the home, but MCFD did not subsequently provide a safe place for the youth to go.” (p53)
- The provincial government’s tuition waiver initiative also met with criticism from participating youth, largely because they felt supports were not tailored to the issues they were dealing with or the trauma they experienced. Young people spoke about the need for supports such as counselling, mentorship and advocacy....” (p54)
- “One youth provided an example of when a bursary was deducted from her income assistance cheque dollar-for-dollar.” (p55)
- “Youth talked about sexual exploitation resulting from a lack of choice combined with a strong need to have their basic needs met, such as shelter. Some youth spoke about having to engage in sexual activity to have a couch to sleep on – a situation they termed “survival rape.” (p59)
- “Some youth were forced into gangs...youth faced increased violence and safety concerns as a result of their gang involvement. They felt they could not get out of the gang life and spoke about horrifying experiences.” (p60)
- “A significant barrier for youth participants under 19 to accessing shelter support is the procedural requirement to inform MCFD and contact the parent. Youth cited this as a particular safety concern as the parent may be the very person who is abusing them and from whom they are fleeing.” (p68)
- “There are no comprehensive lists of shelters available for youth in the province.” (p69)
- “Some youth reported that they were unable to even get on a [BCH] housing wait list until they turned 19, which disrupts and undermines the transition planning process. Youth cited long wait lists and further reported that they sometimes were not able to apply for housing if they didn’t have an existing source of income.” (p74)
- “In some cases, youth said their sexual identity, such as being transgender, resulted in a landlord denying their rental application. One youth gave an example where a landlord shared this information with other landlords, advising them not to rent to the youth.” (p74)
- “Indigenous youth said racism impacted their ability to secure housing. For example, youth in Prince George gave examples of rental advertisements that were openly racist, stating “no Indigenous people.” (p74)
- “Meeting the basic eligibility requirements for income assistance or disability funding represented more hurdles for youth. One youth talked about needing to get an assessment completed before he aged out of care – but it wasn’t done and resulted in no supports.” (p79)
- Youth criticized the dearth of advertising about services and suggested that information should be provided through road and bus signs, as well as media.” (p80)

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
Date: Feb. 18, 2020
Minister: Hon. Shane Simpson

Youth Homelessness Report

SUMMARY:

On Feb. 20, 2020, the Representative for Children and Youth will table in the Legislature a report on youth homelessness, "From Marginalized to Magnified: Youth Homelessness Solutions From Those With Lived Experience." The report will also be released at a media event in Vancouver on Feb. 21. The report recommends that the provincial government develop a plan to end youth homelessness in B.C. and begin implementation by January 2021.

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- I appreciate the report and the input from all the young people who contributed to it. It's always compelling to hear from people with lived experience.
- As recommended by the report, we look forward to working with community partners and youth on a plan to end youth homelessness that builds on our actions to date.
- We established the Office of Homelessness Coordination specifically to work across government ministries and with local community agencies on a proactive approach to help prevent homelessness.
- We've also already taken some specific actions
 - We have raised the age limit of the Agreements with Young Adults program, increased the maximum monthly financial support by \$250 and made the program year-round to help cover costs of living for more young people aging out of care. (MCFD)
 - We have been consulting with former youth in care, caregivers and community agencies over the past year, looking at ways to improve the AYA program. (MCFD)
 - We removed the two-year financial independence rule for people applying for income assistance. By ending the waiting period, we can better support vulnerable young adults in need of immediate access to income supports and benefits. (SDPR)

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BACKGROUND:

The report, "From Marginalized to Magnified: Youth Homelessness Solutions From Those With Lived Experience" compiles the findings and solutions from face-to-face consultations led by 16 youth leaders in 12 communities (Abbotsford, Duncan, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Nelson, New Westminster, Prince George, Surrey, Victoria, Vancouver and Vernon). More than 163 young people participated in the face-to-face sessions from August to October 2018 and another 68 youth filled out an online survey hosted on the

ISSUES NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

Representative for Children and Youth's website.

The report was written by Katharine McParland, executive director, A Way Home Kamloops, and founder of the BC Coalition to End Homelessness.

The report lists 11 solutions as a result of the consultations. They are:

1. Listen to youth and invest in lived expertise leadership
2. Provide access to a continuum of government-funded distinct youth housing options
3. Improve foster care placements to ensure they meet needs of youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness
4. Change MCFD policies regarding youth agreements and aging out as a strategy to prevent and respond to youth homelessness
5. Increase cultural services available to youth at risk or experiencing homelessness
6. Improve emergency responses to youth homelessness
7. Increase financial supports, including raising government income assistance rates and providing rental subsidies
8. Increase wraparound community supports available for youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness
9. Foster young people's connections to natural supports and a sense of community
10. Improve education opportunities for youth at risk or experiencing homelessness
11. Increase opportunities for youth employment

The report has one overriding recommendation that the provincial government develop a plan to end youth homelessness in B.C. and begin implementation by January 2021.

Since the consultations for this report in fall 2018, the provincial government has taken actions consistent with some of the proposed solutions. For example, government has

- raised the age limit of the Agreements with Young Adults program, increased the maximum monthly financial support by \$250 – up to \$1250 per month - and made the program year-round to help cover costs of living for more young people aging out of care.
- been consulting with former youth in care, caregivers and community agencies over the past year, looking at ways to improve the AYA program.
- removed the two-year financial independence rule for people applying for income assistance. By ending the waiting period, we can better support vulnerable young adults in need of immediate access to income supports and benefits.

s.13

Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
2. Crisis Supplement UPDATED
3. Decampment
4. Cheque Issue Day
5. Together BC
6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
9. January Legislative Changes
10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
11. Communities in Transition
12. TCS Police Investigation
13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
15. ICBC Enhanced Care
16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
17. Basic Income
18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
- s.15; s.22
- s.13; s.15; s.22
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
22. Youth Homeless Report
23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension NEW

23

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

Budget 2020

KEY MESSAGES

Message Frame

- From new roads, hospitals, schools and child care centres to better, more affordable services in every community, together we're building a stronger BC, for everyone.
- We've made a lot of progress and Budget 2020 is our plan to keep BC moving forward.
- Budget 2020 is about making life more affordable; improving the services you count on; and creating good jobs and opportunities all across BC.
- British Columbians can't afford to turn back.
- There's more to do, but by focusing on people, life in BC is getting better every day.

Speaking Points

- **Together we're building a stronger BC — for everyone.**
 - **We're making child care more affordable and creating more quality child care spaces** — we've reduced fees at 55,000 public spaces; created more than 10,000 new licensed spaces; and 28,000 families are accessing child care that costs \$10 a day or less.
 - **We're making life more affordable** — we've eliminated MSP premiums; eliminated interest on BC student loans; and 23,000 affordable homes for low and middle-income people are completed or underway.
 - **We're improving our schools to give our kids a better start** — we've hired 4,200 more teachers and 2,000 new education assistants, and we've announced more than 80 capital projects for building, expanded and upgrading schools.
 - **We're working with Indigenous Peoples to build a brighter future for all of us** — we're the first province to pass legislation to implement UNDRIP; and we've created long-term, stable funding for First Nations to invest in strong local infrastructure and services.
 - **We're improving health care** — with more doctors and nurses; more MRIs and faster access to critical surgeries; and by building our health facilities (12 new hospitals or major upgrades and 14 new Urgent and Primary Care Centres).

Budget 2020

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Page 238 of 318

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Page 239 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Page 240 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Page 241 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Page 242 of 318

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s.13

Page 243 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Page 244 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Page 245 of 318

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Capital Investments – Vancouver

Budget 2020 provides record levels of capital spending to expand and sustain provincial infrastructure over the three-year plan, including capital investments in schools, hospitals, roads, transit, and housing that will benefit communities and families throughout the province, and support a sustainable economy for everyone.

Over the next three years, taxpayer-supported capital spending will total \$22.9 billion, helping to:

- *create well-paying jobs in communities throughout B.C.,*
- *ensure access to the services people depend on like healthcare or safe places for kids to learn, and*
- *support our trade corridors and businesses to keep goods and people moving.*

NEW Capital Investments on Vancouver through Budget 2020:

- Making seismic upgrades to Chief Maquinna Elementary so that kids can have a safe space to learn and play – \$12.2M (all provincial)
- Bayview Elementary – seismic replacement - \$24.5M (all provincial)
- Sir Matthew Begbie Elementary – seismic replacement – \$22.4M (all provincial)
- David Lloyd George Elementary – seismic replacement – \$24.2M (all provincial)
- Making seismic upgrades to Lord Tennyson Elementary so kids can have a safe place to learn and play – \$24.5M (all provincial)
- A seismic replacement and addition of 50 new seats for Maple Grove Elementary so kids can have a safe place to learn and play – \$25.9M (\$24.4M province, \$1.5M school district contribution)
- BC Housing is providing \$20 million of capital funding through the Affordable Rental Housing program to S.U.C.C.E.S.S Affordable Housing Society's 97-unit affordable rental project at Clark and 1st Avenue. [Note: BC Housing is also providing interim construction financing of \$47M.]
- Vancouver General Hospital – Main pharmacy redevelopment, including renovations and upgrades to existing infrastructure to comply with accreditation standards – \$7M (all provincial).
- Vancouver General Hospital – Jim Pattison Pavilion – Chiller Upgrades - \$13.6M (provincial)

Capital Investments in Vancouver through Budgets 2019, 2018 and 2017 Update:

Education

Provincial capital investments are made through school districts, health authorities, post-secondary institutions, Crown agencies and ministries. Capital funding is provided through a number of sources, including the provincial government, as well as the federal government, local governments and other third parties (e.g., private donors).

- Eric Hamber Secondary School – seismic replacement – \$108.8M (\$97.1M provincial, \$3.5M district contribution, \$8.2M City of Vancouver contribution)
- General Wolfe Elementary – seismic upgrade – \$20.2M (all provincial)
- Edith Cavell Elementary – seismic upgrade – \$15.6M (all provincial)
- Dr. George M. Weir Elementary – seismic upgrade and partial replacement - \$19.7M (\$16.7M provincial, \$3.0M district contribution)
- Lord Byng Elementary – seismic upgrade – \$18.2M (all provincial)
- Lord Selkirk Elementary – seismic upgrade – \$5.7M (all provincial)
- Seismic replacement of Lord Nelson Elementary so kids can have a safe place to learn and play – \$24.8 million (\$18.4M provincial – including \$500K from MCFD, \$6.4M City of Vancouver for 69 child care spaces) [Substantially complete]
- Making seismic replacements to Sir Sanford Fleming Elementary so kids can have a safe place to learn and play – \$25.9M (\$19.1M provincial, including \$0.5M from MCFD, \$6.3M City of Vancouver for 69 child care spaces) [Substantially complete]

Advanced Education, Skills and Training

- University of British Columbia – SIF: Life Sciences Teaching Laboratories Redevelopment (Vancouver) – redevelopment of the undergraduate life sciences laboratories to provide an upgraded learning environment for approximately 2,157 existing and 445 new students – \$91M (\$11.8M provincial, \$32.5M federal, \$47M UBC and other). Note: substantially completed in 2019.
- University of British Columbia – BC Knowledge Development Fund: Accelerated Drug Discovery Using Clinical Translation (ADDUCT). Specialized equipment to establish research facilities and personalized treatments for prostate, bladder and kidney cancers – \$23.3M (\$9M provincial, \$9M federal, \$5.3M UBC and other)

Health

- St. Paul's Hospital – new core hospital (acute care centre and outpatient centre) at the Station Street site, including capacity for 548 inpatient beds, new and larger emergency department, surgical suite and consolidated specialty outpatient clinics – \$2,083M (\$1,158M provincial, \$125M foundation, \$800M Providence Health Care)
- Dogwood Complex Residential Care - The replacement 150-bed complex residential care facility will be located on Lot 5 of the Pearson Dogwood site in Vancouver - \$58M (Vancouver Coastal Health Authority)
- Vancouver General Hospital – Food Services Redesign - \$21.5M (\$17.6M provincial, \$3.9M Vancouver Coastal Health Authority)

Provincial capital investments are made through school districts, health authorities, post-secondary institutions, Crown agencies and ministries. Capital funding is provided through a number of sources, including the provincial government, as well as the federal government, local governments and other third parties (e.g., private donors).

- Vancouver General Hospital – 3T MRI Acquisition & Installation - \$9.2M (\$7.0M foundation, \$2.2M Vancouver Coastal Health Authority)
- Vancouver General Hospital Operating Room Renewal (Phase 1) – Construct 16 new state-of-the-art operating rooms in the Jim Pattison Pavilion, and 40 pre and post op surgery beds, plus upgraded infrastructure – \$102.4M (\$34.8M provincial, \$47.6M VCHA internal funds, \$20M VGH and UBC Hospital Foundation)
- Children and Women’s Hospital (CWH) Redevelopment Phase 3 will relocate Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children into repurposed space at the CWH campus and expand single room maternity care by 10 beds – total budget for the 3-phase project is \$676.3M (\$532.2M provincial, \$144.1M foundation)
- Vancouver General Hospital – Cardiac Procedural Space Renewal and Redesign – \$6.7M (foundation and auxiliaries)
- University of BC Hospital Renewal Project: Key spaces within Koerner Pavilion at UBCH being repurposed to relocate the Transitional Care Unit (TCU) and Internal Medicine Department (IMD) from the first floor to a new unit on the second floor with no increase in number of beds; also move orthopedics/reconstruction (ortho-recon) services from Vancouver General Hospital (VGH) to the new unit and combine within the existing surgical services – \$21.9M (foundation and auxiliaries)

Transportation and Infrastructure

- Broadway Subway Project is a 5.7-kilometre line that will extend the existing SkyTrain system seamlessly from VCC-Clark Station and will be tunneled beneath the most congested section of the Broadway Corridor to a new terminus station at Arbutus Street – \$2.827B (\$1.83B province, \$897M federal, \$100M City of Vancouver). The new extension will open in 2025.
- PTIF Phase 1 Rapid Transit Stations and Facilities Upgrades Project has a total budget of \$59M (\$29.5M federal, \$19.6M provincial, \$9.9M TransLink). Examples of projects funded from within this overall project include:
 - Joyce-Collingwood Station Upgrades Phase 2: expansion of bus exchange, an extended station roof, accessibility improvements to west stationhouse, and improved pedestrian & cycling connections. Completed June 2019.
 - Canada Line Stations and Facilities Upgrades: installation of new escalators at Waterfront, Vancouver City Centre, and Yaletown-Roundhouse Stations. Completed December 2019.
- New SeaBus vessel to increase service between North Vancouver and Vancouver – \$32.2M (\$16.1M federal, \$10.7M provincial, \$5.4M TransLink). Estimated completion 2020.

Provincial capital investments are made through school districts, health authorities, post-secondary institutions, Crown agencies and ministries. Capital funding is provided through a number of sources, including the provincial government, as well as the federal government, local governments and other third parties (e.g., private donors).

- Metro Vancouver: Rapid Transit Fleet Expansion: 80 new SkyTrain cars (56 for the Expo and Millennium lines and 24 for the Canada Line) \$298M (\$149M federal, \$99M provincial, \$50.3M TransLink). Estimated completion 2020.
- Metro Vancouver: SkyTrain Systems Rehabilitation and Maintenance. Rehabilitation and upgrades to various SkyTrain systems including roofs, escalators, communications, train control, power, security systems, etc. – \$92M (\$46M federal, \$30.6M provincial, \$15.4M TransLink). Estimated completion 2020.
- Metro Vancouver: Bus/SeaBus Systems Rehabilitation and Maintenance. Rehabilitation and upgrades to various bus and SeaBus buildings, operations and maintenance centres, and systems – \$51M (\$25.6M federal, \$17M provincial, \$8.6M TransLink). Estimated completion 2020.

Citizens' Services

- Routine capital project for \$5 million to extend the useful life of the 222 Main Street Courthouse, by completing various mechanical system upgrades. Project completion is targeted for 2022.

