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Ministry of Attorney General 2024/25 Service Plan Framework

Goal	Objectives	Key Strategies	Performance Measures
Goal 1: The justice sector is fair and accessible	Objective 1.1: Enhance the user experience and modernize the justice system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance the Courthouse Capital Asset Management Plan, including courthouse replacement and renovations, infrastructure remediation, WiFi expansion and facility enhancements across the province. • Modernize the justice system for British Columbians through leveraging technology and user-centred design to assist users in navigating legal matters. • Continue to improve early resolution services offered to families remotely and in-person at Family Justice Centres and Justice Access Centres. • Support the 20 boards and tribunals accountable to the ministry with business operations, transformation, innovation, and modernization, including the Civil Resolution Tribunal, Mental Health Review Board, and BC Human Rights Tribunal, among others. • Streamline the collection process for those who have obtained a court judgment or tribunal order for the payment of money, by continuing work to implement the Money Judgment Enforcement Act, which is expected to come into force in early 2025. 	PM1a: Percentage of respondents who agreed that the Parenting After Separation program gave them a better understanding of the family justice system including its relevant laws and services. PM1b: Percentage of respondents who agreed that the program gave them a better understanding of alternatives to court. PM1c: Percentage of respondents who agreed that the program gave them a better understanding of making decisions in the best interests of the children. PM1d: Percentage of eFiled Court Documents.
	Objective 1.2: Increase access to justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance the Legal Profession Act reform initiative, including implementation work, to create a single and modernized regulator for all legal service providers in the province, including lawyers, notaries public, and licensed paralegals. • Further family justice reform initiatives, including support for those experiencing intimate partner violence, resolving disputes out of court, modernizing the Family Law Act, promoting the Child Support Recalculation Service, and working toward implementation of the 2007 Hague Child Support Convention. • Continue to implement the Comprehensive Bail Program to expand access to justice through an improved bail hearing process for all justice participants. • Support the delivery of legal aid services for low-income British Columbians through Legal Aid BC. • In partnership with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, and the Ministry of Children and Family Development, implement the Rights Advice Service for patients who are involuntarily detained under the Mental Health Act. • Work with Indigenous nations to increase their access to justice, including through implementation of Treaty Nation violation tickets in Spring 2024 and implementation of Cowichan Tribes' child welfare law in Spring 2024. 	

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Goal 2: British Columbian communities are protected and resilient	Objective 2.1: Improved community and public safety for all British Columbians.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated BC Prosecution Service prosecutors and professional staff will continue to participate in the Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative. • Implement new federally funded pilot programs to support those experiencing intimate partner violence as they navigate the family justice system. • Contribute to the implementation of the Province’s gender-based violence action plan. 	PM2a: Number of B.C. communities engaged in projects that build intercultural trust and understanding and reduce racism and systemic barriers.
	Objective 2.2: Address systemic racism and support Indigenous and other racialized communities to respond to public incidents of racism and hate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce anti-racism legislation that better serves everyone in British Columbia. • Work with the Ministry of Citizens’ Services to implement the Anti-Racism Data Act, paving way for race-based data collection that is essential in dismantling systemic racism and improving public services and programs. • Engage communities through the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network, multiculturalism grants, and related initiatives, to provide them with the information, supports, and training needed to respond to and prevent future incidents of racism. • Address hate incidents in B.C. by creating a Racist Incident Helpline to report, track and provide supports to individuals harmed by racist incidents. • Continue to address historical wrongs with formal apology to Sons of Freedom Doukhobor community and ongoing work with the National Association of Japanese Canadians. 	
Goal 3: The justice sector is safe and responsive to Indigenous peoples	Objective 3.1: Facilitate self-determination and restoration of traditional Indigenous justice systems in partnerships with Indigenous leadership and communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, the Federal Government, and Indigenous communities, continue work with the BC First Nations Justice Council to advance the B.C. First Nations Justice Strategy and work with the Métis Nation BC to develop, endorse, and advance the Métis Justice Strategy. • Improve access to culturally appropriate justice services, including expanding the network of Indigenous Justice Centres to 15 centres by the end of 2024/25, in alignment with the BC First Nations Justice Strategy and the Safer Communities Action Plan. • Continue the design of a new legal aid model for Indigenous Peoples and develop a comprehensive work plan to transfer control of legal aid services to the BC First Nations Justice Council. • Reduce Indigenous over-representation in the criminal justice system through ongoing policy review and changes, justice sector employee education, expansion of Indigenous courts (new locations or additional dates at existing locations), and outreach and partnerships with Indigenous communities. • In consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, continue reviewing and ensuring alignment of B.C. laws with UNDRIP for all statutes within the ministry’s mandate including new and amending bills. • Support the interface between Indigenous laws and legal institutions and B.C.’s laws and legal institutions. Work collaboratively with Nations to assist them in the enforcement of their laws in multiple areas including child welfare, offences, education, and debts. 	PM3a: Number of cases from Indigenous Clients supported at Indigenous Justice Centres. PM3b: Number of Indigenous Clients served by Indigenous Justice Centres.

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	<p>Objective 3.2: Advance reconciliation through use of the Directives of Civil Litigation involving Indigenous peoples.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to work with Indigenous Peoples on implementation of the Directives.• Review active litigation to ensure the Directives are being implemented as intended, which may include making pleadings amendments.• Work with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation on identifying potential avenues for negotiation of the dispute, such as forms of alternative dispute resolution.• Seek early internal government meetings to discuss the possible effects of litigation on the work of reconciliation and try to identify collaborative ways to resolve all or part of the potential or newly filed legal proceedings.• When litigation has concluded, meet with clients to discuss preventing similar litigation in the future; as well as debriefing with counsel for the Indigenous parties to identify potential areas for improvement.	
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Table 1: Progress Status of Current (2022) Mandate Letter Items

MANDATE LETTER ACCOUNTABILITY	STATUS
<p>2022 Mandate Letter: Continue to work with the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Indigenous communities and the BC First Nations Justice Council to advance the First Nations Justice Strategy.</p>	<p>In progress – The BC First Nations Justice Strategy (the Strategy), was signed on March 6, 2020, and an implementation workplan was approved by Cabinet in July 2021. Since then, there has been significant progress made on the Strategy. Of the 25 strategies contained within it, there has been significant progress on:</p>
<p>2020 Mandate Letter: Work with the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Indigenous communities, and the BC First Nations Justice Council to advance the First Nations Justice Strategy and to improve access to culturally appropriate justice, including continuing to establish Indigenous Justice Centres across the province.</p>	<p>Strategy 4: Establishing a Network of Indigenous Justice Centres (IJC): There are nine IJCs operating in Chilliwack, Kelowna, Merritt, Nanaimo, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Surrey, Vancouver and Victoria as well as a Virtual Indigenous Justice Centre (VIJC), all of which provide legal advice and representation to Indigenous clients with criminal or family law legal matters who may not otherwise have access to legal representation. The Province has committed to funding the network of 15 IJCs as described in the Strategy by the end of fiscal year 2024/2025, with six more IJCs planned to open later in 2024, with their locations to be announced in Spring 2024.</p> <p>Strategy 5: Transitioning Indigenous Legal Aid Services to an Indigenous controlled entity. During fiscal year 2023/24, BCFNJC and the ministry conducted engagement sessions throughout the province to meet with Indigenous people and the legal community about how legal aid services could be delivered to Indigenous clients in the future. This work is continuing into fiscal year 2024/25 with the development of pilot projects by BCFNJC. Implementation will take place starting in 2025.</p> <p>Strategy 6: Implement a comprehensive Gladue strategy supported by a dedicated First Nations controlled Gladue implementation agency. On April 1, 2021, BCFNJC took on delivery of Gladue Services from Legal Aid BC. Since then, the volume of Gladue Report requests has increased in 2023/24 to over 500 requests (298 in 2019/20) and over 370 completed Gladue Reports (289 in 2019/20). Under BCFNJC’s leadership, the program has transitioned to a staff writer model from what was a contracted writer model previously.</p>

	<p>Strategy 9: Establishing an Indigenous Justice Secretariat: On March 6, 2023, B.C. appointed the Executive Director of the Indigenous Justice Policy and Legislation Division, Colleen Spier, to the role of ADM for the newly formed Indigenous Justice Secretariat. This is as described in Strategy 9, which calls for B.C. to establish the Indigenous Justice Secretariat to advance the Strategy through coordination throughout the Provincial Government and the broader justice sector.</p> <p>Strategy 16: Establish an annual Justice Summit on First Nations Issues. The BCFNJC is hosting the First Nations Justice Forum on April 8-10, 2024, to provide a space for First Nations rights holders, leadership, and subject matter experts to attend and hear updates on Strategy implementation and provide their input and feedback. This year theme is “Collaboration”. This forum will feature a day of programming on ‘Track 1’ work of reforming the current justice system, a day on ‘Track 2’ work of restoring First Nations justice systems and institutions, and a third day with collaborative workshops for the attendees to work together on priority topics.</p> <p>Strategy 17: January 16, 2024, the BCFNJC, BC and Canada hosted the Annual Tripartite Ministers meeting in Vancouver as called for under the Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding. In May of 2023, Public Safety Canada signed onto the Tripartite MOU, signalling their support of the shared agenda, including the implementation of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy, and collaboration on the development of a Federal Indigenous Justice Strategy.</p> <p>There continues to be progress across other areas of the Strategy as well. This includes securing funding from Canada to develop an Indigenous Women’s Justice Plan (Strategy 11), developing cultural competency standards for the justice system (Strategy 20), and developing the Indigenous Youth Justice and Prevention Plan (Strategy 10)</p>
<p>2022 Mandate Letter: Advancing recommendations from the German Report and the Cullen Commission on money laundering.</p>	<p>In Progress - JSB is advancing a small number of recommendations, including changes to the Notaries Act as part of our overall project to modernize the regulation of legal professionals. The Law Society is also advancing a number of recommendations relating to the regulation of lawyers.</p>

<p>2020 Mandate Letter: Advance recommendations from the findings of the Cullen Commission and the German Report to fight money laundering.</p>	<p>The remaining coordination work and recommendations are being advanced by the Anti Money Laundering Secretariat within the Ministry of Finance.</p>
<p>2022 Mandate Letter: Taking significant steps to honour Japanese Canadian internment survivors and their families.</p>	<p>In progress - Ministry staff have delivered \$62 million out of the \$100 million commitment that BC Government made in May 2022. These funds sent to the Japanese Canadians Legacies Society (JCLS) are to support the new initiatives outlined in the communities' historical wrongs redress proposal, which covered six pillars of work.</p> <p>The ministry is working closely with Citizens' Services and JCLS to help assess and manage the work required for the "monument" initiative, which is one of the remaining two redress pillars. A Request For Decision was approved by Treasury Board which allowed the release of funds for the Monument. A Request for Proposal is out seeking a Prime Vendor to build the monument with funds confirmed in the approved Treasury Board Submission. An agreement releasing the remaining funds to JCLC will occur by Summer 2024.</p>
<p>2022 Mandate Letter: Adopting the Anti-Racism Data Act to dismantle systemic racism and improve access to government programs and services for Indigenous, Black, and other people of colour.</p>	<p>In progress – MARB working with CITZ on the Anti-Racism Data Act implementation. In Fall of 2022, the Anti-Racism Data Committee was appointed. The committee is made up of 11 members that represent a wide cross-section of racialized communities and geographic regions of B.C.</p> <p>In collaboration with Indigenous Governing Entities (IGEs) and the Committee, on June 1, 2023, government will release a list of anti-racism research priorities and will also release statistics and other information that is relevant to our anti-racism efforts. Specific to the research priorities, 10 were released by the Committee and Indigenous Governing Entities, and these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial diversity within the BC Public Service and equity in hiring and career development. • Interactions with the justice system and analysis of 'complaints' model. • Health outcomes, building upon the health system performance framework to understand how the system is performing for different demographic groups.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding how students across demographic groups access and use education supports and their outcomes (from early childhood through to post-secondary education). • Children, youth, and family wellness in home and away from home. • Economic inclusion, including analysis of unpaid work and foreign credential recognition. • Homelessness, housing supply and security. <p>Government also initiated a Demographic Survey that was conducted publicly and completed by over 200,000 British Columbians. This survey will allow the Province to begin the process of disaggregating data based on race. The survey outcomes will be compared to the results of the research priorities to expose any systemic racism evident in B.C. Provincial government programs, services or policies.</p>
<p>2022 Mandate Letter: Continue to move forward to support the judiciary in the modernization of B.C.'s courts and legal processes to make it easier for the public to navigate our justice system and to better support victims and families.</p>	<p>In Progress - The Court Digital Transformation Strategy (2019-2023) continues to guide the priorities for court modernization. In collaboration with the three levels of Court, Court Services Branch is in the process of refreshing the roadmap of priorities for the Court Digital Transformation Strategy for its next cycle. The roadmap will take into consideration all of the advances made in the last four years and leverage those to continue to meet citizens' expectations for access to justice.</p> <p>Other justice modernization initiatives continue to move forward, with a focus on achieving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved access to justice and timely resolution of matters. - Enhanced online, integrated, and efficient citizen experiences. - More reliable virtual proceedings, including secure access to court materials, and modernized court infrastructure/connectivity. - Less costly and adversarial resolution options for citizen issues, including family justice, housing, and small claims matters. - Modernized justice processes and tools that meet sector needs and reduce the risks created by interruptions to service delivery. - Automated court form submission and eliminating manual data entry, improved infrastructure, enabling digital services and creating options for future online processes. - Collaborated with BC Courthouse Libraries Society (BCCLS) in implementing a one year pilot offering no fee access to Court Services Online eSearch functionality at over 90 Public Access