BC Housing

- BC Housing is providing capital funding of \$5 million to the Covenant House Vancouver expansion project, to assist vulnerable homeless youth. The funding will augment \$10 million raised privately by CHV and enable of a new building at 530 Drake Street, the first phase of CHV's capital expansion project. CHV acquired the land and building site, formerly occupied by the Immigrant Services Society of BC, with help of an interest-free loan from BC Housing. Once complete, the building will accommodate administrative spaces, 28 temporary crisis beds and a drop-in health care centre. [Completed project]
- BC Housing is providing \$10.8 million in capital funding for 109 units of affordable housing for low to moderate income individuals, seniors and families. The project is located at 3175 Riverwalk Avenue in Vancouver and will be operated by S.U.C.C.E.S.S. (Contributions include \$7.95 million from the Investment in Housing Innovation initiative, \$2.85M Deepening Affordability and land valued at \$8.5 million from the City of Vancouver).
- The Province is providing capital funding of \$83 million to four new projects in the Downtown Eastside, for approximately 450-units of affordable rental housing for low-to-moderate income households. The Province is working in partnership with the City of Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health, and four non-profit service providers to ensure the appropriate housing and support services will be made available. (Capital funding provided via Affordable Rental Housing program)
- The following sites have been identified:
 - 58 W. Hastings St., operated by the Chinatown Foundation
 - 23-51 Cordova St., operated by the PHS Community Services Society
 - 616 Cordova St., operated by Union Gospel Mission – Women and Families Centre

Provincial capital investments are made through school districts, health authorities, post-secondary institutions, Crown agencies and ministries. Capital funding is provided through a number of sources, including the provincial government, as well as the federal government, local governments and other third parties (e.g., private donors).

- 301 E. Hastings St., operator still being determined.
- Vancouver Coastal Health plans to operate community health centres at the 58 W. Hastings St. and 301 E. Hastings St. projects for community clients in need.
- BC Housing is providing capital funding of \$8.8 million through the Rapid Response to Homelessness program for the 52-unit Nora Hendrix Place modular housing project located at 258 Union St that will be operated by the PHS Community Services Society. [Completed project]

Provincial capital investments are made through school districts, health authorities, post-secondary institutions, Crown agencies and ministries. Capital funding is provided through a number of sources, including the provincial government, as well as the federal government, local governments and other third parties (e.g., private donors).

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2020FIN0008-000290
Feb. 18, 2020

Ministry of Finance

Budget 2020 keeps building a stronger B.C. for everyone

VICTORIA – Budget 2020 moves British Columbia forward by building the infrastructure the growing province needs, supporting thousands of new jobs, strengthening investments in health and education and making life more affordable for everyone.

“From new roads, hospitals, housing, schools and child care centres to better, more affordable services in every community, we’re seeing fundamental changes that are making life better for British Columbians,” said Carole James, Minister of Finance. “Together, we’ve made a lot of progress and we can’t turn back. Budget 2020 keeps our province moving forward by focusing on people.”

Building a stronger B.C.

Budget 2020 makes new commitments to bring capital spending over three years to \$22.9 billion – the highest level in B.C.’s history. Work is underway on new and upgraded hospitals and health facilities, highway and transit projects, schools and new housing throughout B.C. that is stimulating more than 100,000 direct and indirect jobs during construction.

“British Columbians are working hard to build a better future for their family, and so are we. By building the infrastructure our growing province needs, we’re making life easier for people and creating good jobs and opportunities in local communities,” James said.

A stronger B.C. means ensuring there are opportunities for everyone. Budget 2020 takes another step forward toward reconciliation with Indigenous peoples by affirming the historic 25-year revenue-sharing agreement that will see \$3 billion of gaming revenues shared with all First Nations.

New opportunities in a sustainable economy

Over the next decade, more than 860,000 jobs will open up throughout British Columbia. More than 75% of all jobs will require some post-secondary education or training.

Budget 2020 creates a new, needs-based BC Access Grant for students to make sure all British Columbians can tap into these opportunities, while growing B.C.’s skilled workforce. This grant will provide up to \$4,000 to help with the upfront costs of tuition for more than 40,000 low- and middle-income students.

“B.C.’s future is bright and filled with opportunity. With the new BC Access Grant, we’ll put a college or university education within reach for thousands more British Columbians,” James said. “These grants will make a difference for students, and they’ll help B.C. businesses find the skilled people they need.”

The Province continues to support struggling forestry workers through access to job placement, skills training, equipment loans, grants for hard-hit communities and programs to support early retirement. Budget 2020 adds \$13 million for new forestry revitalization efforts, including revving up B.C.'s bio-economy with innovations that convert wood into value-added products like biofuels, bioplastics and textiles.

A clean environment is the foundation of a prosperous and sustainable economy. Budget 2020 accelerates the transition to a cleaner future with an additional \$419 million over three years for CleanBC, on top of the approximately \$900 million invested in Budget 2019. This funding includes incentives to buy electric vehicles (EV) and build EV charging stations. Additionally, this year's budget increases support for industries moving toward clean, low-carbon solutions and projects to make B.C.'s schools, universities, colleges and hospitals more energy efficient.

Making life more affordable and improving services

B.C. is one of Canada's fastest growing economies. But while the economy has grown, life has become too expensive for many families.

The new BC Child Opportunity Benefit, launching in October 2020, will provide 290,000 families with more money to support their kids. Combined with B.C.'s Affordable Child Care Benefit and the Fee Reduction Initiative for licensed child care spaces, families with one child may save up to \$20,000. Families with two children could save up to \$28,000 each year.

These savings come on the heels of a transformation at ICBC that will reduce fees by an average of 20%, or \$400 a year for all drivers, while improving care benefits. It also marks the first full year of the elimination of medical services plan (MSP) premiums — the biggest middle-class tax cut in a generation.

Budget 2020 strengthens the health, education and community services that all British Columbians depend on. The budget delivers an additional \$339 million to strengthen B.C.'s K-12 education system — building on recent investments to upgrade schools and hire more than 4,200 new teachers.

An additional \$1 billion in Budget 2020 will improve health care in British Columbia. New or upgraded hospitals are on the way for 13 communities, and 12 new urgent and primary care centres are open. Two more are coming.

A balanced plan

Budget 2020 is a balanced plan focused on the priorities of British Columbians.

Budget 2020 creates a new tax bracket for the top 1% of income earners in British Columbia. Nearly half the revenue generated will come from individuals who make more than \$1 million annually.

"Today, we're asking the people at the top, the highest 1% of individual income earners, to pay a little more and help B.C. provide families and communities with better services and stronger infrastructure," James said.

To help address the growing health costs and impacts of sweetened drinks, B.C. will begin charging provincial sales tax (PST) on sweetened carbonated beverages. This is a step that has

been advocated for by health professionals and an all-party committee, as young people between the ages of 14 and 18 are the top consumers of pop.

The Confidence and Supply Agreement with the BC Green Party caucus continues to provide the basis for a strong, stable government for British Columbia. By working together, progress continues to be made on shared priorities, like climate change, tackling the housing crisis and building a strong, diverse economy.

Quick Facts:

- The budget is balanced in all three years of the fiscal plan with surpluses of \$227 million in 2020-21, \$179 million in 2021-22, and \$374 million in 2022-23.
- Last year, B.C.'s economy was among the top of the provincial real gross domestic product (GDP) growth rankings, led the country with the lowest unemployment rate, and was among the leaders in employment growth across Canada.
- British Columbia is projected to continue to be among the top of the provincial real GDP growth rankings in 2020 and 2021.
- Between 2001 and 2019, B.C.'s population grew by nearly one million people, with much of the increase concentrated in the Lower Mainland. By 2024, B.C.'s population is expected to grow by approximately 346,000 people and by more than one million people in the next 15 years.

Four backgrounders follow.

Contact:

Ministry of Finance
Media Relations
778 974-3341

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect

BACKGROUNDER 1

For Immediate Release
2020FIN0008-000290
Feb. 18, 2020

Ministry of Finance

Fiscal Plan 2020-21 to 2022-23

Making life better

British Columbia is an economic leader in Canada. Private-sector forecasters expect B.C. to remain among the top of the provincial real gross domestic product (GDP) growth rankings in 2020 and 2021. Last year, British Columbia led the country with the lowest unemployment rate and was among the top in employment growth across the country.

Budget 2020 is a balanced plan that allows government to continue making investments that improve affordability and improve the services people count on, while supporting job creation throughout the province.

Resilient economy, stable economic growth

The Budget 2020 forecast reaffirms B.C. as an economic leader in Canada, while recognizing global economic uncertainty.

The forecast for B.C. real GDP growth in 2020 has increased slightly from 1.9% to 2.0%, while the forecast for 2021 has been revised slightly from 2.0% to 1.9%, compared to the First Quarterly Report 2019. The economic growth outlook for the 2022 to 2024 period is on average 2.0%, which is in line with previous expectations.

The main downside risks to the economic outlook include ongoing uncertainty regarding global trade policies, geopolitical tensions, weak global economic activity, as well as lower commodity prices and slower domestic economic growth. Liquefied natural gas (LNG) development in the province is expected to have a positive impact on B.C.'s economy. Fiscal sustainability at ICBC and the impact of global trade uncertainty on natural resource revenues pose risks to the fiscal plan.

To manage these risks, the Budget 2020 forecast for B.C. real GDP growth remains below the outlook provided by the Economic Forecast Council, reflecting one of the levels of prudence built into the fiscal plan.

Other layers of prudence are included in the fiscal plan to help address the possibility of lower than expected revenues, unforeseen expenses or emergencies. Budget 2020 includes an annual forecast allowance of \$300 million in each of the three years of the fiscal plan. Budget 2020 also includes a contingencies allocation of \$600 million in 2020-21 and \$400 million per year in 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Budget outlook

Budget 2020 projects surpluses of:

- \$227 million in 2020-21
- \$179 million in 2021-22
- \$374 million in 2022-23

Revenue outlook

Total government revenue is forecast at \$60.6 billion in 2020-21, \$62.4 billion in 2021-22 and \$64.2 billion in 2022-23.

Expense outlook

Total expenses over the three-year fiscal plan are forecast at \$60.1 billion for 2020-21, \$61.9 billion for 2021-22, and \$63.5 billion in 2022-23.

Capital spending

Taxpayer-supported capital spending over the fiscal plan is a record \$22.9 billion and includes new investments to sustain and expand provincial infrastructure, including schools, post-secondary facilities, housing, transit, roads, bridges and hospitals.

Debt affordability

B.C.'s taxpayer-supported debt is projected to be \$49.2 billion at the end of fiscal year 2020-21, \$53.9 in 2021-22 and \$58.6 billion at the end of 2022-23. The taxpayer-supported debt-to-GDP ratio, a key metric used by credit rating agencies, is expected to remain near 17% by the end of the fiscal plan period.

Contact:

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Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect

BACKGROUND 2

For Immediate Release
2020FIN0008-000290
Feb. 18, 2020

Ministry of Finance

New BC Access Grant

To support low- to middle-income post-secondary students when they need it most, Budget 2020 takes the next step in making life more affordable for B.C. students.

Building on the elimination of interest on B.C. student loans, a new needs-based, up-front BC Access Grant will remove barriers to education and provide support for learners to complete their studies.

In time for the 2020 fall semester, more than 40,000 eligible students at public colleges and universities throughout the province will receive immediate support with the upfront costs of their education.

The BC Access Grant complements the Canada Student Grant for Full-time Students, ensuring B.C. students receive up to \$4,000 a year to help with the cost of programs leading to a degree, diploma or certificate.

- Eligible students enrolled in a program under two years in length may receive up to \$4,000 a year in BC Access Grant support.
- Eligible students enrolled in a program of more than two years may receive up to \$1,000 a year in BC Access Grant support, in addition to up to \$3,000 under the Canada Student Grant for Full-Time Students program, totalling up to \$4,000 each year.

The grant design reflects best practices and research that needs-based, upfront grants not only improve access to education, but also encourage completion by making life more affordable for students as they begin post-secondary studies at the start of each school year.

The new grant will be created with a new \$24-million investment over three years, and by re-designing existing grant programs based on input from B.C. student advocates. This is in addition to approximately \$37 million government is reinvesting from grants to ensure students get the help they need when they need it most.

This means that almost double the number of students will receive support.

The BC Access Grant program continues support for labour-market priorities, modernizes student financial aid and is flexible to meet high-demand occupations, such as early childhood educators, health-care assistants and trades workers. This is the first time that provincial grants will be available to part-time students and students in programs of less than two years in a much broader range of programs.

The BC Access Grant program builds on the B.C. government's work to make life better and more affordable, including historic investments and policy changes in the post-secondary

sector:

Opening doors to post-secondary education and training:

- Launching the Provincial Tuition Waiver Program for former youth in care to access free tuition at all 25 public post-secondary institutions. To date, more than 1,100 former youth in care have benefited.
- Eliminating interest on B.C. student loans will save a typical student who graduates with about \$28,000 in combined B.C. and federal student loans \$2,300 in interest charges over a 10-year repayment period.
- Reducing the cost of education by investing more than \$3 million in open textbooks — the Province's largest investment.
- Creating B.C.'s first graduate-scholarship fund with a \$12 million investment — the largest investment in graduate scholarships in the province's history.

Supporting safe and state-of-the-art learning environments:

- Making housing more accessible and affordable for students by investing \$450 million to build approximately 5,000 new beds over six years, with 1,975 new beds funded to date.
- Opening 11 new and improved trades, health-care and engineering training facilities in partnership with the federal government, and post-secondary institutions throughout B.C.
- Developing a new, 24/7, free mental-health helpline for students at all public and private post-secondary institutions throughout B.C.
- Investing \$750,000 in sexual violence prevention programs at post-secondary institutions.

Investing in the jobs of today and tomorrow:

- Providing \$42 million annually by 2022-23 to add 2,900 tech spaces for a range of technology programming at public post-secondary institutions throughout B.C.
- Investing approximately \$30 million overall to expand co-op and work-integrated learning in each of B.C.'s 25 public post-secondary institutions.
- Negotiating a new Workforce Development Agreement with the Government of Canada, providing \$685 million over six years to train and improve the skills of 67,000 British Columbians.
 - Investments to date include \$12.4 million to help more than 2,000 women, youth and other under-represented groups access skilled trades training, and \$7.5 million for trades training for nearly 500 people in Indigenous communities
- Addressing workforce needs in health-care and early childhood education by:
 - investing in the first sonography program outside the Lower Mainland, at College of New Caledonia in Prince George, as well as Vancouver Island's first sonography program at Camosun College;
 - expanding occupational and physical therapy spaces, and creating the first programs in the North;
 - creating the first nursing degree program in the northeast in Fort St. John;
 - adding 314 early childhood education spaces at 12 post-secondary institutions as part of a three-year, \$7.4 million investment.
- Investing in trades training including:

- \$12.4 million to help more than 2,000 women, youth and other under-represented groups access skilled trades training;
- \$7.5 million for trades training for nearly 500 people in Indigenous communities throughout B.C.;
- \$3.5 million to increase the number of apprentice advisors to increase support for both apprentices and employers.

Quick Facts:

- 77% of all job openings over the next 10 years will require post-secondary education and training: 41% will require a certificate or diploma and 36% will require an undergraduate or master's degree.
- Starting in September 2020, eligible students applying for student financial assistance from StudentAid BC will be automatically assessed for the BC Access Grant. Students won't need to apply separately.
- Grant funding can be used toward tuition costs, but it can also be used for basic living expenses, such as the cost of rent, groceries or transit.
- The new BC Access Grant follows best practices, bringing B.C. in line with other Canadian jurisdictions that provide upfront, needs-based grants.
- The BC Access Grant supports the commitment in the Confidence and Supply Agreement with BC Green Party caucus to improve access and reduce the cost of post-secondary education for students.

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BACKGROUNDER 3

For Immediate Release
2020FIN0008-000290
Feb. 18, 2020

Ministry of Finance

B.C.'s largest-ever infrastructure plan

With B.C.'s population set to grow by more than one million people in the next 15 years, delivering the infrastructure and services that people need is key to maintaining a strong economic foundation and improving everyone's quality of life.

Budget 2020 makes new capital commitments by bringing taxpayer-supported capital spending over three years to \$22.9 billion – the highest level in B.C.'s history.

Work that is underway on new and upgraded hospitals and health facilities, highway and transit projects, schools and new housing throughout B.C. is stimulating more than 100,000 direct and indirect jobs during construction.

As a growing province, these investments will help meet the increased demands for services and keep B.C. on the path to a sustainable future.

Investments over the three-year fiscal plan period include:

- **Health:** \$6.4 billion to support new construction projects and upgrading of health facilities, medical and diagnostic equipment, and information management systems. Major projects include redevelopment of the Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster, new patient care towers at the Royal Inland Hospital in Kamloops and the Penticton Regional Hospital, replacing Mills Memorial Hospital in Terrace and building a new St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver.
- **Transportation:** \$7.4 billion for priority projects, including the Pattullo Bridge replacement, the Broadway Subway, four-laning on Highway 1 through Kicking Horse Canyon and improvements to highway corridors in Delta, Langley and along the southern coast of Vancouver Island.
- **Education:** \$2.8 billion to maintain, replace, renovate or expand K-12 facilities in North Vancouver, Sooke School District, Quesnel, Coquitlam, the Greater Victoria School District, Vancouver, Abbotsford, and an addition to Valleyview Secondary in Kamloops. Many of these new and upgraded schools will also include neighbourhood learning centres and child care spaces.
- **Post-secondary education:** \$3.1 billion to build capacity and help meet the province's future workforce needs in key sectors, including health, science, trades and technology. Projects include a new health science building for students at the British Columbia Institute of Technology in Burnaby; new equipment to expand the CEDAR supercomputer at Burnaby's Simon Fraser University; and specialized equipment at the University of British Columbia's Vancouver campus, Vancouver General Hospital and BC Cancer Research Centre to support the development of personalized treatments for prostate, bladder and kidney cancers. Additionally, the provincial student housing loan program

will see approximately 5,000 new student housing beds built around B.C., from Terrace to Cranbrook, and Prince George to Victoria.

- **Housing:** As part of government's 10-year plan to work in partnership to create more affordable housing for British Columbians, more than \$1 billion over three years will support the construction of new low- and middle-income housing throughout B.C. This includes more housing for seniors, Indigenous peoples and families. Budget 2020 also provides an additional \$56 million for 200 new units of supportive modular housing for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

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BACKGROUND 4

For Immediate Release
2020FIN0008-000290
Feb. 18, 2020

Ministry of Finance

Building the foundations of reconciliation

From the day this government was sworn in, it has made Indigenous rights and reconciliation a priority – not for one ministry, but across the whole of government. On the day each minister was given their individual ministerial responsibilities, they were also given a mandate letter. This letter directed them to seek true, lasting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in British Columbia, and to support the work of adopting and implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (the UN Declaration).

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act

In fall 2019, the legislature unanimously passed the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (the Declaration Act), developed in collaboration with the First Nations Leadership Council, which includes the B.C. Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit and Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs.

The Declaration Act requires government, in consultation and co-operation with Indigenous peoples in British Columbia, to take all measures necessary to bring provincial laws into alignment with the UN Declaration. It also mandates government create an action plan with Indigenous peoples on achieving the objectives of the UN Declaration, along with annual reporting on progress.

Government is committed to engaging with Indigenous peoples, Nations, organizations and leadership about next steps. This engagement will guide government as it begins to move forward toward full implementation of the Declaration Act.

Ongoing work to support reconciliation

The whole of government has been engaged for the past two and a half years in taking steps to work with Indigenous peoples to support healthy and thriving communities.

Government moved quickly to change policies and address gaps long identified as a high priority by Indigenous peoples, including work to address the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The Declaration Act builds on the foundation of this work and demonstrates government's commitment to true and lasting reconciliation, and willingness to work quickly to meet the priority needs of Indigenous peoples.

The following items are a selection of just some of the important work government has been doing over the last two years in anticipation of the Declaration Act.

Fixing the child protection system

No one wants to see a child harmed. And no one wants to see a child unnecessarily taken from their family. Because of the significant cultural harms caused by taking Indigenous children away from their families and communities, the Province has been working quickly to address the over-representation of Indigenous children in the care of the Province.

To keep children with their families and in their communities, government boosted support payments to extended family members to match the supports given to all foster parents. Because more Indigenous children are being supported from within their families and communities, B.C. now has the lowest number of children and youth in care in 30 years, and the lowest number of Indigenous children in care since 2014. Still, this government knows much more needs to be done.

One key way government is working to keep Indigenous children out of care is by ending the practice of issuing “birth alerts,” which saw children taken from their parents without consent by service providers who had child protection concerns.

Instead of taking children away because families need help, this new, collaborative approach involves service providers working closely with parents to identify and provide the supports they need to give their children a healthy start.

The continuing over-representation of Indigenous children and youth in B.C.’s care system makes supports for children and youth aging out of government care particularly important. That is why government expanded the tuition waiver for former children and youth in care to all public post-secondary institutions as one of its first actions. It has since expanded the program to invest in a number of trades training programs, and to increase and improve the financial supports former youth in care receive so that they can focus on their studies. Budget 2020 continues to build on this initiative by making these important financial supports available to more youth who qualify for the tuition waiver.

The Province acknowledges and honours the more than 1,100 former youth in care now getting a post-secondary education or trades training, tuition-free, and getting started on the path to a bright future.

Supporting Indigenous health and healing

Supporting the health and healing of Indigenous peoples is critical to the well-being of Indigenous families.

In partnership with the First Nations Health Authority, government has invested \$40 million to build two new urban Indigenous treatment centres and rebuild or renovate six more in rural communities. It has also helped fund the Kilala Lelum Urban Indigenous Health and Healing Cooperative in Vancouver – a first of its kind in B.C., led by Indigenous Elders using both Indigenous and Western medicine and healing practices.

Recognizing that Indigenous peoples have been disproportionately harmed by the overdose crisis, government partnered with the First Nations Health Authority, Métis Nation British Columbia and friendship centres on a three-year investment of \$20 million to support First Nations communities and Indigenous peoples in addressing this crisis. Fifty-five grants have

been provided under this program.

Making K-12 education more accessible and reflective of Indigenous experiences

For too long, too many Indigenous children and youth have been left behind by an education system that did not include Indigenous teachings and perspectives or reflect the lived realities of Indigenous peoples.

To help reverse this trend, government worked with the First Nations Educations Steering Committee and the First Nations Schools Association to deliver a collaborative tripartite agreement that ensures an equitable education for First Nations students, no matter where they live.

This \$100-million, five-year agreement supports First Nations students in B.C. who attend on-reserve First Nations schools or off-reserve public or independent schools.

Thanks to the hard work of Indigenous students, new investments and a new curriculum that better reflects Indigenous knowledge, perspectives and experiences, Indigenous students in B.C. are completing secondary school at the highest rate in history, with almost 70% completing secondary school last year. Still, the goal is to see every student in B.C. succeed, so there is much more work to be done.

To reach that goal, government is continuing to work to improve education for Indigenous students by funding new Indigenous teacher education training spaces, two new Indigenous master of education cohorts, and public-teacher education programs so teachers in schools are better equipped to support Indigenous learners. Government has also taken steps to better support Indigenous students in B.C. by bringing in a new professional standard that requires teachers to commit to truth, reconciliation and healing.

B.C. has also funded the creation of 17 First Nations language curriculums, with more in development, and is also committed to moving to full-course offerings in Indigenous languages. There are more Indigenous languages spoken in British Columbia than in any other province in the country. Government has a responsibility to do its part to support their survival and revival.

As part of addressing the vulnerability factors that can lead to Indigenous children struggling in the school system, government is investing \$30 million over three years to expand the Head Start program in more than 30 communities across the province. Head Start offers culturally specific early-learning, child care and parenting programs, with services available at no cost to families.

These investments, in addition to new funding in Budget 2020 for vulnerable learners, will help more Indigenous students graduate with their peers.

Opening doors to opportunity

Indigenous students need to see a path forward for them at B.C.'s post-secondary institutions, and a way to succeed in the workforce.

To better reflect the needs of Indigenous students, government is co-developing a new Indigenous post-secondary education and training strategy and Indigenous skills training programming with the First Nations Education Steering Committee, Indigenous Adult and

Higher Learning Association, Métis Nation British Columbia, the British Columbia Aboriginal Training Employment Alliance and other Indigenous post-secondary partners.

As part of helping Indigenous peoples access good-paying jobs, government is also delivering more than \$24 million a year in job-training funding in Indigenous communities through the Aboriginal Community-Based Training Partnerships Program, the Community Workforce Response Grant and Indigenous Skills Training Development Fund.

Community benefits agreements are being used to keep jobs in local communities, and government investments are being used as an opportunity to provide apprenticeships, skills training and employment opportunities on a priority basis for Indigenous peoples and others who have been shut out from opportunity.

Representation matters. That is why government has made sure there is Indigenous representation on every board of directors of public post-secondary institutions in British Columbia.

In line with Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, government funded the creation of Canada's first Indigenous law program at the University of Victoria, which is now providing intensive study of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous law, allowing people to work fluently across both realms. Government is also funding the pilot for a new Indigenous language fluency degree.

Supporting revitalization of Indigenous languages

For too long, language revitalization was neglected and all Indigenous languages in B.C. are endangered. Many of the challenges communities face around language and culture are systemic and founded on colonial practices aimed at eradication of Indigenous culture, including the residential school system. By investing in Indigenous languages and culture, the Province is starting to address those systemic social challenges at the community level, connecting peoples to their communities, land and cultures.

Fifty million dollars in provincial funding through the Indigenous-led First Peoples' Cultural Council is helping communities and peoples to reclaim connections to their language and culture. With this funding, the council has more than doubled the number of community language grants to support language revitalization, with more than \$16 million in grants distributed to First Nations since 2018.

The council is now supporting more than 30 language nests, which create cultural immersion environments for preschool-age children and their parents to become fluent in First Nations languages, as well as more than 100 mentor-apprentice teams. They are also significantly increasing the number of dialects archived on FirstVoices.com.

While the continued work of the First Peoples' Cultural Council supports a foundation for the future, there is also still much to do together to support communities in their work to restore their languages, which are vital to nationhood and sovereignty.

Working together to address the housing crisis

Indigenous Nations and organizations are important partners with government in addressing the housing crisis.

Through the Building BC: Indigenous Housing Fund, government is investing \$550 million over 10 years to build 1,750 homes for Indigenous peoples, both on- and off-reserve.

With this fund, B.C. became the first and only provincial government to fund on-reserve housing. Nearly 1,200 new affordable homes are underway through this program.

Additionally, each and every one of the Building BC housing fund streams welcomes applications from Indigenous partners.

The provincial government is working with Indigenous communities, friendship centres and other Indigenous-led organizations to build the homes people need in communities in every part of the province.

Protecting the things that matter

Resource development is a vital part of the provincial economy. Resource jobs sustain families and communities. But resource development must be sustainable and pursued without jeopardizing the clean air, clean water and healthy land that people depend on.

Under the UN Declaration, Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands, territories and resources.

As part of respecting this right, government worked closely with Indigenous leaders to find a way forward on the issue of salmon farms in the Broughton Archipelago. Using a consensus-based process, the Province and the Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis, 'Namgis and Mamalilikulla Nations worked together to deliver recommendations to the federal and provincial governments on the future of salmon farms in the region.

Through this process, which included industry, all parties were able to come together around a just transition plan for fish farms in the Broughton Archipelago. This process also resulted in changes to Land Act policy, so that in the future salmon-farm tenures will only be granted where there is an agreement in place with local First Nations within their traditional territories.

The Environmental Assessment Act plays an important role in involving Indigenous Nations in land-use decisions. Recognizing that this legislation is critical to reconciliation, government worked closely with Indigenous Nations to develop a new Environmental Assessment Act, which was passed in November 2018 and came into force in December 2019.

The new act increases avenues for Indigenous and public participation in the assessment process, involves all participants earlier and aims to identify issues of concern at the outset, improving outcomes and reducing conflict. Further, it requires the minister to consider participating Indigenous Nations' consent to the project before a decision is issued.

Supporting self-governance

The right to self-government, autonomy and self-determination requires that Indigenous Nations have stable, predictable sources of revenue to invest in critical things for every government, like infrastructure, services that build healthy communities and the staff to get it done.

In November 2018, government announced that B.C. First Nations will share in provincial gaming revenue, with a 25-year commitment that will see about \$3 billion in new revenues – transferred from one level of government to another – to support First Nations' priorities for social services, education, infrastructure, cultural revitalization and self-government.

Through the BC First Nations Gaming Revenue Sharing Limited Partnership, \$100 million per year is going to all First Nations communities in B.C. to pursue their own priorities and serve the needs of their communities. First Nations are using the revenues to make a real difference in communities. Examples include a community youth centre, a forest-fuel management program to protect homes from wildfires and language programs that build connection to culture.

Friendship centres provide important connections to Indigenous peoples in urban communities throughout the province. Recognizing the important role these community hubs play for urban Indigenous peoples, government tripled the financial support for friendship centres. More importantly, this represents, for the first time ever, stable core funding so that they can focus on their important work.

Justice for Indigenous peoples

Too many Indigenous peoples have had their lives irrevocably changed for the worse by a justice system that has been unresponsive to their needs and culturally unsafe. Meaningful, transformative changes to the justice system are needed to advance reconciliation.

To create these changes, government endorsed an agreement with the B.C. Aboriginal Justice Council, now the B.C. First Nations Justice Council, which identified seven priorities for transforming the justice system and committed partners to developing an Indigenous justice strategy.

To support this work, the BC Prosecution Service has been providing mandatory education and training for justice system staff, updating policy and practice, and engaging directly with First Nations to reduce the over-representation of Indigenous persons as victims, accused and offenders in the criminal justice system, and to make court services more culturally safe for Indigenous peoples.

Multiple new policies have been introduced through the BC Prosecution Service to reduce the over-representation of Indigenous peoples in the justice system, including new charge assessment guidelines, a new bail provision that directs prosecutors to exercise restraint in all bail matters, especially where the accused is Indigenous, and new guidelines for probation conditions that direct prosecutors to consider systemic factors that affect Indigenous peoples when addressing probation violations. Additional policy changes are under development to further support the goal of making the justice system more fair and equitable.

Recognizing that the adversarial approach often taken by the court system is not in line with Indigenous justice practices, government has also been expanding access to specialized Indigenous courts. Two additional Indigenous courts have opened since fall 2017, with the next one in Williams Lake set to open in early 2020.

Connecting Indigenous communities

Connections are important to communities. Articles 20, 21 and 24 of the UN Declaration require governments to support Indigenous peoples in gaining meaningful access to the internet to support economic activities, health care and social services.

In December 2019, government launched a new intake of the Connecting British Columbia program, offering an additional \$50 million to help rural, remote and Indigenous communities expand broadband infrastructure.

Work is already underway or completed under this program to offer high-speed internet access to 83 Indigenous communities in British Columbia.

Physical connectivity is as important as digital connectivity, which is why the Province is working with the federal government to maintain BC Bus North services. Government is also offering driver training to people in Indigenous communities, recognizing that the ability to get around is critical, especially for Indigenous peoples living in rural and remote communities.

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A STRONGER BC, FOR EVERYONE

**BUDGET 2020: A BALANCED PLAN
TO KEEP BC MOVING FORWARD**



STRATEGIC PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Making life more affordable	6
Delivering the services people count on	7
Building a sustainable economy that creates opportunities, for everyone	8
Building a cleaner future	9
Advancing meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous peoples	10
Advancing equality, diversity and inclusion	11
Conclusion	12
Summary – Three Year Fiscal Plan	13

Across British Columbia, things are changing for the better. More families can breathe a sigh of relief because they have finally found good, affordable child care. Students are learning in newer, safer schools. More people who struggled to find housing in the face of skyrocketing rents and low vacancy rates are moving into new homes. Patients don't have to wait as long for an MRI. And the elimination of MSP premiums has put more money back in the pockets of British Columbians.

It's no accident that everyday life is getting a bit easier for people. It's because our government is making different choices. We're choosing to put people first and tackle the challenges they face. Instead of ignoring problems and making reckless cuts to services, we are investing in solutions.

While people are starting to see the benefits, there's still more to do.