	<p>Computers in BCCLS across the province. Librarians are trained on how to use CSO to assist clients in completing forms and seeking file information. 59 courthouse now have robust courtroom WiFi connectivity for both public and IDIR authenticated court participants to facilitate access to material in the courtroom.</p>
<p>2022 Mandate Letter: Work with community partners, including B.C.'s Human Rights Commissioner, to develop and pass an Anti-Racism Act to better serve everyone in B.C.</p>	<p>In progress – MARB have been working with the B.C.'s Human Rights Commissioner's office, and have begun the consultation and cooperation process with Indigenous partners in the co-development of the Anti-Racism legislation. A Request for Decision was approved by the Cabinet Committee on Social Initiatives in May 2023 approving policy direction. A Request for Legislation was approved by Cabinet in November 2023 approving policy intent, currently the team is drafting legislation scheduled to be released in Spring 2024.</p> <p>The team has engaged extensively with the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, with the Commissioner informing all drafts submitted to Cabinet. The team provided funds to BC First Nations, Metis Nation of BC, BC Alliance of Modern Treaty Nations, and BC Association of Friendship centres to conduct distinct consultation and cooperation sessions with their membership. The team has also extensively engaged racialized community members by providing funds to racialized non-profit organizations to conduct community-led engagement sessions on the proposed policy intent of the Broader Anti-Racism Legislation.</p> <p>The team has also worked with GCPE to conduct a public engagement questionnaire that run from June 2023 to October 2023 where over 2,000 citizens engaged with the questionnaire. A What We Heard Report will be shared with the public in Spring 2024 before bill introduction.</p>
<p>2022 Mandate Letter: In collaboration with the Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity, take steps to address non-consensual disclosure of intimate images.</p>	<p>In progress – The <i>Intimate Images Protection Act</i> came into force January 29th, 2024. In partnership with PSSG, the ministry now has a program where people who have had their intimate images or video shared without consent have new supports to get those images off the internet, stop their distribution, and seek monetary compensation. These services will help people who have had their intimate images shared without their consent quickly access self-help tools to assess their legal options, get information on their rights and be connected to supports.</p>

<p>2022 Mandate Letter: Support the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General and the work of the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions to build safe and healthy communities through implementation of the Safer Communities Action Plan.</p>	<p>In progress – BCPS is working with PSSG (BC Corrections and Policing and Security Branch) to support the Safer Communities Action Plan through the ongoing development and management of the Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative (ReVOII).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ReVOII brings together police and dedicated probation officers with the aim of identifying and intervening in cases involving repeat violent offending at the earliest opportunity possible, and where appropriate, connects individuals with services to help break the cycle of reoffending. Teams of dedicated prosecutors make decisions about charge assessment and, where appropriate, the conduct of prosecutions involving individuals prioritized into ReVOII.• To support this work, 12 ReVOII hubs began operating in May 2023 in Nanaimo, Victoria, Vancouver, Surrey, New Westminster, Abbotsford, Kamloops, Kelowna, Cranbrook, Prince George, Williams Lake and Terrace. The ReVOII hubs serve all communities within the province.• The BC Prosecution Service (BCPS) assigned dedicated Crown Counsel and professional staff to its High Risk Offender Identification Program, and five newly created Regional ReVOII prosecution teams. The Regional prosecution teams include dedicated Crown Counsel who make decisions about charge assessment and, where appropriate, conduct the bail hearings and prosecutions involving individuals prioritized into ReVOII. The Regional prosecution teams also provide criminal law advice to law enforcement.• BCPS made system enhancements to permit improved tracking and reporting on ReVOII prioritized individuals and to enhance information available to prosecutors for use at charge assessment, bail, trial and sentencing.• The goals of ReVOII include early intervention in cases involving prioritized individuals, and improved information sharing from investigative agencies to Crown Counsel, helping Crown Counsel to make better informed decisions about charge assessments and prosecutions. ReVOII assists Crown Counsel in making more effective decisions and court submissions about bail and sentencing, which can reduce the risk prioritized individuals pose to the community.• ReVOII also focuses on helping prioritized individuals interrupt the cycle of reoffending, improving justice system responses to immediate public safety concerns, and holding prioritized individuals more accountable through enhanced community supervision, case
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	<p>management and release planning for those transitioning from custody into the community. ReVOII also help prioritized individuals who identify as Indigenous to gain access to available culturally appropriate supports, and to much needed mental health and addictions treatment by engaging community stakeholders and service providers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ReVOII’s multi-agency response ensures that prioritized individuals are continuously monitored from investigation, charge assessment, bail, trial or plea, and sentencing, through to enhanced release planning and ongoing case management of community supervision orders. • ReVOII Crown Counsel continue to fulfill their constitutional obligations to act as independent ministers of justice, applying the governing law and BCPS policies, including the revised BCPS bail policy and recent amendments to the <i>Criminal Code</i>. ReVOII Crown Counsel also continue to apply the law and principles governing the BCPS Indigenous Justice Framework to cases involving prioritized individuals who identify as Indigenous. <p>Through the Safer Communities Action Plan, the Province has committed to funding 10 additional Indigenous Justice Centres to bring the network of 15 IJCs active, as described in the BC First Nations Justice Strategy by the end of fiscal year 2024/2025. There are currently nine IJCs operating in Chilliwack, Kelowna, Merritt, Nanaimo, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Surrey, Vancouver and Victoria as well as a Virtual Indigenous Justice Centre, all of which provide legal advice and representation to Indigenous clients with criminal or family law legal matters who may not otherwise have access to legal representation.</p>
<p>2022 Mandate Letter: Support all ministries to deliver initiatives listed in the Action Plan required by the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, to keep building strong relations based on recognition and implementation of the inherent rights of Indigenous</p>	<p>In progress – Action 3.12: Prioritize implementation of the First Nations Justice Strategy. The BC First Nations Justice Strategy (the Strategy) was signed on March 6, 2020, and an implementation workplan was approved by Cabinet in July 2021. This fiscal year there has been significant progress made on the Strategy. Of the 25 strategies contained within it, there has been significant progress on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy 4: Establishing a Network of Indigenous Justice Centres (IJCs) • Strategy 5: Establishing First Nations Legal Services

<p>Peoples protected in Canada’s constitution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy 6: Implement a Gladue strategy supported by a First Nations controlled Gladue implementation agency. • Strategy 9: Implementing the Indigenous Justice Secretariat • Strategy 10: Developing an Indigenous Youth Justice and Prevention Plan • Strategy 11: Developing an Indigenous Women’s Justice Plan • Strategy 16: Establish an annual Justice Summit on First Nations Issues. • Strategy 17: Engaging the Government of Canada in the work of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy. <p>Action 3.13: Prioritize endorsement and implementation of the Métis Justice Strategy: The ministry is working to obtain Provincial endorsement of MJS and its accompanying draft Implementation Workplan.</p>
<p>2020 Mandate Letter: Support the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation to deliver the action plan required under DRIPA to build strong relationships based on recognition and implementation of the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples protected in Canada’s constitution.</p>	

Table 2: Progress Status of 2022 Mandate Letter Items (Parliamentary Secretary)

<p>MANDATE LETTER ACCOUNTABILITY</p>	<p>STATUS</p>
<p>2022 Mandate Letter: Support the Attorney General’s work with community partners, including B.C.’s Human Rights Commissioner, to develop and pass an Anti-Racism Act to better serve everyone in B.C.</p>	<p>In progress – MARB have been working with the B.C.’s Human Rights Commissioner’s office, and have begun the consultation and cooperation process with Indigenous partners in the co-development of the Anti-Racism legislation. A Request for Decision was approved by the Cabinet Committee on Social Initiatives in May 2023 approving policy direction. A Request for Legislation was approved by Cabinet in November 2023 approving policy intent, currently the team is drafting legislation scheduled to be released in Spring 2024.</p>
<p>2020 Mandate Letter: Conduct a full review of anti-racism laws in other jurisdictions and launch a stakeholder consultation to inform the</p>	<p>MARB has engaged extensively with the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, with the Commissioner informing all drafts submitted to Cabinet. The team provided funds to BC First Nations, Metis Nation of BC,</p>

<p>introduction of a new Anti-Racism Act that better serves everyone in B.C.</p>	<p>BC Alliance of Modern Treaty Nations, and BC Association of Friendship centres to conduct distinct consultation and cooperation sessions with their membership.</p> <p>MARB has also extensively engaged racialized community members by providing funds to racialized non-profit organizations to conduct community-led engagement sessions on the proposed policy intent of the Broader Anti-Racism Legislation.</p> <p>The team has also worked with GCPE to conduct a public engagement questionnaire that run from June 2023 to October 2023 where over 2,000 citizens engaged with the questionnaire.</p> <p>A What We Heard Report will be shared with the public in Spring 2024 before bill introduction.</p> <p>The legislation is scheduled to be introduced in Spring 2024.</p>
<p>2022 Mandate Letter: Continue work to advance the anti-racism helpline.</p>	<p>In progress - Government has announced their intent to launch a Racist Incident Helpline, which will work as an Anti-Racism Hotline for British Columbians in Spring 2024. This work is an outcome of the AG commitments to address the rise in Anti-Asian Hate as well as recommendations that came out of the From Hate to Hope Report release in March 2023 by the BC Human Rights Commissioner.</p> <p>MARB received funds in FY 2023/24 to initiate the development of the Helpline with industry experts, specifically United Way/ BC211 who have similar services provided through the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (VictimLink). The Helpline will be a trauma-informed, multilingual service providing a culturally safe platform for witnesses or victims of hate to report an incident, and receive referrals to community support programs, including counselling.</p> <p>The Helpline is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• open from 8 am to 6 pm;• accessible via phone;• a multilingual service;• toll-free;• a culturally safe platform for racialized people;• delivered by an agency that is not police or law-enforcement related;• a place where witnesses or victims of racism can report and validate their experience;• place to receive emotional support.

	<p>The Racist Incident Helpline is intended to go live in Spring 2024</p>
<p>2022 Mandate Letter: Work with community partners to create an anti-black racism strategy in recognition of the International Decade for the People of African Descent.</p>	<p>In progress - Government conducted extensive engagement with the Black community in 2021 to inform potential initiatives related to the work and recognition of the International Decade for the People of African Descent. The B.C. Government also funded the Black in British Columbia (BC) Convener pilot project through a \$0.100 million grant. As part of the Convener role, The African Arts and Cultural Community Contributor Society (AACCCS) led a community assessment process of the performance of our government, and provided their findings and recommendations through their report called Black In B.C.</p> <p>Work will continue with the Black community and an Anti-Black Racism strategy will follow the introduction of the <i>Anti-Racism Act</i>. The Act will provide the necessary guidelines and actions required for anti-racism strategies. This information will help inform the process and development of specific anti-racism strategies.</p>
<p>2022 Mandate Letter: Work with community partners to create an anti-Asian racism strategy.</p>	<p>In progress - Work for this mandate item will begin in early 2024. An Anti-Asian Racism strategy will follow the introduction of the <i>Anti-Racism Act</i>. The Act will provide the necessary guidelines and actions required for anti-racism strategies. This information will help inform the process and development of specific anti-racism strategies.</p>
<p>2022 Mandate Letter: Work with the Japanese Canadian Legacies Society to deliver the Province’s redress initiatives that honour the legacy of Japanese Canadians in B.C.</p>	<p>In progress – Ministry staff have delivered \$62 million out of the \$100 million commitment that BC Government made in May 2022. These funds sent to the Japanese Canadians Legacies Society (JCLS) are to support the new initiatives outlined in the communities’ historical wrongs redress proposal, which covered six pillars of work.</p>
<p>2020 Mandate Letter: Honour the Japanese-Canadian community by providing lasting recognition of the traumatic internment of more than 22,000 Japanese-Canadians during World War II.</p>	<p>The ministry is working closely with Citizens’ Services and JCLS to help assess and manage the work required for the “monument” initiative, which is one of the remaining two redress pillars. A Request For Decision was approved by Treasury Board which allowed the release of funds for the Monument. A Request for Proposal is out seeking a Prime Vendor to build the monument with funds confirmed in the approved Treasury Board Submission. An agreement releasing the remaining funds to JCLC will occur by Summer 2024.</p>

<p>2022 Mandate Letter: Support the Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport in consultation with affected communities to advance emerging museum programs and proposals, including the Chinese Canadian museum, a South Asian Museum, and a provincial Filipino cultural centre.</p>	<p>In progress – This work is being led by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sports (TACS), but PS Elmore has met with the Minister of TACS and senior executives to determine how she can help move this important work forward and provide her full support throughout the process.</p>
<p>2022 Mandate Letter: Support the Minister of Citizens’ Services to continue collaborating with community partners on implementation of the Anti-Racism Data Act to dismantle systemic racism and improve access to government programs and services for Indigenous, Black, and other people of colour.</p>	<p>In progress – MARB working with CITZ on the Anti-Racism Data Act implementation. In Fall of 2022, the Anti-Racism Data Committee was appointed.</p> <p>In collaboration with Indigenous Governing Entities (IGEs) and the Committee, on June 1, 2023, government will release a list of anti-racism research priorities and will also release statistics and other information that is relevant to our anti-racism efforts.</p> <p>10 priorities were released by the Committee and Indigenous Governing Entities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial diversity within the BC Public Service and equity in hiring and career development. • Interactions with the justice system and analysis of ‘complaints’ model. • Health outcomes, building upon the health system performance framework to understand how the system is performing for different demographic groups. • Understanding how students across demographic groups access and use education supports and their outcomes (from early childhood through to post-secondary education). • Children, youth, and family wellness in home and away from home. • Economic inclusion, including analysis of unpaid work and foreign credential recognition. • Homelessness, housing supply and security.
<p>2020 Mandate Letter: Work with B.C.’s new Human Rights Commissioner and other stakeholders to introduce legislation that will help reduce systemic discrimination and pave the way for race-based data collection essential to modernizing sectors like policing, health care and education.</p>	<p>Government also initiated a Demographic Survey completed by over 200,000 British Columbians. This survey will allow the Province to begin the process of disaggregating data based on race. The survey outcomes will be compared to the results of the research priorities to expose any systemic racism evident in B.C. Provincial government programs, services or policies.</p>



December 7, 2022

Honourable Niki Sharma
Attorney General
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Attorney General Sharma:

Thank you for agreeing to serve as Attorney General. I trust in your leadership at this critical time to deliver results for the people of British Columbia.

British Columbians continue to recover from and respond to the upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate related natural disasters, while global inflation is driving up costs for more households and the world's economic outlook is concerning. Now more than ever, we need to focus on building a secure, low emission, sustainable economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – whether you live in a rural area, in a city, or in an Indigenous community. We will continue working toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in the inclusive and sustainable province we are building together.

Our government is committed to delivering on the mandate British Columbians gave us in 2020. Together we can make life better for people in B.C., improve the services we all rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations.

As we renew our work, my priority as Premier is to deliver results that people can see and feel in four key areas:

- **Attainable and affordable housing:** In the wake of soaring prices and record migration to B.C., we will take on the important work of building new homes that are actually attainable for the middle class, while continuing our work to address the housing crisis for those in distress on our streets.