Budget 2020 keeps building – it keeps building on the progress we've made to make life more affordable and improve the services families count on. And it keeps building the infrastructure we need. New roads, bridges, housing, energy projects, schools and hospitals – investments like these create jobs, grow the economy and prepare B.C. communities for growth.

B.C. is an economic leader in Canada. We are leaders in other ways, too – in our commitments to better public services; protecting B.C.'s clean water, air and land; and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. These commitments all work together to create a sustainable and resilient modern economy in which everyone shares in the benefits. In today's economy, we can't afford to leave anyone behind.

Budget 2020 continues to focus on this government's three core priorities:

- » Making life more affordable
- » Delivering the services British Columbians depend on
- » Building a sustainable economy that creates opportunities for everyone

We understand that, in order to deliver on these priorities, we must take bold action on climate change, build meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and support equity, diversity and inclusion.

Supported by the Confidence and Supply Agreement with the BC Green Party caucus, government is advancing these priorities to make life better for people.

Two years ago, we set a new direction for this province. British Columbians work hard, and they deserve a government that works hard for them. That's what *Budget 2020* is all about. It keeps building a stronger B.C., for everyone.

MAKING LIFE MORE AFFORDABLE

For too long, life in B.C. became more and more expensive while government looked the other way. Since July 2017, this government has taken meaningful steps to make life more affordable. And British Columbians are starting to see the results.

When we eliminated the Medical Services Plan (MSP) premiums on January 1, 2020, we delivered one of B.C.'s biggest middle-class tax cuts – saving families as much as \$1,800 a year.

We have made ferry travel more affordable by cutting or freezing all fares and fully restoring the Monday to Thursday seniors' passenger fares discount. We also eliminated the tolls on the Port Mann and Golden Ears bridges.

In *Budget 2018*, we introduced ambitious plans to tackle two of the biggest affordability problems facing people in British Columbia: shortages of quality child care and affordable housing. Both are priorities identified in the Confidence and Supply Agreement. Two years later, affordable housing and child care remain cornerstones in building a stronger B.C., and they continue to be among our top priorities.

British Columbians deserve safe and affordable housing in the communities they call home. When people can find affordable housing that is closer to work, it gives them more time at home and with family – making life better for everyone.

Homes for BC included the largest investment in housing affordability in B.C.'s history: \$7 billion over ten years. We are working with non-profits, the private sector, Indigenous communities and local governments across British Columbia to build the homes people need. We have also taken steps to moderate the housing market, crack down on tax fraud, close loopholes, and make renting more secure.

And we are beginning to see results.

Close to 23,000 new homes are completed or underway in nearly 90 communities in B.C. Thousands of low- to middle-income families, seniors and individuals will soon have access to new affordable housing. This includes more than 5,200 affordable, mixed income rental homes – with a goal of over 14,000 – that are on the way through our Community Housing Fund. And the HousingHub, which is bringing partners together and delivering thousands of homes for the “missing middle” – middle-income families who have struggled to find affordable housing.

Nearly 2,100 people who were homeless or at risk of being homeless now have a safe and secure home with access to 24/7 support. And more than 800 additional supportive homes are on the way for people currently without housing.

For individuals and families who rent their homes, government has limited the yearly allowable rent increase to the rate of inflation – 2.6% for 2020. And we are giving more support

to help families and seniors afford rent through the Rental Assistance Program (RAP) and Shelter Aid For Elderly Renters (SAFER).

And there is more to come.

Budget 2020 ensures this positive momentum will continue, with more than \$4 billion invested in housing over the next three years.

At the same time, we have put British Columbia on the path to universal child care. Our made-in-B.C. plan is showing results. The parents of more than 65,000 kids are seeing real savings with the Affordable Child Care Benefit – up to \$1,600 each month. And kids in more than 55,000 spaces have seen their rates reduced with the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative. Thanks to our combined child care affordability measures, over 28,000 families have benefited from paying \$10 per day or less for child care.

Budget 2020 continues to invest in the Childcare BC plan, which reaches a total of \$1.4 billion over the fiscal plan in new investment since 2018. This brings overall child care programming to a total of \$2 billion over three years. This investment will help create thousands of child care spaces, build and improve the quality of facilities, and grow the workforce.

To give families with children even more support, the BC Child Opportunity Benefit, announced in *Budget 2019*, will begin later this year. Nearly 300,000 families with children under 18 will receive a benefit up to as much as \$1,600 per year for their first child, up to \$2,600 per year for families with two children, and up to \$3,400 per year for families with three children.

For years, B.C.'s car insurance rates have soared. The old government ignored problems at ICBC, allowing it to become a system that made lawyers rich, while drivers paid too much for insurance. It's time for change at ICBC. We're going to transform ICBC to deliver lower rates for B.C. drivers – saving them an average of \$400 on their insurance, while also improving care coverage for people who have been injured in a crash.

Government is also taking steps to put more money in the pockets of British Columbia's lowest-paid workers. We will keep strengthening the minimum wage, increasing it to \$14.60 an hour in 2020 and reaching \$15.20 an hour in 2021. Government is also increasing the liquor servers minimum wage, which disproportionately discriminates against women, to \$13.95 in 2020 and \$15.20 in 2021, when it will be the same as the general minimum wage.

DELIVERING THE SERVICES PEOPLE COUNT ON

Making sure high-quality public services are there for British Columbians when they need them is at the heart of what people count on governments to do. Protecting and improving health care, education, social and family support services, public safety and other services remains a central priority of this government.

We are taking steps to give people faster access to health care in communities across B.C. We are building and expanding hospitals. We have opened new urgent and primary care centres, hired more doctors and nurses, and increased staff levels at residential care homes.

B.C.'s Surgical and Diagnostic Imaging Strategy is shortening the wait times for surgeries and diagnostic procedures. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of MRI exams being done in the province, and wait times for hip and knee surgeries have fallen since 2016.

We are giving hospital patients access to more food grown and processed in B.C. through FeedBC. This not only delivers fresh, local food to people while they are in hospital, it also supports local farmers and communities.

Budget 2020 invests over \$1 billion in additional health care funding for British Columbians. This funding will continue improving the quality of health care services and enhancing patient outcomes. This includes supports for seniors, and more resources to continue tackling wait times for hip, knee, dental and other surgeries.

For too long, mental health issues were dismissed as a weakness, and addiction as a sign of moral failure. That's starting to change. As a society, we are finally recognizing these challenges for what they really are: health issues. We understand that comprehensive services are needed to support people coping with mental health issues or addiction. That's why in 2017, we created the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions to respond to the ongoing overdose crisis and build a better system for mental health care.

While much more is needed, interventions made by this government to tackle the overdose crisis are estimated to have averted more than 5,000 deaths since the crisis began.

Our goal for mental health care is a system where, if you need help, you only have to ask once and you receive it quickly. Our path to getting there is laid out in B.C.'s mental health roadmap: *A Pathway to Hope*, which we released last June. This plan includes a comprehensive mental health and addictions system

of care. Our immediate focus is on improving wellness for children, youth and young adults, supporting Indigenous-led solutions, improving substance use care, and improving access and quality of care throughout B.C.

For example, we are expanding the Foundry primary health, mental health and substance use centre "one-stop-shop" model to give youth and their families in communities throughout B.C. access to wraparound care. Eight centres are currently open and eleven more are on the way, for a total of 19 provincially.

To make sure kids in British Columbia are set up for future success, this government has increased and accelerated investment in the province's K-12 education system.

Since 2017, we have announced more than 80 capital projects for expanding, building and seismically upgrading schools across the province. More than 10,000 spaces are being created to improve the learning environment for students in growing communities.

Inside the classroom, we are supporting students with over 4,200 new teachers, including 700 new special education teachers and nearly 200 new teacher-psychologists and counsellors. Close to 2,000 new education assistants have also been hired.

In addition, we have been building new playgrounds, modernizing the curriculum and graduation program, training more Indigenous teachers, and looking out for the well-being of all students through programs like ERASE (Expect Respect and a Safe Education) and the SOGI-inclusive (students of all sexual orientations and gender identities) codes of conduct.

Budget 2020 invests an additional \$339 million over three years to build on work already happening to improve B.C. schools and set students up for success.

We are also working to help build a safer and more resilient B.C. with a new, additional investment of \$195 million over three years to help communities better respond to and recover from wildfires, floods and other emergencies in B.C.

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY THAT CREATES OPPORTUNITIES, FOR EVERYONE

Despite uncertainty in the global economy, British Columbia's economy remains strong and resilient. We are one of Canada's fastest-growing economies and have one of the lowest unemployment rates. As a government, we are taking steps to make sure B.C.'s economic strength is creating opportunities for everyone, not just the few at the top.

For all British Columbians, a good job makes a real difference. Over the next decade, more than 860,000 new job opportunities will open up across B.C. and more than 75% of these jobs will require some post-secondary education or training. With new opportunities in every region, it's critical that British Columbians have access to the training and education they need to benefit from B.C.'s momentum.

That's why we eliminated tuition fees for Adult Basic Education and English Language Learning programs within the first 100 days of forming government. More than 20,000 British Columbians are now upgrading their skills through adult basic education.

Last year, in *Budget 2019*, we eliminated the interest from all new and existing B.C. student loans – so people paying off their student loan experienced immediate relief and current and future post-secondary students will come out of school able to pay off their loans faster.

These were important steps in reducing barriers and expanding access to education. *Budget 2020* builds on them by introducing a new, up-front, needs-based grant program, giving financial support to students who need it most. Starting in September 2020, this grant program will support more than 40,000 students in degree, diploma and certificate programs as well as the skilled trades.

B.C. is growing, and that means there is a need to build and expand infrastructure across the province. Investment in infrastructure projects improves services and makes life better for people. It also creates training and good job opportunities. Government's capital investment will build, improve and expand B.C.'s roads, bridges, hospitals and schools, and support more than 100,000 direct and indirect jobs during construction throughout the province.

Infrastructure projects like the new Pattullo Bridge and the Highway 1 expansion are being built with Community Benefit Agreements. These agreements provide good jobs for local people and apprenticeship opportunities for women, Indigenous peoples and others underrepresented in the trades.

The \$7 billion investments in housing affordability laid out in government's plan to build 114,000 homes over 10 years will

create more than 54,000 jobs. It will also strengthen local economies by providing the housing employers need to attract and keep workers.

We know a strong economy is a diverse economy. Industries from tech and innovation to mining, agriculture and energy continue to generate good jobs for people and grow our economy.

Delivering on a Confidence and Supply Agreement priority, government appointed B.C.'s first innovation commissioner, whose work over the past two years has helped advance tech and innovation, by building relationships and helping companies access talent and capital.

The Emerging Economy Task Force, another shared priority in the Confidence and Supply Agreement, will help B.C. stay at the forefront of emerging economic developments and address the challenges and opportunities ahead.

We are working to create and foster the conditions that make B.C. a great place to invest and do business. In fall 2018, LNG Canada announced its decision to build an LNG plant in Kitimat – the largest private-sector investment in Canadian history.

Over the past two years, government has supported local business by lowering the small business corporate income tax rate – making it the second lowest in the country – and eliminating the PST on electricity for businesses.

A thriving forest sector has provided good, stable jobs for many families for generations. But right now, the people who depend on B.C.'s forest industry are struggling.

To create and support good jobs in British Columbia's forest sector, government is taking steps to promote B.C. wood products at home and abroad, and making changes to encourage the construction of encapsulated mass timber buildings. Government's infrastructure plan is building, wherever possible, with B.C. wood.

We are also supporting many forestry workers and their families by providing placement co-ordination services, training programs and early retirement bridging.

A healthy and sustainable forest industry depends on bringing together employers, workers, First Nations, the private sector

and government to find solutions. New funding in *Budget 2020* invests in developing more opportunities for B.C.'s bio-economy and revitalizing the forest sector.

A strong economy is one in which we treat workers fairly, and with respect, and where workers are safe and come home at the end of each day.

BUILDING A CLEANER FUTURE

Taking real action on climate change is central to building a more sustainable economy. By reducing carbon pollution we're creating opportunities and building a cleaner, stronger future.

In fall 2018 we launched CleanBC. This is B.C.'s plan to meet the rising climate challenge, prepare for climate impacts, and build a more prosperous, balanced, and sustainable future.

CleanBC was developed in collaboration with the BC Green Party caucus and supports the commitment in the Confidence and Supply Agreement to implement climate action to meet B.C.'s emission targets.

Budget 2019 committed approximately \$900 million over three years to implement the plan. *Budget 2020* provides an additional investment of over \$400 million to support CleanBC.

Electric vehicles (EV) are transforming how we travel around B.C. With CleanBC rebates, we're helping make electric vehicles more affordable – and we're rapidly expanding EV charging networks throughout the province. *Budget 2020's* CleanBC investment includes additional funding to support the Go Electric BC program to help more people transition to electric vehicles.

With CleanBC, we are updating the BC Building Code to make every new building more energy efficient and improve existing buildings. We're making progress with thousands of people and businesses using CleanBC rebates to help make their homes and workplaces more comfortable and energy efficient.

We're working with industry to reduce pollution and meet world-leading climate targets. We've launched the CleanBC Program for Industry to reduce emissions directly at industrial operations, and we're supporting technological innovation,

Last spring, we announced much-needed reforms in the *Labour Relations Code* and *Employment Standards Act*. The Temporary Foreign Worker registry has been introduced to protect these vulnerable workers and prevent abuse. And we are making sure people affected by domestic or sexual violence or those caring for an ill relative don't have to worry about losing their job when they need time off work.

reducing emissions from natural gas production, and developing solutions for long-haul shipping and trucking.

The impacts of climate change are already being felt throughout the province. By planning and taking action now, we can take care of our homes, businesses and communities. To better understand and prepare for changing weather and other climate impacts, the Province is developing a climate preparedness and adaptation strategy in collaboration with Indigenous peoples, local governments, and other stakeholders.

We're developing a plastics action plan to help keep plastic waste out of our environment. During summer 2019, our public engagement on plastic pollution attracted so much interest that government extended it so everyone who wanted to was able to participate. We heard from more than 35,000 people who gave their input.

We are committed to being transparent and accountable when it comes to meeting our climate goals, and we are continually monitoring the impacts of our CleanBC activities and adjusting our approach as needed. That's why we passed groundbreaking accountability legislation last fall, requiring annual reporting and establishing a new independent advisory council. Work is also underway on new interim and sectoral climate targets.

ADVANCING MEANINGFUL RECONCILIATION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Our work to build true and lasting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples is foundational to moving B.C. forward. Working in partnership with Indigenous communities, we have made significant progress – from language revitalization and child welfare, to revenue sharing and affordable housing.

Sharing gaming revenue with First Nations supports self-government and self-determination, and is starting to transform communities and lives. Over the next 25 years, First Nations will have the reliability of a long-term, stable funding source to invest in the services and infrastructure their communities need.

Budget 2020 delivers on our revenue-sharing commitments.

A fundamental shift in approach to B.C.'s child welfare system has been central to our work to advance reconciliation. We are focusing on prevention to help support families to stay together and to keep more kids out of care and in their communities with aunts, grandparents and other extended family members. B.C. has the lowest number of total kids in care since 1990 and the lowest number of Indigenous children in care since 2014.

Budget 2019 brought the support payments to extended family in line with those received by foster parents and boosted support payments for the first time in a decade. This is helping keep more kids out of care and in their communities with relatives, friends and other supportive people.

Government is also working on agreements with First Nations to transfer jurisdiction of child welfare to Indigenous communities.

We are beginning to address the over-representation of Indigenous peoples in the justice system. This includes new funding in *Budget 2020* to open new Indigenous justice centres that will provide culturally safe justice and social services and diversion programs to improve Indigenous peoples' experience with the justice system.

A revitalized *Environmental Assessment Act* was developed in collaboration with First Nations. This means Indigenous knowledge and laws will be applied to future regulations.

To make sure people are receiving the most effective and appropriate care, government is funding Indigenous-led projects focused on mental health and wellness.

We believe everyone in British Columbia deserves a safe and secure place to live. That is why we are working with First Nations to find solutions and take action in an area generally thought of as federal responsibility: on-reserve housing. British Columbia is the first province in Canada to fund on-reserve housing.