.../2

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- **Safer communities:** To address concerns about public safety, both for the people struggling with mental health and addiction on our streets, as well as the feeling that downtown centres are not as safe as they were before the pandemic, we will work with our partners at all levels of government, the justice and health care systems, the non-profit sector, and community leaders to find solutions for this complex challenge facing our province, and work overtime to seize the assets of high-level criminals.
- **Improved health care:** Amid unprecedented pressures we will continue to work to strengthen our public health care system, from family doctors to new hospitals, so care is there for each of us when we need it.
- **A sustainable, clean, secure, and fair economy:** We will continue our work investing in British Columbians, fighting racism and promoting equity, and building a clean economy that addresses our obligations to combat climate change by driving down emissions, while creating good, family supporting jobs.

As Attorney General, part of your unique role is to ensure the rule of law is protected as a foundational principle in British Columbia. One of the greatest challenges and opportunities of modern British Columbia is to find ways to meaningfully recognize the two systems of law in our province – Indigenous and Colonial – that co-exist and are recognized by our Constitution, our Courts, and by our government through the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples incorporated into provincial law.

In addition to this historic work and partnership with Indigenous Peoples that you will continue, British Columbians expect government to enhance and build on remarkable modernization work undertaken in our Courts and Tribunals during the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual bail hearings, remote testimony, virtual courts, and other innovations were embraced across the justice system during the pandemic. Our government will continue to support the Courts of British Columbia in further enhancing processes and services.

Currently, public concern about community safety coming out of the pandemic is also front of mind for British Columbians. The public, and our government, believes that social and health issues like mental health, addiction, and poverty are not matters for the criminal law, and yet many people struggling with these issues end up in conflict with the criminal law and the justice system in our province. Our response to this issue requires your ongoing support with colleagues in Cabinet and community members across the province.

.../3

Since 2020, our government has made considerable progress on important initiatives including:

- Launching the First Nations Justice Strategy with the BC First Nations Justice Council and the federal government toward dismantling systemic racism and discrimination from our justice system and revitalizing Indigenous legal traditions.
- Advancing recommendations from the German Report and the Cullen Commission on money laundering.
- Taking significant steps to honour Japanese Canadian internment survivors and their families.
- Adopting the *Anti-Racism Data Act* to dismantle systemic racism and improve access to government programs and services for Indigenous, Black, and other people of colour.

As you continue to make progress on items in the previous mandate letter, over the remaining period of this mandate I expect you to prioritize making progress on the following:

- Continue to work with the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Indigenous communities and the BC First Nations Justice Council to advance the First Nations Justice Strategy.
- Continue to move forward to support the judiciary in the modernization of B.C.'s courts and legal processes to make it easier for the public to navigate our justice system and to better support victims and families.
- Work with community partners, including B.C.'s Human Rights Commissioner, to develop and pass an *Anti-Racism Act* to better serve everyone in B.C.
- In collaboration with the Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity, take steps to address non-consensual disclosure of intimate images.
- Support the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General and the work of the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions to build safe and healthy communities through implementation of the Safer Communities Action Plan.
- Support all ministries to deliver initiatives listed in the Action Plan required by the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, to keep building strong relations based on recognition and implementation of the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples protected in Canada's constitution.

.../4

To assist you in meeting the commitments we have made to British Columbians, you are assigned a Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives. You will work closely together and ensure your Parliamentary Secretary receives appropriate support to deliver on the priorities outlined in the mandate letter issued to them.

Our work together must continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of people in this province. Issues not contemplated by this letter will come forward for government action and I ask you to bring such matters forward for consideration by the Planning and Priorities Committee of Cabinet, with the expectation that any proposed initiatives will be subject to the usual Cabinet and Treasury Board oversight and include measurable outcomes for British Columbians. Your ministry's priorities must reflect our government's overall strategic plan as determined by Cabinet.

British Columbians expect their elected representatives to work together to advance the public good. That means seeking out, fostering, and championing good ideas regardless of their origin. I expect you to reach out to elected members from all parties as you deliver on your mandate. Further, you will build thoughtful and sustained relationships both with title holders and through public and stakeholder engagement plans that incorporate diverse perspectives early in the policy development process. Federal partnerships and resources will be particularly important and, on behalf of our government, you will engage with the federal government on advancing priorities to improve the lives of British Columbians.

As a Cabinet, we will uphold the highest standards of ethics, collaboration, and good conduct in service of the public, and as a Minister of the Crown, you are expected to review, understand, and act according to the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act*. You will establish a collaborative working relationship with your Deputy Minister, and the public servants under their direction, who provide the professional, non-partisan advice that is fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities. Your Minister's Office must meet the highest standards for integrity and provide a respectful, rewarding environment for all staff.

The rural and urban challenges that we face are urgent and complex. In response, we must be forward-thinking, strategic, and ready to work across disciplines and old divisions in new ways. Labour shortages are a major issue globally, and British Columbia is no exception, including in the public service. Maintaining the BC Public Service as an employer of excellence will be key to retaining and recruiting the diverse professionals we rely on to deliver essential services, advice, and analysis.

.../5

At the core of this work is listening and responding to the priorities of people in B.C. Together, we can deliver results in very real ways – ways that people can see, feel, and touch, and that change their lives for the better. Thank you for doing this important work with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Eby". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David Eby, KC
Premier



December 7, 2022

Mable Elmore, MLA
Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Parliamentary Secretary Elmore:

Thank you for agreeing to serve as Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives. I trust in your leadership at this critical time to deliver results for the people of British Columbia.

British Columbians continue to recover from and respond to the upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate related natural disasters, while global inflation is driving up costs for more households and the world's economic outlook is concerning. Now more than ever, we need to focus on building a secure, low emission, sustainable economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – whether you live in a rural area, in a city, or in an Indigenous community. We will continue working toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in the inclusive and sustainable province we are building together.

Our government is committed to delivering on the mandate British Columbians gave us in 2020. Together we can make life better for people in B.C., improve the services we all rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations.

As we renew our work, my priority as Premier is to deliver results that people can see and feel in four key areas:

.../2

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- **Attainable and affordable housing:** In the wake of soaring prices and record migration to B.C., we will take on the important work of building new homes that are actually attainable for the middle class, while continuing our work to address the housing crisis for those in distress on our streets.
- **Safer communities:** To address concerns about public safety, both for the people struggling with mental health and addiction on our streets, as well as the feeling that downtown centres are not as safe as they were before the pandemic, we will work with our partners at all levels of government, the justice and health care systems, the non-profit sector, and community leaders to find solutions for this complex challenge facing our province, and work overtime to seize the assets of high-level criminals.
- **Improved health care:** Amid unprecedented pressures we will continue to work to strengthen our public health care system, from family doctors to new hospitals, so care is there for each of us when we need it.
- **A sustainable, clean, secure, and fair economy:** We will continue our work investing in British Columbians, fighting racism and promoting equity, and building a clean economy that addresses our obligations to combat climate change by driving down emissions, while creating good, family supporting jobs.

As Parliamentary Secretary, you will assist the Attorney General in carrying out ministerial duties in the House and speaking on the government's behalf when issues arise in the absence of the Attorney General. You will also play an important role in engaging British Columbians by representing the Attorney General at public events, delivering speeches on behalf of the Attorney General, or acting as a spokesperson for the government's position. You will reach out to stakeholders, businesses, civil society, and people across B.C. to better understand their perspectives and bring their views to the Attorney General.