Government has provided funding to support Indigenous teacher education. This investment directly responds to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action that governments fund post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.

Over the past two years, meaningful progress has also been made in a number of other key areas. This includes the language revitalization funding that is increasing the number of Indigenous languages learners. Government has supported First Nations to participate in the clean energy sector and reduce remote communities' reliance on diesel. And we have advanced treaty negotiations with a number of First Nations through new, modernized approaches and signed other important reconciliation agreements.

In fall 2019, British Columbia became the first province in Canada to pass legislation to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Implementation of the UN Declaration is a shared priority under the Confidence and Supply Agreement.

The *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, developed in collaboration with the First Nations Leadership Council, is an important step on the journey to advancing reconciliation and respecting the human rights of Indigenous Peoples. The next critical steps are to work collaboratively with Indigenous peoples to develop an action plan to implement the objectives of the UN Declaration and to begin the work of aligning laws to the UN Declaration over time.

ADVANCING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

A critical part of a strong, resilient economy is opportunity – not just for some, but for everyone. Opportunity for all starts by eliminating the discrimination and bias that unfairly holds people back.

That's why government created the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner. This important office is tasked with promoting and protecting human rights and creating a more inclusive and just society for all British Columbians.

We are also incorporating Gender-Based Analysis Plus into the design of all B.C. policies and programs. By addressing inequality and bias from the beginning of every decision made in British Columbia, we can build a better, more inclusive, province for everyone.

Targeted supports are an important tool government uses to help those most in need. That's why we have introduced several innovative new jobs programs aimed at providing opportunities to people who have unique needs, such as older workers and survivors of violence and abuse. Similarly, the new homes we are building as part of the Building BC: Community Housing Fund include transition homes for survivors of family violence, seniors' housing, housing for people with disabilities and Indigenous housing both on- and off-reserve.

These and other investments address inequality by giving a hand up to those who have been held back.

Bringing the tuition waiver program for former youth in care to all public post-secondary institutions was also a critical part of our plan to make sure that no one gets left behind. We have built on that work by expanding the waiver to cover several trades training programs, and by improving the supports that these young people rely on while they learn. So far, more than 1,100 young people have taken advantage of this opportunity, and we expect thousands more will do so in the years ahead.

More young adults from care than ever before are accessing educational, cost of living and other supports through Agreements with Young Adults, and we're building on that success with further improvements to the program in the coming year.

To give even more children the foundation they need to pursue their dreams, we are taking action to support vulnerable youth in our public schools. Schools will be able to provide more supports like trauma counselling, school breakfast or lunch programs, tutoring and mentoring to children and youth in care, kids with mental health challenges and those living in poverty.

For years, the most vulnerable people in our province and our communities were left out and left behind. *Budget 2020* builds

on the progress we have made towards a better, more inclusive, British Columbia with additional investments to support the nearly 6,000 children and youth in government care. *Budget 2020* also extends care and services to more people who need the support of Community Living BC and protects the continuity of care for the 23,000 people with diverse abilities who receive services through Community Living BC.

Last year government introduced our province's first-ever poverty reduction strategy, *TogetherBC*. *Budget 2020* takes another next step towards lifting 140,000 people out of poverty by 2024 by increasing earning exemptions for individuals and families receiving income or disability assistance.

Increased earnings exemptions let people keep more of their hard-earned wages without risking access to the supports they need. This helps people accessing government supports to stay engaged in the workforce and build up valuable work experience that can lead to future opportunities.

Legal troubles can be destabilizing for people in poverty. That's why we are providing low-income people with quicker access to justice by funding new legal aid clinics in communities throughout B.C. These clinics will provide appropriate legal assistance and represent clients in legal proceedings at no cost.

For too long transgender, genderqueer and non-binary British Columbians have struggled to access the health care and other inclusive services they need to thrive. We have been taking steps to be more inclusive of people of all gender identities by introducing the ability to get "gender X" identification, and by making it possible to access more gender-affirming surgeries here in B.C., rather than requiring people to travel out of province. We will continue work on making government services more inclusive of people of all gender identities in 2020 and beyond.

Tackling racism and other forms of hate is a fundamental part of giving everyone the opportunity to succeed. The new Resilience B.C. Anti-Racism Network provides grants and other funding for communities. It also connects them to information, supports and the training needed to respond to and prevent racism and hate, as well as promote cultural diversity and multiculturalism.

Together these programs, investments and policies are aimed at making sure everyone has the chance to succeed in B.C.

By many measures, B.C.'s economy remains strong and resilient, and we are an economic leader. But the economy is broader than that. It also includes people, as well as the communities they call home, the natural environment they cherish, and the public services they count on. Is everyone able to share in the opportunities offered by a growing economy? Will we be able to grow old with dignity? Will our kids be able to stay in B.C. when they grow up?

Budget 2020 takes all of these considerations into account. It builds on the progress made over the past two and a half years. It helps make life more affordable, makes targeted investments in services, and builds important infrastructure. In the next two and a half years – and beyond – B.C.'s population is expected to keep growing, along with our economy. *Budget 2020* prepares our province for that growth.

New roads, bridges and public transportation will help businesses and shorten commute times. New hospitals will offer people better care closer to home. And new child care centres

will help more parents afford child care, so they can join the workforce if they wish.

We are working every day to make life better for people and ensure everyone has an opportunity to share in the benefits of a resilient, sustainable economy.

Budget 2020 builds a stronger B.C., for everyone.

SUMMARY – THREE YEAR FISCAL PLAN

(\$ Millions)	Updated Forecast 2019/20	Budget Estimate 2020/21	Plan 2021/22	Plan 2022/23
» Revenue	59,326	60,585	62,366	64,211
» Expense	(58,823)	(60,058)	(61,887)	(63,537)
» Forecast allowance	(300)	(300)	(300)	(300)
Surplus	203	227	179	374
Capital Spending:				
» Taxpayer-supported capital spending	5,248	7,126	7,399	8,390
» Self-supported capital spending	4,301	3,409	3,204	3,119
	9,549	10,535	10,603	11,509
Provincial Debt:				
» Taxpayer-supported debt	44,569	49,202	53,929	58,598
» Self-supported debt	25,769	26,890	27,834	28,697
» Total debt (including forecast allowance)	70,638	76,392	82,063	87,595
Taxpayer-supported debt to GDP ratio	14.6%	15.5%	16.3%	17.1%
Taxpayer-supported debt to revenue ratio	77.9%	84.1%	89.4%	94.4%
Economic Forecast:	2019	2020	2021	2022
» Real GDP growth	1.8%	2.0%	1.9%	1.9%
» Nominal GDP growth	3.7%	3.9%	3.9%	3.9%



Ministry of
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A STRONGER BC, FOR EVERYONE

BUDGET 2020: A BALANCED PLAN TO KEEP BC MOVING FORWARD



Across British Columbia, things are changing for the better. After nearly three years of choices that put people first, we're starting to see the results.

More families have greater peace of mind because they have finally found good, affordable child care. Students are learning in newer, safer schools with more supports in the

classroom. More people who struggled to find housing in the face of skyrocketing rents and low vacancy rates are moving into new homes. Families are getting the care they need at new health care centres. British Columbians will have more money in their pockets with the new BC Child Opportunity Benefit and the elimination of MSP premiums.

Budget 2020 keeps building — it builds on our progress to make life more affordable and strengthens our health care and education systems.

Budget 2020 builds the infrastructure we need with new roads, bridges, housing, schools and hospitals. And *Budget 2020* builds a future where your opportunities are not defined by your age, income bracket or postal code.

The new BC Access Grant will put a college or university education within reach for thousands more British Columbians, while building the skilled workforce our growing province needs.

B.C. is an economic leader in Canada. We are leaders in other ways, too — our government recognizes that investing in people, communities and a clean future is fundamental to building a strong and sustainable economy.

Our government is working hard for you every single day. And *Budget 2020* is our plan to keep B.C. moving forward.

HONOURABLE CAROLE JAMES
MINISTER OF FINANCE AND DEPUTY PREMIER



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Budget 2020 Details: www.bcbudget.ca
Ministry of Finance: www.gov.bc.ca/fin



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

MAKING LIFE MORE AFFORDABLE

You are working hard and so are we — working to provide savings and opportunities for you and your family to get ahead



BC CHILD OPPORTUNITY BENEFIT

Helping children and families get ahead

Starting October 1, 2020, nearly 300,000 families will benefit from the new BC Child Opportunity Benefit, a tax-free payment for families with children under 18 years of age. The new monthly payments will help families with basic necessities like food and clothing, further reduce child care costs, and make opportunities like sports and arts possible.



Up to \$1,600 a year
for families with
one child.



Up to \$2,600 a year
for families with
two children.



Up to \$3,400 a year
for families with
three children.

CHILDCARE BC

Making progress where young families need it most

CHILD CARE IN B.C. IS GETTING BETTER EVERY DAY. BUDGET 2020 CONTINUES TO INVEST IN THE CHILDCARE BC PLAN.

Families are already feeling the benefits. Thousands of new licensed child care spaces are opening, and some families are saving up to \$19,200 annually. Finally, parents are getting some much-needed relief, along with the chance to rejoin the workforce and take their careers to the next level.



*Access to affordable
child care is critical
to achieving equality
in the workplace and
helping to close the
gender pay gap.*

Our historic investment in child care will give more parents — especially women — the opportunity to fully participate in the workplace. So far, *Childcare BC* has delivered:

- » More than 10,400 new spaces
- » 28,000 children have benefited from \$10/day child care
- » Rates reduced for over 55,000 spaces
- » Wage lift for more than 11,000 early childhood educators
- » 5,400 bursaries for ECEs

FAMILIES ARE SAVING UP TO \$1,600 PER CHILD EACH MONTH.

NO MORE MSP PREMIUMS

A big tax cut for middle-income British Columbians



*2020 marks the first
year that British
Columbians no longer
have to pay MSP
premiums, saving
individuals up to \$900
a year and families up
to \$1,800 per year.*

HOMES FOR BC

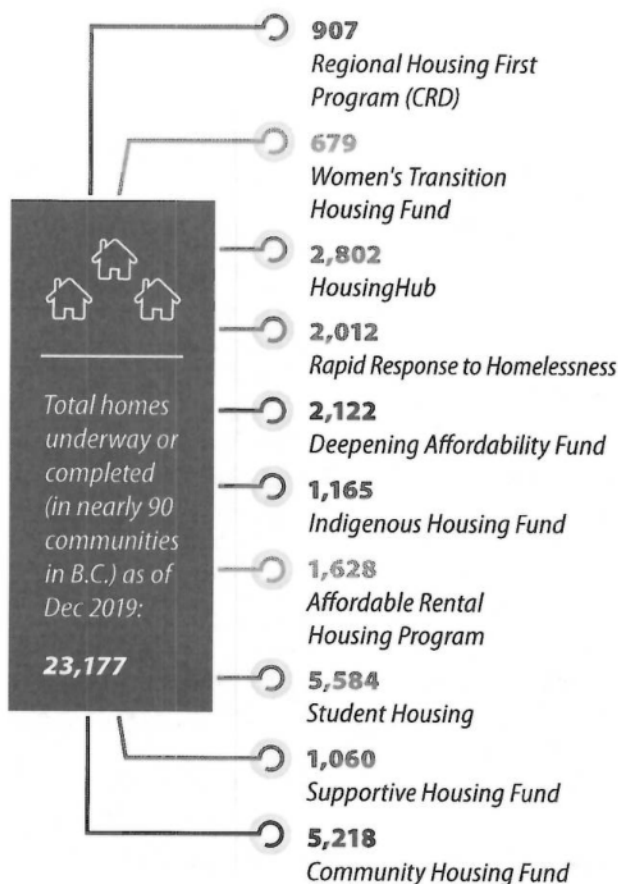
Building the homes you can afford

No matter where you live, housing affordability is one of our biggest challenges in B.C.

Budget 2020 continues to support landmark investments in housing construction and affordability measures. As part of our 10-year plan, *Homes for BC*, your government is investing more than \$1 billion a year to build more affordable homes for low- and middle-income British Columbians.

Homes for BC is delivering results. Already, more than 23,000 homes for families, seniors, and individuals are complete or underway in 90 communities. *Budget 2020* includes funding for new homes as well as funding for a public inquiry on money laundering. By cracking down on money laundering, stopping fraud, targeting speculators, closing loopholes, and making renting more secure, government is working to make housing more affordable for British Columbians.

MORE THAN 100,000 HOMES WILL BE BUILT OVER OUR 10 YEAR PLAN, CREATING OVER 50,000 JOBS THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE.

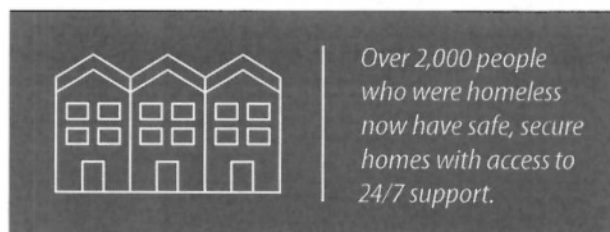


ACTION ON HOMELESSNESS

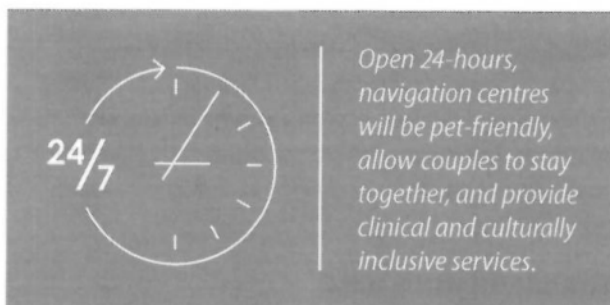
Because everyone deserves a safe place to call home

Through *Homes for BC* and *TogetherBC*, the province's first-ever poverty reduction strategy, we are opening supportive housing to people most in need to begin to break cycles of poverty.

This is low-cost housing with wraparound services for residents who get the support services they need to move forward.



New investments in *Budget 2020* will open an additional 200 supportive homes for people and communities in need. With this new investment, government's commitment to supportive housing now stands at 4,900 supportive housing units. In addition, two new 60-bed navigation centres — shelters with enhanced services — will open for people with complex challenges.





NEW EARNINGS EXEMPTIONS

Reducing poverty is about more than just financial assistance



Last year government introduced our province's first ever poverty reduction strategy, TogetherBC.

Budget 2020 takes another step towards lifting 140,000 people out of poverty by increasing earning exemptions for people and families receiving income or disability assistance. This means people can increase their income, stay connected to the workforce and continue building experience that can lead to a good-paying job.

TRANSFORMING ICBC

Saving you money on auto insurance

For years, B.C.'s auto insurance rates have soared. We are making public auto insurance work for British Columbians again by removing lawyers and legal costs to increase coverage for medical care and reduce your rates.

Care and treatment benefits for people injured in a crash will increase and new benefits will offer care for those most seriously injured for as long as they need it.

- » No basic rate increase in 2020
- » Average savings of 20% or \$400 per driver starting May 2021

SERVICES YOU CAN COUNT ON

IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

More hospitals, MRIs, surgeries

As B.C.'s population grows, we need to make sure we are ready to meet the demand for health care services. New funding will help reduce wait lists and improve the quality and sustainability of the health services we need. That includes funding to ensure people get the surgery they need with shorter wait times.



We're increasing access to preventative and diagnostic MRIs and improving care for seniors with new investments in primary care, home health, long-term care, assisted living and respite services.

Budget 2020 delivers better care for you and your family by building on the steps we have been taking to transform B.C.'s health care system.



New or upgraded hospitals are planned for Williams Lake, Quesnel, Trail, Nanaimo, Cowichan Valley, Fort St. James, Terrace, Surrey, Dawson Creek, Richmond, Burnaby, Vancouver and North Vancouver.



New urgent and primary care centres have opened in Surrey, Kamloops, Quesnel, Vancouver, Nanaimo, Langford, Kelowna, Prince George, Burnaby, North Vancouver, Vernon and Pitt Meadows-Maple Ridge, with two more planned for in Victoria and East Vancouver.