You will work with the Attorney General to help advance these shared responsibilities:

- Support the Attorney General's work with community partners, including B.C.'s Human Rights Commissioner, to develop and pass an Anti-Racism Act to better serve everyone in B.C.
- Continue work to advance the anti-racism hotline.
- Work with community partners to create an anti-black racism strategy in recognition of the International Decade for the People of African Descent.

.../3

- Work with community partners to create an anti-Asian racism strategy.
- Work with the Japanese Canadian Legacies Society to deliver the Province's redress initiatives that honour the legacy of Japanese Canadians in B.C.
- Support the Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport in consultation with affected communities to advance emerging museum programs and proposals, including the Chinese Canadian museum, a South Asian museum, and a provincial Filipino cultural centre.
- Support the Minister of Citizens' Services to continue collaborating with community partners on implementation of the *Anti-Racism Data Act* to dismantle systemic racism and improve access to government programs and services for Indigenous, Black, and other people of colour.

The Attorney General is responsible and accountable for their ministry and their mandate; all key decisions will be made by them. You will understand the Attorney General's policy goals, develop a deep understanding of the issues, build thoughtful and sustained relationships both with title holders and through public and stakeholder engagement plans, and provide your best advice to the public service as they develop options for decision by the Attorney General.

You will collaborate with the Attorney General, ministry, and the Premier's Office to develop a workplan to guide your efforts, including detail on how the professional public service will support your work.

All members are expected to review, understand, and act according to the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act* and conduct themselves with the highest level of integrity. As a Parliamentary Secretary, your conduct will reflect not only on you, but on the Attorney General and our government.

You will establish a collaborative working relationship with the Attorney General, the Attorney General's staff, and the public servants who provide the professional, non-partisan advice that is fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities.

The rural and urban challenges that we face are urgent and complex. In response, we must be forward-thinking, strategic, and ready to work across disciplines and old divisions in new ways. Labour shortages are a major issue globally, and British Columbia is no exception, including in the public service. Maintaining the BC Public Service as an employer of excellence will be key to retaining and recruiting the diverse professionals we rely on to deliver essential services, advice, and analysis.

At the core of this work is listening and responding to the priorities of people in B.C. Together, we can deliver results in very real ways – ways that people can see, feel, and touch, and that change their lives for the better. Thank you for doing this important work with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Eby". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David Eby, KC
Premier

KEY MESSAGES:

- Budget 2024 invests in strengthening the justice system and keeping people and communities safe. The overall budget for the ministry is \$876.923 million, an increase of \$103.082 million, or 13.34 per cent, over last year's (restated) budget.
- Budget 2024 is investing \$74.5 million in strengthening the justice system by further enhancing processes and services to make it easier to navigate the justice system:
 - \$69.808 million for increased wages arising from the Shared Recovery Mandate, and from the 2022 Judicial Compensation Commission recommendation which resulted in pay increase for Judges, Judicial Justices, Supreme Court Masters, Legislative Officers and Crown Counsel;
 - \$2.073 million to support Legal Services Branch Pressures;
 - \$2.051 million to support Court Services and BC Prosecutions for pressures resulting from operational and contractual agreements;
 - \$0.351 million to support Office of Legislative Counsel;
 - \$0.264 million to support Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS) Project implementation and;
- Budget 2024 includes \$19.1 million new investments for fiscal 2024/25 to better support families and victims access to the justice system, including:
 - \$8.052 million for Family Legal Aid Expansion, which will help establish a new family law clinic dedicated to families experiencing family violence;
 - \$4.426 million to support the Anti Racism Legislation and Helpline implementation, including counseling supports;
 - \$4.145 million to support Early Resolution Model expansion to help divert family law cases to mediation, improving timely resolution and reducing the number of family law cases proceeding to court;
 - \$1.500 million to support the BC Human Rights Tribunal in managing backlog and increasing caseload;
 - \$0.490 million to support a new Port Coquitlam Supreme Court Registry;
 - \$0.457 million to support Public Guardian and Trustee for Bill 38 and reclassification costs;
- There is \$2.3 million more funding for public safety programs:
 - \$0.900 million to support Intimate Images Protection Act;
 - \$0.856 million to support Public Safety Programs for Nanaimo Correctional Centre;

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- \$0.554 million to support the Independent Investigations Office;
- The increase also includes a \$.031 million net increase for the Passenger Transportation Board transfer from Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and Budget transfer to Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, and confirmation of prior year decisions:
 - \$7.124 million increase primarily from a Budget 2023 decision to support Shared Recovery Mandate (SRM), Virtual Bail and Facilities expansion.

BACKGROUND:

Cabinet Confidences; Government Financial Information

IF ASKED:

Why did the BC Prosecutions budget increase \$38.828 million?

Response:

- \$37.550 million Shared Recovery Wage mainly due to the 2022 Judicial Compensation Commission recommendations (\$37.068 million).
- \$0.275 million Contractual/Caseload increase.
- \$1.553 million previous year budget decisions.

Why did the Indigenous Justice Secretariat budget decrease by \$1.156 million?

Response:

- Budget 2023 provided Indigenous Justice Centre funding of \$16.035 million for 2023/24, \$14.879 million for 2024/25 and \$12.849 million funding for 2025/26 to implement 10 Indigenous Justice Centres over two years.

Contact: Ed Sykora, A/CFO, Corporate Management Services Branch	Mobile: ^{Personal Security}
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¹ This is the 2nd installment of a \$10 million package approved in 2023.

2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 21, 2024

Justice Sector and Court Modernization

KEY MESSAGES:

- The Ministry is committed to fair, equitable and timely access to justice through technology innovation and justice reform.
- Through collaborative efforts, and by using a service design approach, justice and court modernization initiatives continue to improve the sector’s delivery of user-centered services.
- This work enables efficiencies to be created and increases accessibility to court services in a digital forum.
- These initiatives support everyone in the justice system, including the judiciary, court services staff, media, other partners, and most importantly members of the public who interact with the justice system.
- Outcomes of these efforts include:
 - Improved access to justice and timely resolution of matters for people in B.C.
 - Enhanced, integrated, and efficient experiences, including online.
 - Reliable proceedings, including secure access to court materials, modernized court infrastructure and increased connectivity.
 - Less costly and adversarial resolution of issues in key areas such as family justice and small claims proceedings.
 - Modernized justice processes and tools that meet sector needs and reduce the risks created by interruptions to service delivery.

FINANCES:

- Budget allocations for Courts Modernization focus on access to justice by delivering citizen centred services in the areas of modern electronic filing services, on-demand access to court materials, scheduling, virtual proceeding enablement, delivery, and training.
- Court Modernization Funding by Budget and Fiscal Year in \$ Million:

Budget	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Base funding (\$M)	5.496	10.184	12.125	7.979	2.806	38.590

BACKGROUND:

- Total spending to date on courts modernization initiatives is \$47.081 million including \$18.831 million for virtual bail. Over the past four years, many improvements have been made in digital service delivery, application enhancements, and the enablement of virtual appearances. initiatives include:
- **Application Modernization** – automating court form submission and eliminating manual data entry, improved infrastructure to enable digital services.
- **Access to Court Materials** – Uses the digital BC Wallet and verifiable credentials to allow secure access to systems and information. For example, Family Duty Counsel, with one scan with their mobile on a login screen can prove both, who they are and that they are a lawyer in good standing, to securely access Provincial Family Court documents. On demand access to documents aids counsel in conducting pre-court interviews, especially if counsel are in a different jurisdiction than the litigant. This enhances virtual proceedings and aids in preparedness for court.
- **Enhanced Connectivity** – Includes enhancements to facility infrastructure as well as network robustness.
 - Over the past two years, approximately 260 courtrooms across 59 courthouses were enabled with robust public and IDIR authenticated connectivity. Further WiFi expansion activities included providing connectivity in public areas of 4 larger locations as well as 35 barrister lounges, witness rooms and public conference rooms across the province. The enhanced coverage will enable Courthouse participants, including the public, defence and Crown counsel, and others to securely connect to information and services they need from more locations within the Courthouse.
 - At the end of February 2024, 92% of planned courthouse SD-WAN implementations are complete, representing 59 sites now with two network provider services per site, allowing for failover services and offering more efficient network traffic monitoring and performance.
 - A comprehensive network architecture review of courthouse connectivity was undertaken by OCIO to identify further areas of improvements; this is in addition to increasing by over 240% network bandwidth in courthouses around the province to add capacity due to digital services and virtual appearances.
- **Digital Evidence and Disclosure Management System (DEMS)** – DEMS intakes evidence directly from police agencies, including tools to assist with file reviews, court preparation and disclosure, provides case-related information from JUSTIN, and securely shares disclosure packages digitally.
- **Virtual Appearances** for virtual civil, family, and criminal proceedings across courts, boards, and tribunals province wide.
 - Expansion of Cisco videoconferencing units - an additional 200 devices and endpoints over the last 4 years, bringing the number of devices and endpoints

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located in courthouses, correctional centres, police detachments and boardrooms around the province to close to 600.

- **Virtual Bail Initiative** – The Virtual Bail Initiative supports timely, effective bail hearings that aim to reduce community displacement. Accused appear virtually, with the impact of reducing what is sometimes significant time in custody and long-distance transportation for the purpose of a bail hearing, only for the accused to be released far from home with no means to return. Judges, court staff and lawyers are no longer geographically bound and can appear virtually in multiple jurisdictions on the same day. Province wide implementation creates a more resilient justice system that can better adapt to extreme events like wildfires, flooding, and pandemics.
- **e-Filing Services** – Enablement of processes to support electronic submission of family forms, representation grant, chamber binders, divorce forms, Supreme Court civil forms and Court of Appeal forms.
 - Includes guided pathways to assist with form completion, e-filing, and integration with case tracking systems.
- **Traffic Court Online** – launched a web landing page (tickets.gov.bc.ca) and a self-resolution information tool. The Ministry is preparing to implement end-to-end digitized processes to resolve traffic violation ticket cases online and enable options for future online processes.
- **Money Judgement Enforcement Act (MJEA)** and the Money Judgment Enforcement Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions Act together modernize mechanisms used to enforce orders to pay money from the Supreme Court, Provincial Court and tribunals in British Columbia.
- **Intimate Images Protection Act (IPPA)** – aims to address and prevent the online distribution of nude, near-nude, or sexual photographs/videos without the subject’s consent, through giving survivors access to new services that will provide ways to stop or prevent distribution. Technology enhancements support the Civil Resolution Tribunal’s (CRT) new trauma-informed fast-track application process to stop the distribution of images. PSSG’s Intimate Images Protection Service provides victims with information, resources, and supports.
- **Family Justice enhancements** – virtual support for clients seeking help with separation and divorce (Family Justice Services), expanded the Early Resolution Model to Surrey, and launched an informal trial pilot which provides litigants in Kamloops with a less adversarial trial option.
- **Online Booking and Court Services Scheduling enhancements** – development of court services web-based applications, including Sheriff Scheduling, Court Administration Scheduling and Interpreter Scheduling, that assist in managing resource allocations. Providing an online booking system, which allows for a more equitable process and an avenue for court users to submit requests in a modern, more efficient manner.
- **Court of Appeal Courtroom of the Future** – a fully modernized courtroom incorporating ergonomics, accessibility, environmental and technological functionality.

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- Includes design standards developed for use in future Court of Appeal courtroom builds and renovations.

Concepts can be leveraged for the Supreme and Provincial Courtroom of the Future projects also planned after the Court of Appeal project completes.

- **Modernization of Legacy Systems**

- Work is under way for re-platforming of the aging Oracle forms-based applications into new technologies, which are in use in key systems across the justice sector.
- The Court Fees and Fines modernization project will replace the 40-year-old legacy Accounts Receivable and Collections (ARC) system.
- Modernization of the Court Services Online system will improve the experience of self-represented litigants and provide service integration with existing and new online services, as well as the Family Law Application.

- **Enterprise content management** – We aim to build a transformative Enterprise Content Management (ECM) ecosystem to position the sector as a leader in effective data and content management, which enables confidence in data accessibility, cross-sector collaboration, and process efficiency.

- **eWarrants** – will create a fully integrated case management system for receiving applications for search warrants and production orders, including processing, tracking, and storing those that are approved. Developing an integrated end-to-end system that allows for secure access exchange between enforcement agencies, the Justice Centre, the Provincial Court, and court registries of highly sensitive material.

- **Supporting and improving technology for administrative justice tribunals** – enables the tribunals to resolve disputes more quickly and effectively, and virtual proceedings minimize travel and allow disputes to be resolved more efficiently.

- **Court Digital Transformation Strategy** - CSB is updating the Strategy, which continues to provide a clear roadmap of the shared government and judicial priorities to improve services and accessibility for citizens.

Contact: Paul Craven, ADM, Justice Services Branch	Mobile: ^{Personal Security}
Contact: Jenny Manton, ADM, Court Services Branch	Mobile: ^{Personal Security}

2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated February 15, 2024

OHRC Hate Report and Ministry Response

KEY MESSAGES:

- In March 2023, The Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (the Commissioner) released the report: *From Hate to Hope: Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Ministry of Attorney General staff, as well as other affected ministries, continue to look at the Commissioner recommendations very carefully.
- Supported by the coordination efforts of the Deputy Attorney General, all relevant ministries have completed a comprehensive review of services to identify current initiatives that are responsive to the recommendations made in the report. Responsive initiatives can be identified for the majority of recommendations.
- The DAG has provided an initial update to the Commissioner on the work the Province is completing to respond to the recommendations made in the Report.
- To identify and move forward with next steps in responding to the recommendations, government will seek direction from the Head of the Public Service and from Cabinet, as appropriate. Direction will also be sought to move forward with the second recommendation which is to produce a whole-of-government strategy/action plan on addressing hate.
- The Commissioner's diligent work on this report should be acknowledged. It is also important to acknowledge the importance of ensuring that the work of preventing and responding to hate has the appropriate oversight, is government-wide and is situated appropriately within government.

FINANCES:

- There are currently no financial impacts.
- Funding for responsive programs is detailed in cross-referenced notes.