INVESTING IN EDUCATION

More teachers and new, safer schools



Budget 2020 will support the growing number of students in our schools — more teachers, special education teachers, psychologists and counsellors to ensure all students have the best chance at success. We're reducing class sizes and increasing classroom resources.

We're building, expanding and seismically upgrading schools throughout the province.

To keep kids and the people who support them safe, we have nearly tripled the pace of seismic project approvals with 39 projects announced in just two years.

MORE THAN 10,000 SPACES ARE BEING CREATED TO IMPROVE THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR STUDENTS IN GROWING COMMUNITIES.

BETTER ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Removing barriers, expanding services

WOMEN, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, THOSE LIVING IN POVERTY AND OTHER MARGINALIZED PEOPLE OFTEN HAVE GREATER BARRIERS TO ACCESSING LEGAL SERVICES. THAT IS WHY WE ARE FUNDING LEGAL AID CLINICS THROUGHOUT B.C. TO REPRESENT PEOPLE IN LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AT NO COST.



We're funding new, expanded court services in Surrey, Fort St. John and Abbotsford.

And because Indigenous peoples are over-represented in the justice system, we are funding new, culturally-safe Indigenous justice centres and programs.

Budget 2020 provides an additional \$71 million to enhance public safety and support services for people affected by crime. This includes \$13 million for the Crime Victims Assistance Program to help victims and their families cope with the effects of violent crime.

IMPROVING THE LIVES OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Protecting and Supporting Children in Care

MORE THAN 6,000 CHILDREN AND YOUTH LIVE IN GOVERNMENT CARE AND, WHILE THE NUMBER IS DECLINING, INDIGENOUS CHILDREN AND YOUTH ARE STILL OVER-REPRESENTED IN CARE.

Budget 2020 includes \$15 million over three years to make sure that Indigenous youth in care are getting the support they need to maintain connections with their community.



Funding helps Indigenous children go to cultural events and stay connected with community members.

INVESTING IN A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

NEW BC ACCESS GRANT

Up to \$4,000 for post secondary students

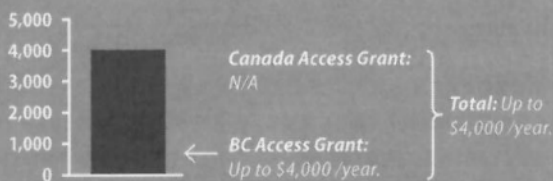
To remove barriers to the training and education needed for in-demand jobs, *Budget 2020* takes the next step in making life more affordable for B.C. students. Building on the elimination of interest on B.C. student loans, starting this fall, more than 40,000 students at colleges and universities will receive immediate support with up-front costs of their education through the new BC Access Grant.

The needs-based grant complements the Canada Access Grant, ensuring low- and middle-income B.C. students receive up to \$4,000 a year to help with the cost of programs that lead to a degree, diploma or certificate.



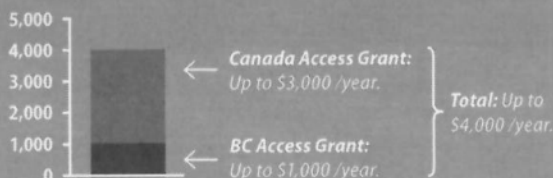
For a **program length of under 2 years**, B.C. students can receive a total of **up to \$4,000 a year**.

PROGRAM LENGTH: UNDER 2 YEARS



For a **program length of 2 years and over**, B.C. students can receive a total of **up to \$4,000 a year**.

PROGRAM LENGTH: 2 YEARS AND OVER



RECONCILIATION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

A foundation for moving BC forward



Building true and lasting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples is foundational to moving B.C. forward.

British Columbia is the first province in Canada to pass legislation to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This recognizes Indigenous peoples as full partners in B.C.'s economy, offering a path forward for everyone living and doing business in British Columbia. Next steps are to work collaboratively on an action plan to implement the objectives of the UN Declaration and begin the work of aligning laws to the UN Declaration over time.

Government has started sharing gaming revenues, with each First Nations receiving between \$250,000 and \$2 million each year. Every First Nation will have the reliability of a long-term, stable funding source to invest in self-governance and the services and infrastructure their communities need, including child care, schools and housing.

WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, B.C. IS THE FIRST PROVINCE TO FUND ON-RESERVE HOUSING.

By working with First Nations and Métis groups, we are improving the child welfare system — focusing on prevention to help support families to stay together and keeping more kids out of care. We are also working on agreements with First Nations to transfer jurisdiction of child welfare to Indigenous communities.



INFRASTRUCTURE AND JOB CREATION

Creating jobs while growing our province

Budget 2020 sees the largest investment in B.C. history in the infrastructure we need to keep moving forward — schools, hospitals, highways, and housing.

Our population is expected to rise by more than a million people in the next 15 years — and we'll be ready.

WORK UNDERWAY ON INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IS CREATING MORE THAN 100,000 DIRECT AND INDIRECT JOBS ACROSS THE PROVINCE.

Thousands of good jobs are being created as a result of the B.C. government's infrastructure plan. These investments will also help meet the growing demands for services and infrastructure.



Health: \$6.4B to build and expand hospitals and health facilities, and for medical equipment.



Transportation: \$7.4B for priority projects including bridge replacements, highway expansions, and corridor improvements.

K-12

Education: \$2.8B to replace, renovate or expand K-12 schools — many to include child care spaces and neighbourhood learning centres.



Post-secondary education: \$3.1B to expand our institutions, help meet workforce needs, and build student housing.



Housing: More than \$1B for more affordable housing for seniors, Indigenous peoples, individuals, and families.

SUPPORTING B.C.'S FOREST SECTOR

Assisting workers and developing new opportunities

A thriving forest sector has provided good, stable jobs for many families going back generations. Over the last several years, the mountain pine beetle infestation, wildfires and the softwood lumber dispute have reduced timber supply, triggering mill closures or uncertainty for forest companies and workers. To create and support good jobs in the sector, we are promoting B.C. engineered wood products at home and abroad, using wood wherever possible for public infrastructure and championing the construction of encapsulated mass timber buildings.

Budget 2020 takes another step forward with new funding to develop opportunities for B.C.'s bio-economy and revitalization within the forest sector. Workers are also accessing job placement and skills training, equipment loans for coastal logging contractors, grants to help the hardest hit communities, and programs to support early retirement.

WILDFIRES AND FLOODS

Responding and recovering from natural disasters

Recent years have seen natural disasters devastate homes, communities, business and industry. This year's budget boosts funding to help the Province and communities prepare for, respond to and recover from wildfires, floods and other emergencies.

CLIMATE ACTION AND CLEANBC

Harnessing the power of a cleaner future

New investments in *CleanBC*, our government's plan to reduce pollution and build a cleaner future, are helping British Columbians transform how we get around, and where we live and work — making our schools, universities and hospitals more energy efficient. We're providing increased support to help industries move towards clean, low-carbon solutions. *Budget 2019* provided record level funding to implement the plan. *Budget 2020* provides an additional investment of over \$400 million to support *CleanBC*.



This year's budget continues the Climate Action Tax Credit for families and adds \$20 million to the Province's program to make purchasing an electric vehicle more affordable.

MAKING LIFE BETTER

Budget 2020 delivers

A central commitment of government is to make life more affordable for hardworking British Columbians.

A family of four earning \$70,000 and living in Metro Vancouver **could save nearly \$30,000**, thanks to:

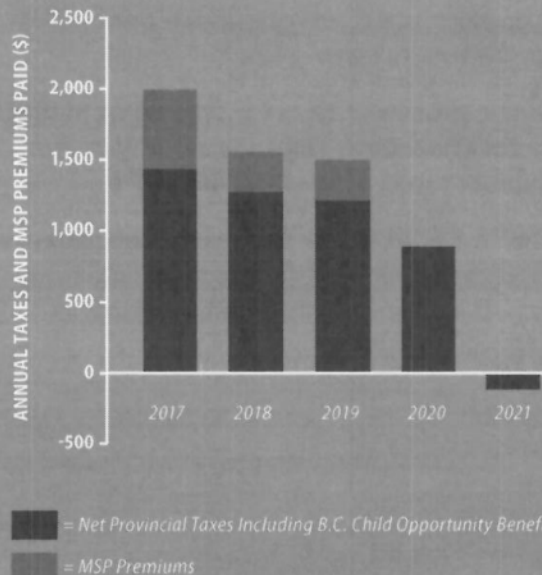
- » BC Access Grant — up to \$3,495 for post-secondary students in programs of under two years
- » BC Child Opportunity Benefit — up to \$1,380 per year
- » MSP elimination — up to \$1,800 per year
- » Student loan interest removal — a typical student who graduates with about \$28,000 in combined B.C. and federal loans saves \$2,300 in interest charges over a 10-year repayment period.
- » Affordable Child Care Benefit — up to \$14,895 per year
- » Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative — up to \$5,400 per year
- » Elimination of Port Mann and Golden Ears Tolls — up to \$1,500 per year
- » Electric vehicle savings — up to \$6,000 when purchasing an electric vehicle and approximately \$1,500 per year in gas costs
- » Heat pump savings — up to \$2,000 to replace a fossil fuel heating system



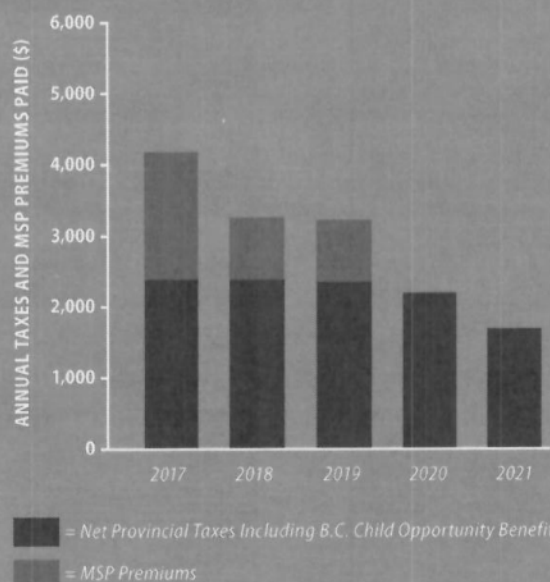
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By 2021, a single parent, with two children, earning \$40,000 **will save over \$2,100 in taxes.**



By 2021, a family of four earning \$60,000 **will save over \$2,500 in taxes.**



BUDGET 2020 SPEECH

I'd like to begin by acknowledging that we are on the traditional territory of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations and I want to give a warm welcome to everyone here today.

A budget is built with the work and input of many — thanks to all the staff in the Ministry of Finance and my office for their extraordinary efforts.

Thank you to everyone who wrote and took part in the Select Standing Committee on Finance's budget consultations and thank you to the many people who have shared their ideas and hopes for the future of our province.

Working together will help us build a stronger B.C. for everyone.

That's what *Budget 2020* is all about.

It's about the fundamental changes our government has been making for the people of British Columbia.

It's about continuing to fix the problems facing families today.

And it's about delivering the results that keep us moving forward together.

The changes we have made are all about making lives better today and creating opportunities that last a lifetime — opportunities to put down roots, contribute to your community, and have a job that provides a good quality of life.

These are the things that drive us — and my family is no exception.

In the 1950s, my grandparents left England and moved to Saskatchewan with my mum. Like so many others who immigrated to Canada, they left the only home they had ever known in search of a better life for their family.

Times were tough, money was tight. My grandmother soon found a job at the local hospital. Together, she and my grandfather worked day in and day out to put food on the table and keep a roof over our heads.

For my grandparents, family was never just immediate family — it was anyone in our community who needed a hand up. Over the years, our family grew to include dozens of foster kids.

Growing up alongside children of all ages and abilities showed me that while everyone has something to contribute to this world, not everyone is given the opportunity they need to make their mark.

While my grandmother possessed a quiet, solid strength, my mother is the trail-blazer and fierce community advocate.

As a young single parent with two children, my mum enrolled in teacher's college, about two hours away from our family home in Saskatchewan. During the week, my grandparents would take care of me and my sister, while my mum put herself through school.

Looking back, I can see the barriers she faced as a single parent to two young girls living in a small prairie town. I also recognize that access to education creates opportunities that span generations — it has the power to change a family forever.

Had the door to opportunity remained closed for my mother, I have no doubt that my life would have looked very different.

These personal experiences also reflect what I have heard from so many British Columbians. People want to do for themselves; sometimes they just need a door to open for that to happen.

As Finance Minister, it's my job to make sure that the benefits of B.C.'s strong economy are felt by everyone, not just the few at the top.

After nearly three years of choices that put people first, we're starting to see the results. From new roads, hospitals, schools, and housing, to new services and job opportunities... life in B.C. is getting better every day.

And our economy is stronger because we are putting B.C. on a path to a cleaner, better future.

This is my third full budget as Finance Minister.

As with previous years, our government continues to work from a balanced budget. Our fiscal strategy lays out a solid plan with layers of planning and foresight.

B.C. remains an economic leader in Canada. We are the only province with triple-A credit ratings from the three major international rating agencies.

We have the lowest unemployment rate in the country, and zero operating debt.

Our fiscal foundation remains strong, as does our commitment to:

- making life more affordable;
- delivering the services British Columbians depend on; and
- building a sustainable economy with opportunities for everyone.

We know that delivering on these priorities means strong climate action, meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and a commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

Supported by the Confidence and Supply Agreement with the BC Green Party caucus, government is advancing these priorities.

Moving forward, together

Together, we have made a lot of progress and, today, I am presenting our plan to keep B.C. moving forward.

Budget 2020 breaks down barriers to opportunity for you, your children and your neighbours.

Budget 2020 delivers access to a good education, quality health care and vital community supports.

And *Budget 2020* supports British Columbians who are working hard to get ahead by making life more affordable.

We are not here to deliver the largest surplus possible, at all costs.

The point of a budget is to plan ahead, to set priorities and to make responsible decisions that are good for people over the long term.

That is what we have done for the last two and a half years, and we can't afford to turn back.

Choosing a different path

Over the last decade our province's economy has remained strong, but many people and communities fell further behind.

There was a bright future in British Columbia, but only for the few who could afford it.

I am proud to say that, as a province, we are now on a different path. We are making different choices. And *Budget 2020* backs up our choices with action.

Mr. Speaker, the days of cashing in on a hot real estate market at the expense of hardworking British Columbians are done.

Instead of turning a blind eye to money laundering and the housing crisis, we're acting so that everyone can afford a future in British Columbia.

Money laundering in our economy must end. Our goal is to ensure balance — and it is not balanced to have an economy distorted by dirty money.

Budget 2020 delivers on our commitment to conduct a public inquiry and get people the answers they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, the old practice of hoarding surplus at the expense of people is over. Instead, we are choosing a balanced fiscal approach, one that maintains a reasonable surplus while investing in people.

Because we understand that when the door to opportunity closes one too many times, people can lose hope. A little support can be life changing.

Building on our government's poverty reduction plan, *Budget 2020* increases earnings exemptions for people receiving income and disability assistance.

This gives people a chance to increase their household income, remain connected to the workforce, and build up the kind of valuable work experience that can lead to a good-paying job.

And after years of cuts that hurt people most in need, *Budget 2020* provides new funding for children in care and adults with diverse abilities.

A commitment to ongoing funding for the cultural connections program will provide more support for Indigenous children to stay connected with their communities and families.

Mr. Speaker, in partnership with Indigenous peoples, we are choosing a more stable and prosperous path for everyone.

We got right to work with new money for language revitalization, a historic revenue-sharing agreement, and changes to the child welfare system that will keep more Indigenous children in their communities.

Aboriginal friendship centres now have long-term, stable funding. And we stepped up as the first province to fund on-reserve housing in Canada.

I am proud to say that the human rights of Indigenous peoples are now enshrined in law as the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

I recognize the road ahead is not without its challenges. But if we invite the conversation and work from a place of respect, we will build a better future together.

And to achieve that future, Mr. Speaker, our government is not waiting to take action on complex problems that defy simple solutions.

Our government has taken significant steps to help address sustainability at ICBC and affordability for British Columbians.

While the old government ignored the problems with auto insurance, we are transforming ICBC to make it work for you.

Instead of pushing problems down the road, we are standing up for the best interests of British Columbians.

I want to recognize that, right now, the people who depend on B.C.'s forest industry are hurting. A thriving forest sector has provided good, stable jobs for many families going back generations.

However, over the last number of years, the mountain pine beetle infestation, wildfires and the softwood lumber dispute have reduced timber supply and triggered a wave of mills to close their doors or scale back shifts.

These changes didn't happen overnight, but that doesn't lessen the hardship that forest workers and their families are facing right now.

We won't turn our backs on the people who have helped power our province for so long.

Our government's top priority is to provide the help that people need to get on with their lives, to support their families, and to plan for a good future in our province.

Workers are now getting job placement and skills training, equipment loans for coastal logging contractors, grants for hard-hit communities, and programs to support early retirement.

Investments in public infrastructure are building a better British Columbia, and wherever possible, B.C. engineered wood will serve as the foundation.

These are important steps. But a healthy and sustainable forest industry depends on bringing together industry, First Nations, unions and government to find solutions.

Budget 2020 takes another step forward with new funding to begin developing opportunities for B.C.'s bio-economy and revitalization within the forest sector.

We will keep working hard to make sure that forest workers, contractors, and communities get the support they deserve.

A better future, together

Because we are all in this together. And only when we work together, will we succeed in the kind of fundamental change that provides relief from the problems facing people now and inspires hope for a better future.

A future where your opportunities are not defined by your age, income bracket or home address. Instead, our plan creates a lifetime of opportunity for everyone in British Columbia.

For my family — as it does for so many others — it all started with a good education.

Going back to school and building up her career meant that my mother was able to put away a little money each month and build a better future for herself and our family.

Growing up, we didn't always have a lot, but we had enough for both me and my sister to know that nothing was out of reach.

As Finance Minister, I am unwavering in my commitment to delivering the opportunities that our children and grandchildren deserve.

But for too long, families were left to struggle as their monthly bills kept going up, while the health, education, and community supports they counted on were slashed.

In a prosperous province like British Columbia, we can and must do better.

And we are.

Launching this fall, the new BC Child Opportunity Benefit will help lift up thousands of kids and give them the opportunities they deserve, now and down the road.

Families with one child will be eligible to receive up to \$1,600 annually. For two children, that goes up to \$2,600, and it's up to \$3,400 for three kids. People can bank on this tax-free support up until their child's eighteenth birthday.

On top of the new benefit, this will be the first full year that people won't have to pay the unfair MSP premium.

Together, these two measures could save families thousands of dollars that they can put towards what really matters: setting up the next generation for success.

For many, that starts with access to affordable, high-quality child care.

Child care for all is closer than ever to becoming a reality in our province. Thousands of new licensed child care spaces are opening, and some parents are saving nearly \$20,000 annually.

Budget 2020 builds on the progress with total investments reaching \$2 billion over three years for child care in British Columbia.

Child care is critical to achieving equality in the workplace, helping to close the gender pay gap, and giving more parents — particularly women — the opportunity to take their careers to the next level.

We are also investing in B.C.'s early childhood educators — again, almost entirely women — with more bursaries and increased wages.

Additionally, B.C.'s minimum wage will rise to more than \$15 per hour by 2021. For the almost 140,000 people who currently earn minimum wage, more than half of which are women, this will provide a much-needed boost.

We've also invested over \$12 million to provide more opportunities for women to become today's electricians, carpenters and heavy-duty mechanics, while opening the door for the next generation of girls.

Mr. Speaker, our government is putting children and families first. Child care for all is a fundamental change that will redefine an entirely new generation of children and their parents.

Not only does quality child care give parents peace of mind, it can help provide kids with the solid start they need for a smooth transition to school.

Record investments in education mean that B.C. kids are learning in some of the smallest class sizes in a decade with more supports available for children of all ages and abilities.

New schools are opening in some of our fastest growing communities, from Surrey to Fort St. John, and Chilliwack to Langley, to inspire hope, curiosity and confidence in young learners.

As Finance Minister, but also as a mother and grandmother, I know the success of our province depends on giving our kids the best possible start in life.

Inside the classroom, we are supporting students with more than 4,200 teachers, including 700 new special education teachers, and nearly 200 new teacher-psychologists and counsellors.

I am proud to say that *Budget 2020* includes new funding of \$339 million over the next three years to continue improving B.C. schools and setting students up for success.

Together, these investments add to the work already underway to strengthen our K-12 system, build better and safer schools, and prepare students for life after graduation.

Mr. Speaker, we are making sure that our young people have the skills and training to excel in the economy of tomorrow.

In the next 10 years, there will be more than 800,000 job openings in health care, early childhood education, skilled trades, tech and much more.

There are good things happening in our province, and we want everyone to be a part of it.

That is why our government has focused on breaking down barriers and creating pathways to opportunities.

Adult Basic Education and English Language Learning are now free.

Twelve hundred former youth in care are now attending college, university and trade schools for free.

B.C. student loans are now interest free.

And we're partnering with post-secondary institutions to build thousands more student housing beds.

Because we want our young people to focus on gaining the skills, knowledge and experience they need to provide for themselves and help power B.C.'s economy.

From my own experience, I saw how being able to go to school and build up my mum's career changed her and my family. As a single parent, it put her on the pathway to economic independence and opened doors for me and my sister.

At the same time, being able to rely on the support of family helped my mum overcome the obstacles that may otherwise have kept her out of school. She was able to seize the opportunity and build a better life for herself and our family.

These are the kinds of opportunities that every person — and every family — deserve. And as Finance Minister, this is exactly what I intend to deliver.

As part of Budget 2020, I am proud to announce the new BC Access Grant for post-secondary students.

Starting in September 2020, the new BC Access Grant will provide upfront funding to more than 40,000 students who may otherwise struggle to pay for post-secondary education.

Between the new access grant and the Canada Student Grant, students can receive up to \$4,000 a year to help them with the cost of tuition.

And — for the first time — provincial grants will be available to part-time students and students enrolled in programs of less than two years.

This will help people land good-paying jobs in high-demand fields like early childhood education, health care and the skilled trades.

This grant is about investing in our shared future... A future where B.C.'s workforce is flexible, innovative and ready to thrive in a world shaped by advancing technology, global trade and climate action.

And, I believe B.C. will rise to that challenge thanks to the passion and talents of the people who call our province home.

Building up a skilled workforce is one part of the equation. But we also need to build affordable housing to keep people in the neighbourhoods where they live, work and learn.

Sweeping change is on the way thanks to the largest investment in affordable housing in B.C.'s history — \$7 billion over 10 years to deliver 114,000 homes. In just two and a half years, almost 23,000 new homes are underway or complete throughout the province.

We started where the impact was most immediate. More than 2,000 people who were homeless now have stable housing and access to 24/7 support. And another 800 supportive homes are on the way.

This year's budget provides additional funding for more emergency shelter spaces, supportive homes and navigation centres to provide wraparound supports for people in need.

Overall, government is delivering more than \$4 billion over three years to help bring affordable housing within reach for people of all ages and income levels.

We have a long way to go and we will get there in partnership with all levels of government, Indigenous peoples, not for profits and the private sector.

Mr. Speaker, our government is delivering the homes British Columbians need, along with the infrastructure and services that people count on, from our kids to our parents and grandparents.

We know there is nothing more important than being able to access high-quality health care when you or your loved one needs it the most. As B.C.'s population grows and ages, we need to make sure we are ready to meet the demand.

And *Budget 2020* delivers. We are providing an additional \$1 billion over three years for British Columbia's health-care system.

This new funding will help bring down surgical wait times and address the growing demand for services.

Budget 2020 delivers better care for you and your family by building on the steps we have already taken to transform B.C.'s health care system.

New or upgraded hospitals are coming to Fort St. James, Surrey, Williams Lake, Burnaby, Quesnel, Vancouver, Trail, Richmond, Nanaimo, North Vancouver, Dawson Creek, the Cowichan Valley and Terrace.

New urgent and primary care centres are now open in Kamloops, Quesnel, Langford, Surrey, Vancouver, Nanaimo, Prince George, Burnaby, North Vancouver, Kelowna, Vernon, Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows. And another two centres are opening soon in Victoria and East Vancouver.

After years of cuts, investments in long-term care and respite services are giving seniors and their caregivers a well-deserved boost.

No one should be forced to decide between buying groceries or prescription medicine. This year marks the first anniversary of eliminating or reducing Fair Pharmacare deductibles for 240,000 families.

And soon, every post-secondary student will have access to 24/7 mental-health support services. This builds on a province-wide expansion of Foundry Centres to provide youth and families with a "one stop shop" for mental-health and substance-use supports.

Because it's crucial to reach out to people early, before challenges escalate.

We know there's more to do, especially when it comes to keeping our young people healthy.

As part of *Budget 2020*, B.C. will begin charging PST on sweetened carbonated drinks to help address the health and economic costs of these beverages.

Research shows that teens between the ages of 14 and 18 are the top consumers of pop. This is a step that health professionals and an all-party committee have long supported.

Because this is about keeping young people healthy while taking in a bit of revenue to continue to pay for enhanced health care services for everyone.

An economy that works for people

We know that people work hard to build a good life for themselves and their family. And in turn, people deserve an economy that works hard for them...

By delivering good, stable jobs in all corners of the province.

By building a connected and resilient network of communities.

And by recognizing that a prosperous future means a clean future.

To do that, we need an economy that works for people. When people thrive, our economy thrives.

As Finance Minister, I often speak about the importance of building a diverse, sustainable and resilient economy. But what does that mean?

I think about my own story. My grandparents were both able to find good jobs that allowed them to provide for our family. My mum was able to go back to school and build up her career because my grandparents were willing and able to look after me and my sister.

To me, this gets at the heart of what resilience looks like, for families and communities. It doesn't come down to our own individual strength, but rather the strength of the community we build around us.

And this comes back to the core value guiding our government. It does not come down to a choice between investing in a strong economy, a clean environment, or in the people that call this province home.

Investing in people, communities, and a clean future is fundamental to building a strong and sustainable economy.

This is a significant departure from what people experienced throughout much of the past decade. While British Columbia's economy remained strong, many people and communities fell further behind.

Now, together, we are building a better future grounded by an economy that works for everyone, not just those at the top.

As part of *Budget 2020* and our government's ongoing work to improve the services and infrastructure that we all depend on, a new tax bracket is being introduced for the top 1% of income earners in our province.

Nearly half the revenue will come from people making more than \$1 million annually.

This will help to deliver the infrastructure and services that create good jobs and keep B.C.'s economy moving, while maintaining B.C.'s tax system as one of the most competitive in the country.

As I've said before, we continue to do our part and look carefully at spending across government. This is simply part of ongoing responsible budget management.

No matter where you call home — whether it's our province's north, south, east or west — our plan creates opportunities for you.

I know that as proud British Columbians, there is more that unites us than divides us.

We all want life to be more affordable. We all want a quality education for our kids. We all want access to health care when we need it. And we all want to feel the benefits that come with a strong provincial economy.

These are the priorities that have shaped our province's historic capital plan. The scale of change is staggering: \$18 billion worth of work is happening in all corners of the province.

By building the schools, roads, hospitals, housing, post-secondary facilities and more that our growing province needs, our plan is supporting 100,000 direct and indirect jobs during construction.

Together, we are building our way to a better quality of life — no matter where you live.

For our urban centres, parents taking their kids to soccer practice will be able to hop on the Broadway Subway. Or, an electrician travelling from her home in Surrey to a job in New West will get where she needs to go because of the new Pattullo Bridge.

Metro Vancouver is already home to one of the top transit systems in the world. Our government is committed to building on the momentum, creating transit-oriented housing, good jobs and a path towards a cleaner future.

Looking to our rural communities, Highway 1 upgrades between Kamloops and Alberta will improve travel for locals, visitors and commercial drivers. And east of Golden, we are on the final phase of the Kicking Horse Canyon Project.

Investments in BC Transit are shortening daily commutes for people, while the BC North Bus connects our northern residents to jobs and services, along with family and friends.

After years of cuts to ferry service, our government is prioritizing coastal communities. Sailings have been added, fares have been frozen on major routes, and the seniors discount is back in effect.

But infrastructure is about more than ferries, roads, bridges and transit — it is also about the flow of ideas, knowledge and opportunity.

We are close to bringing our 500th connected community online. This means a digital world of opportunity is now open to people in Deka Lake, Clinton, Tofino, and Haida Gwaii.

British Columbia is growing, and we need to ramp up infrastructure investments — digital and otherwise — to keep goods, services, and people moving and B.C. businesses thriving.

As government, we are working closely with the Business Council of British Columbia and the BC Chamber of Commerce to foster a competitive environment. And I want to say thank you to the many businesses and entrepreneurs who have chosen to set up shop in B.C.

We know that our economy must provide opportunities for businesses to succeed — and they are.

Named as one of 2019's top global cleantech companies, Semios gives B.C. farmers real-time data on their crops.

This kind of innovation feeds into the work of our government's Food Security Task Force, which aims to unlock the potential for agri-tech in B.C., create more jobs and reduce waste.

And we are making good progress. Thanks to the hard-working people who make up B.C.'s agriculture sector, 2018 was a record year for revenue. Another boost will come from new regional food hubs in Surrey, Port Alberni, Quesnel and Vancouver.

Mining, another one of B.C.'s key industries, is joining forces with clean-tech to give local companies a global advantage.

As one example, Saltworks has created a new energy efficient technology that turns contaminated water from resource extraction into clean, fresh water.

In the rapidly expanding field of biotech, homegrown talent like STEMCELL Technologies is on track to create hundreds of new jobs in Burnaby.

And as work scales up on LNG Canada's \$40 billion project, our province will benefit from an estimated 10,000 construction jobs and 950 permanent jobs.

This new industry will create a legacy of skills and economic opportunity to sustain people and communities from the northeast to the north coast.

It's clear that good things are happening in B.C.

In 2019, more than 45,000 jobs were added in the private sector, along with continued wage growth.

In partnership with the BC Green Party caucus, the Emerging Economy Task Force will help keep B.C. at the cutting edge of clean tech, artificial intelligence and quantum computing.

As I've said before, we cannot have a strong economy without creating more opportunities for B.C.'s rural regions to prosper.

Tourism has become a major province-wide employer and an economic driver for many small and rural communities. Growing the tourism industry can help boost local businesses and provide life-long careers for people right around our province.

New and upgraded infrastructure delivered through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program is also helping to build healthy and resilient communities.

We're working with the federal government, local governments and First Nations to deliver projects that support local growth, a green economy and inclusive communities. Projects are underway throughout the province — with more on the way this year.

Our government knows that for many communities paying for the infrastructure that people and businesses need can be tough, or almost impossible on their own.

That is why we are investing in rural communities in a way that works for them.

Soon, people in Williams Lake will be able to connect at a new community centre.

For Osoyoos and Prince Rupert, this new funding will resolve longstanding problems with the quality of their drinking water.

Investing in greener infrastructure is part of our government's plan to grow the economy, while protecting the clean water, land and air that we — as British Columbians — all cherish.

Harnessing the power of a greener future to help grow our economy is at the heart of CleanBC, our government's commitment to climate action.

As part of last year's budget, we backed our plan with approximately \$900 million over three years.

Budget 2020 builds on CleanBC with an additional \$419 million over the fiscal plan. This will go towards making our schools, universities, colleges and hospitals more energy efficient, along with increased support to help industries move towards clean, low-carbon solutions.

This year's budget maintains increases to the Climate Action Tax Credit for families and adds \$20 million to the Province's program to make purchasing a zero-emission vehicle more affordable.

I'm proud to say that we have almost hit our 2025 electric vehicle target — four years ahead of schedule. This new funding will help accelerate the clean energy transition.

Our economy remains resilient, but every year we must plan for and adapt to a changing climate. Recent years have seen wildfires rage across our province and natural disasters devastate people, homes, communities, business and industry.

In response, the Province is boosting total funding to \$519 million over the fiscal plan to help B.C. prepare for, respond to and recover from wildfires, floods and other emergencies.

Because we are stronger when we work together.

In partnership with Indigenous peoples, we are choosing a more stable and prosperous path forward for everyone.

Passing the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* was a historic day. It was the culmination of many years of hard work from many people — and a long wait for Indigenous peoples.

And we have a lot of hard work still to do.

The act is a significant step forward and will serve as the foundation for a new way of living and working together.

Funds are flowing to First Nations through a historic revenue-sharing agreement for an estimated \$3 billion over the next 25 years. For many communities, being able to count on stable revenue long into the future is making a real and meaningful difference.

The funds are being put to good use building a youth community centre, supporting forest management to protect peoples' homes from wildfires, and launching language programs that are key to the health of communities.

For the Nadleh Whut'en First Nation it means building up to 30 new homes — the first new housing the community has had in years.

And finding a place to call home in the community you love is transformational.

Conclusion

Mr. Speaker, it is a true privilege to stand here today and table our government's third full budget that offers stability and opportunity.

I am honoured to come to work every day to make life better for the people of British Columbia.

Together, we have accomplished a great deal. Families are saving thousands of dollars thanks to investments in child care, the elimination of MSP premiums, the soon to launch BC Child Opportunity Benefit and the new BC Access Grant.

Families will benefit from new funding to strengthen our schools and hospitals, while delivering essential community supports.

Meanwhile, landmark investments in roads, bridges, housing, hospitals and schools are delivering a better quality of life while creating jobs.

Together, we have chosen a fundamentally different path — a choice we can all be proud of. We are making life more affordable, providing the services people count on, and creating opportunities for you and your children to build a good life in British Columbia.

Yes, significant progress has been made. But there is no shortage of work still to do.

You, the people of British Columbia, have always been working hard to get ahead.

And we are working hard for you.

I want my grandkids to know the sense of pride that comes from putting down roots, contributing to your community and building a good life for yourself, your family, and others.

This is at the heart of what I believe all British Columbians want: a stronger province for everyone.

A province where the next generation will not face a housing crisis. People will be able to find a more affordable home with space for their family to grow.

A province where equal opportunity and access to education will put people's dreams within reach and end the cycle of poverty.

A province where the heroes of our communities — our early childhood educators, parents, health care workers, teachers, and trades people — will see the recognition they deserve for keeping our province running.

A province where everyone will have access to the health and mental health services they need — no matter where they live and no matter the size of their bank account.

And a province with a strong economy where future generations can enjoy our clean water, land and air.

Our government is working hard for you every single day.

Budget 2020 is our plan to keep B.C. moving forward.

Together, we are building a stronger B.C., for everyone.

Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
2. Crisis Supplement **UPDATED**
3. Decampment
4. Cheque Issue Day
5. Together BC
6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
9. January Legislative Changes
10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
11. Communities in Transition
12. TCS Police Investigation
13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
15. ICBC Enhanced Care
16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
17. Basic Income
18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
- s.15; s.22
- s.13; s.15; s.22
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
22. Youth Homeless Report
23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension **NEW**

24

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

1. Poverty Reduction

Question: What are the next steps for the Poverty Reduction Strategy?

s.13

Background:

- On November 5th, 2018 BC passed the *Poverty Reduction Strategy Act*, which set legislated targets and timelines for poverty reduction in BC.
- Independent of changes in other provinces, the targets will result in BC having the lowest rate of child poverty in Canada by 2024, down from the 6th lowest, and the 3rd lowest rate of total poverty.
- The latest poverty data (2017) shows that 481,000 people are living in poverty in BC (10.3%), including 81,000 children (9.8%).
- The Ministry conducted a public engagement process which provided citizens with numerous opportunities to provide input, including attending community meetings, email, mail, telephone, and submitting an online feedback form.
- The public consultation included 28 community meetings across BC to discuss the issues facing people in poverty, and how we can best take action to improve people's lives.
- In addition, the process was designed to help ensure that indigenous people, including First Nations and Metis, had culturally relevant opportunities to provide input.

s.13

Question: What is in Budget 2020 to support the poverty reduction strategy?

s.13

Background:

- Child Care B.C. is the Province's plan to build affordable and accessible child care system, and includes:
- The B.C. Child Opportunity Benefit (BCCOB) replaces the B.C. Early Childhood Tax Benefit effective October 1, 2020.
- The B.C. Child Opportunity Benefit provides a tax-free monthly payment to families with children under the age of 18. The maximum B.C. Child Opportunity Benefit is:
 - \$1,600 for a family's first child.
 - \$1,000 for a second child.
 - \$800 for each subsequent child under the age of 18.
- If the family net income is more than \$25,000 but less than \$80,000, the B.C. Child Opportunity Benefit is reduced by 4% of the portion of family net income over \$25,000. For families with a family net income of \$80,000 or more, the remaining B.C. Child Opportunity Benefit is reduced by 4% of the portion of family net income over \$80,000 until it is reduced to zero.
- Child Care B.C. is the Province's plan to build affordable and accessible child care system, and includes:
 - The Affordable Child Care Benefit - provides up to 86,000 families up to \$1,250 per month in child care cost relief by 2020.
 - Child Care Fee Reduction Program – provides up to 50,000 with a fee reduction of up to \$350 per month.
 - Creation of 22,000 new licensed child care spaces, and incentives for licensed service providers to offer child care outside of standard business hours.
 - Boosting the supply of Early Childhood Educators.
- Investments to FAIR Pharmacare expanded coverage to 240,000 B.C families:
 - Families with household net incomes under \$45,000 have benefitted.
 - Families with household net incomes between \$15,000 and \$30,000 have had their deductibles eliminated.
- SDPR policy changes include:
 - 5 Week Work Search - benefits 200 clients.
 - Room and Board - benefits 200 clients.
 - Identification (ID) Supplement - benefits 13,500 clients.
 - Vehicle Asset Limit for Income Assistance Clients - benefits 150 clients.
 - Case Asset Limits for Income Assistance - benefits 50 clients.
 - Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB) - benefits 1,000 clients.

- Moving Supplement - benefits 1,500 clients.
- Change definition of spouse - benefits 1,730 clients.
- Eliminate 2 Year financial independence - benefits 50 clients.
- Eliminate requirement for early CPP - benefits 360 clients.
- Information & verification requirements (section 10) - benefits 500 clients.
- Security Deposit & Pet Damage Deposit - benefits 4,500 clients.
- Crisis Supplement for Shelter - benefits 1,600 clients.
- Hardship Assistance - benefits 360 clients.
- Streamlined assistance reapplication - benefits a small number of clients.
- Maximum repayment - benefits a small number of clients.
- Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal enhancements - benefits 700 clients.

Question: Where are we on Reaching Our Targets?

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- The Market Basket Measure is currently being reviewed and a new basket measure will be released in February 2020 with the 2018 poverty numbers. There is no firm date for its release.

Background:

- Revising the Market Basket Measure is standard practice for Statistics Canada and happens every 8 to 10 years.
- Historically, the revisions result in more goods being built into the basket, which increases the cost of the basket and therefore increases the number/rate of people living in poverty – on average the poverty rate increases by 2 percentage points between revisions.
- For this upcoming revision, we know the major change is improving the shelter component, changing it from a two-bedroom apartment to a three-bedroom apartment. Other smaller changes are also likely.
- When revising the Market Basket measure, Statistics Canada continues to publish the older series and revises backwards the new series. This means that B.C. can compare the performance on poverty reduction to the same methodology as when the *Poverty Reduction Strategy Act* was released or could switch to the revised series.

2. Homelessness

Question: What is the government doing to address growing homelessness across BC?

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Question: What are you doing to address encampments across the province, including people living in RVs?

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Question: What are you doing to address mental health and addictions for people who are homeless?

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Question: What is a Navigation Centre and how will it be different?

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Question: When is the next homeless count and why are they important?

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3. Social Services Sector

Question: What are you doing to address staffing and compensation issues in the social services sector?

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Question: Is there funding in Budget 2020 to address recruitment and retention issues?

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Background:

- In response to concerns from community agencies and umbrella organizations, the Social Services Sector Roundtable (SSSR) was established and convened its first meeting on May 10, 2019 to:
 - discuss matters of importance within the sector;
 - maintain on-going communications; and
 - address issues in a coordinated and collaborative way.
- The SSSR is chaired by Minister Simpson and comprised of senior government officials and executive representatives from community-based agencies and umbrella organizations.
- The Roundtable provides a more formal and ongoing engagement between government and community-based service organizations with continued opportunities for the broader social services sector to engage with the Roundtable.
- A smaller working group, the Recruitment and Retention Working Group (chaired by the Deputy Minister for SDPR), was established to develop a recruitment and retention strategy for the sector and an action plan for government consideration.
- On November 15, 2019, Minister Simpson spoke at the Together for Social Change forum, a joint government/social sector gathering. This first forum brought together approximately 135 representatives from the sector to learn about the work of the SSSR and create a blueprint for on-going collaboration with the broader social services community.
- In the medium to long term, the SSSR can support the development of more coordinated service delivery structures and sector-wide workforce strategies, similar to those found in the health and education sectors. A Social Sector HR Strategy could set out consistent, cross sector approaches for key matters such as: Indigenous-specific issues; remote and rural worker recruitment; training; classification; public awareness and marketing; compensation and benefits; and a centralized hiring/vetting platform.

Table of Contents

1. SSSRT Recruitment and Retention
2. Crisis Supplement UPDATED
3. Decampment
4. Cheque Issue Day
5. Together BC
6. Office of Homelessness Coordination
7. Accessibility Legislation Consultation
8. Summary Report Accessibility Legislation Consultation
9. January Legislative Changes
10. Reconciliation and UNDRIP
11. Communities in Transition
12. TCS Police Investigation
13. Gaming Control Amendment Act
14. PlayNow Deposit and Account Balance Increases
15. ICBC Enhanced Care
16. Income and Disability Assistance Rates
17. Basic Income
18. Funding Increase for Home Sharing Providers
- s.13; s.15; s.22
- s.13; s.15; s.22
21. Ombudsperson – *Holding Pattern* Report Update
22. Youth Homeless Report
23. Budget – KMs, Capital Factsheet, Strategic Plan, Speech
24. KMs on Poverty Reduction, Homelessness & Social Services Sector
25. Seniors Supplement – Tax Extension NEW

25.

Updated ~~June 21st~~
July 27th

Senior's Supplement – July/August Payment Delay

SUMMARY

From July to December there will be delays in payments of the Senior's Supplement. Approximately 7,000 eligible seniors may not receive the Senior's Supplement on the July 29 payment date but will receive it retroactively August 27 because of a delay in obtaining eligibility data from the federal government. The delay is due to the deadline for filing 2019 income taxes being extended to June 1, 2020. The delay will have a greater effect on seniors who are expecting to also receive the temporary \$300 COVID Crisis Supplement. This delay is expected to continue through December or until 2019 income taxes are filed. As more seniors file their income taxes, the affected number of people will decrease over time.

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE

- **We're committed to assisting low-income seniors which is why we introduced the Senior's Supplement and ensured that people receiving the Senior's Supplement are also receiving the temporary \$300 per month COVID-19 Crisis Supplement.**
- **The Senior's Supplement is provided to low-income seniors who are eligible and receive the federal government's guaranteed income supplement, which is based on federal income tax filings.**
- **Unfortunately, with the delayed 2019 income tax filing, some seniors expecting to receive these payments on July 29th may not receive them until the August 27 payment date.**
- **I know this is a stressful time for a lot of British Columbians; especially low-income seniors who already face barriers to accessing what they need to be safe and healthy.**
- **We are working to minimize the delays and apologize to anyone who may be affected.**

BACKGROUND

The Senior's Supplement is a provincial benefit provided automatically to an estimated 58,000 eligible seniors who receive the federal Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS). Eligibility for GIS is determined by the federal government based on income tax filings and SDPR relies on an OAS/GIS data match from Service Canada to determine who is eligible for the Senior's Supplement.

In a typical year, seniors that file their taxes late will not be eligible for the provincial benefit

until they do; ministry staff will manually process retroactive benefits once the federal government confirms eligibility for GIS.

Due to the pandemic, the Canada Revenue Agency extended the 2019 tax year filing deadline to June 1, 2020 and Service Canada has decided to renew OAS/GIS benefits until December 2020 based on 2018 income tax information. A new OAS/GIS data match for seniors without completed tax filings for 2019 was provided to SDPR too late for July payments and will require manual processing before approximately 7,000 seniors will receive the Senior's Supplement and the temporary \$300 COVID-19 crisis supplement. This will delay payments to late August.

Senior's Supplement

- The Senior's Supplement is a provincial top-up to the federal Old Age Security (OAS) and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) payment provided to approximately 58,000 low-income seniors each month. The top-up was created to ensure that B.C. seniors receive a minimum level of income.
- Seniors receive the provincial Senior's Supplement automatically if they are eligible based on their GIS rates. Seniors do not need to apply.
- The maximum monthly rate is \$49.30 per single senior and \$120.50 for senior couples.
- All seniors receiving the provincial Senior's Supplement also receive the temporary \$300 COVID-19 Crisis Supplement. This is done automatically.

\$300 COVID-19 Crisis Supplement

- All seniors receiving the provincial Senior's Supplement are eligible to receive the additional temporary \$300 COVID-19 Crisis Supplement. It will automatically appear on their cheques.

Service Canada OAS/GIS Update and Impacts on Senior's Supplement

- Eligibility for OAS/GIS is determined by the federal government and a monthly data match provided to SDPR is used to determine eligibility for the Senior's Supplement.
- In a typical year, seniors who file taxes late will not receive the GIS or the provincial Senior's Supplement until the tax filing is complete and eligibility determined. Once the federal OAS/GIS data match confirms continued eligibility, then SDPR will manually process retroactive benefits for late filing seniors. This manual process is completed over several months on a rolling basis as individuals file their taxes.
- In July 2019, over 7,700 files were closed for the Senior's Supplement based on the federal OAS/GIS data match. Over the next four months, approximately 2,500 of these files were reopened as late tax filings were completed and eligibility reconfirmed through the monthly data matches from the federal government.
- Due to the pandemic, the federal government extended the filing date for the 2019 tax year to June 1, 2020.
- For seniors in B.C. who did not file their income tax by the deadline, Service Canada has advised SDPR that OAS/GIS will continue to be provided for up to six months based on 2018 income tax information until 2019 tax information is available.

- A new OAS/GIS data match was provided to SDPR with 2018 tax information for seniors without completed 2019 tax filings. This information was received too late for July payments and will require manual processing into August. A systems fix was also explored but could not be implemented in time.
- This means up to 7,000 seniors will not receive the Senior's Supplement or the temporary \$300 COVID-19 crisis supplement until their next payment in late August.
- The Ministry received the information from the Federal Government in mid-July for seniors whose taxes were not filed by the deadline. Once reviewed by systems staff, manual work by up to 20 staff, full time for up to 9 business days is then required to create payment files which are uploaded for payment on the regular Senior's Supplement payment date in August.
- Senior's Supplement payments align with OAS/GIS payments through a system process. The Ministry is not able to produce Senior's Supplement payments outside of regularly scheduled dates. As recipients are not typically set up on the income or disability assistance system, there is no process to be able to make payments outside of these dates.

Communications

- Ministry staff are meeting with the seniors' advocate on July 27, so she and her office are aware of the issue and can help communicate with impacted seniors.
- In addition, on July 28, the Ministry will be sending a letter to key stakeholders, including the Moving Forward Steering Committee, Ombudsperson's Office.
- Service Delivery Division staff will also be prepared to answer any questions from seniors. Call scripts will be distributed and posted to an internal webpage on July 28.
- Impacted seniors will receive a letter with their cheques issued in August explaining the increased payment amount.

July 27, 2020

**Senior's Supplement – Payment Delays
Questions and Answers**

Q1: Why won't some seniors receive their July Senior's Supplement and the \$300 COVID-19 Crisis Supplement on time?

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Q2: How many eligible seniors will not receive their Senior's Supplement or crisis supplement in July?

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Q3: Will eligible seniors receive both their July and August Senior's Supplement and \$300 COVID-19 Crisis Supplement payments in August?

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Q4: Why can't affected eligible seniors receive payments such as hardship or temporary payments while they await Senior's Supplement and the crisis supplement?

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Q5: How will this information be communicated to seniors, particularly those who do not receive their payments as expected?

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