BACKGROUND:

- On November 14, 2023, in collaboration with impacted ministries and with the Premier's Office, the DAG provided the Human Rights Commissioner with a detailed summary of all current initiatives across government that are considered responsive to the recommendations made in the report.
- Within this communication, next steps were identified and include, pending direction from the Head of the Public Service and from Cabinet, the development of a working group that includes the following impacted ministries:
 - Ministry of Attorney General
 - Ministry of Education and Child Care

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- Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness
- Ministry of Finance – Gender Equity Office
- Ministry of Housing
- Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General
- Office of the Premier
- For additional information on this topic, reference the following Ministry of Attorney General Estimates Notes:
 - Prosecuting Hate Crimes (Tab 11)
 - Declaration Act Action Plan (Tab 23)
 - Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (Tab 33)
 - British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal (Tab 34)
 - Intimate Images Protection Act (IIPA) (Tab 40)
 - Anti-Racism Legislation (Tab 50)
 - Anti-Racism Data Act (Tab 51)
 - Racist Incident Helpline (Tab 53)
 - Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network (Tab 54)

Contact: Laurel Holonko, Director of Strategic Relationships, JSB

Mobile: <small>Personal Security</small>
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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 26, 2024

2022 Shared Recovery Mandate and Judicial Compensation Commission Increases

KEY MESSAGES:

- The Shared Recovery Mandate (SRM) provides general wage increases for all public sector employers with unionized employees whose collective agreements expired on or after December 31, 2021. Excluded employees received similar increases.
- The general wage increase for 2024 will be 2% plus a potential Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) to a maximum of 3%.
- The Judicial Compensation Commission (JCC) is a five-person independent body established every four years to make recommendations on the remuneration, allowances and benefits of Provincial Court judges and judicial justices for the following four years.
- As a constitutional requirement, judicial salaries and benefits must not be negotiated between the judiciary and government.
- Since the Legislative Assembly did not reject the recommendations of the 2022 Commission within the statutory time limits, Provincial Court judges and judicial justices were entitled to receive the remuneration, allowances and benefits recommended by the 2022 JCC for the period from April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2027.
- Supreme Court associate judges (previously masters) and registrars are entitled to receive the remuneration recommended by 2022 JCC for Provincial Court judges. The salaries of Crown counsel and some officers of the Legislature are also linked to Provincial Court judges' salaries.

FINANCES:

- The following table summarizes the fiscal impact of the 2022 SRM, excluding COLA which has yet to be calculated, and JCC recommendations in \$M (salaries and benefits).

Vote	Description	2024/25				2025/26				2026/27			
		SRM	JCC	CCA	Total	SRM	JCC	CCA	Total	SRM	JCC	CCA	Total
14	Ministry Operations	14.265		1.360	15.625	14.502		1.360	15.862	14.502		1.360	15.862
	BCPS CCA			37.068	37.068			37.068	37.068			37.068	37.068
		14.265		38.428	52.693	14.502		38.428	52.930	14.502		38.428	52.930
15	Judiciary												
	Prov Court Judiciary												
	<i>Provincial Court Judges</i>		12.178		12.178		12.178		12.178		12.178		12.178
	<i>Judicial Judges</i>		0.221		0.221		0.247		0.247		0.272		0.272
	<i>In-House LTD</i>		0.290		0.290		0.299		0.299		0.307		0.307
	<i>Part-time Judicial Justices</i>		1.194		1.194		1.307		1.307		1.420		1.420
		0.421	13.883		14.304	0.421	14.031		14.452	0.421	14.178		14.599
	Superior Court Judiciary												
	<i>Masters</i>		1.297				1.297				1.297		
	<i>Registrars</i>		0.166				0.166				0.166		
		0.820	1.463		2.283	0.820	1.463		2.283	0.820	1.463		2.283
	Judiciary Total	1.241	15.346		16.587	1.241	15.494		16.735	1.241	15.641		16.882
17	IIO	0.283			0.283	0.283			0.283	0.283			0.283
	Statutory Appropriation												
	PGT	0.245			0.245	0.245			0.245	0.245			0.245
Total		16.034	15.346	38.428	69.808	16.271	15.494	38.428	70.193	16.271	15.641	38.428	70.340

BACKGROUND:

- The courts have confirmed that to preserve judicial independence, the constitution requires judicial salaries to be set through a process involving an independent commission. They cannot be the subject of direct negotiations.
- The 2022 JCC final report recommended significant compensation increases. Provincial Court judges' salaries will increase by 28.4% over four years and Provincial Court judicial justices' salaries will increase by 37.3% over four years.
- The Agreement between the Employer and BC Crown Counsel Association expired on March 31, 2019 and key provisions of it remain in force until a new Agreement is reached. A December 2019 arbitration decision ruled the annual salary adjustment provisions would continue as long as the current Agreement remains in force.
- Crown Counsel received increases of:
 - 1.51 percent effective April 1, 2019
 - 2.22 percent effective April 1, 2020
 - 2.26 percent effective April 1, 2021
 - 2.21 percent effective April 1, 2022
- Implementation of JCC recommendations provided Crown Counsel with the following increases:
 - 18.89% for 2023/24 and 4.95% for 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- Pre-judgment interest is payable to Provincial Court judges and judicial justices from April 1, 2023 through November 23, 2023, and post-judgement interest is payable from November 24, 2023 until retroactive payments are paid. The PSA has confirmed that interest also applies to the Crown Counsel Association retroactive salary payments.

- Government’s response to the 2019 JCC and judicial salaries for the previous cycle (April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2023) are under litigation. A decision is expected later in 2024.
- Officers of the Legislature with salary links to the JCC salary recommendations for the chief judge of the Provincial Court are:
 - Auditor general
 - Chief electoral officer
 - Information and privacy commissioner and registrar of lobbyists
 - Ombudsperson
 - Representative for children and youth
 - Police complaints commissioner

Contact: Ed Sykora, A/Chief Financial Officer, CMSB	Mobile: Personal Security
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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 15, 2024

Conduct of Bail Hearings

KEY MESSAGES:

- BCPS has completed province-wide implementation of all three components of its Crown-led Comprehensive Bail Program: weekday virtual and hybrid virtual bail, weeknight evening bail, and weekend/holiday daytime bail.
- Standardized processes and remote hearings reduce prisoner movement, enhance the capacity for provision of legal services in remote locations, and provide scheduling flexibility in all venues. These changes contribute to creating a more resilient justice system that can better respond to closures or delays due to extreme events, including those related to weather, pandemics, or infrastructure outages.
- As part of the government's *Safer Communities Action Plan*, BCPS has deployed dedicated regional teams of Crown Counsel and professional staff to support the *Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative* (ReVOII). ReVOII Crown Counsel make independent decisions in relation to the charge assessment involving individuals prioritized into ReVOII, and where applicable, conduct any bail hearings.
- In conjunction with the Government's *Safer Communities Action Plan*, an AG directive on bail, and recent amendments to the bail provisions of the *Criminal Code* regarding repeat violent offenders, BCPS has provided further information and policy guidance to Crown Counsel. BCPS also established a process for collecting data on the positions Crown Counsel take on bail hearings and the resulting judicial decisions.

FINANCES:

- The Ministry of Attorney General has been provided \$2.806 million for virtual bail in Fiscal 24/25, an increase from the \$2.045 million provided in Fiscal 23/24.

BACKGROUND:

- Working with the Provincial Court and other justice partners, BCPS has developed and implemented a province-wide Comprehensive Bail Program. The development started in 2017 with implementation of Crown-led (as opposed to police-led) after hours weekend/holiday bail hearings started. This followed with the Provincial Court's development and implementation of daytime virtual bail, beginning during the pandemic.
- Prior year budget decisions provide \$35.3 million funding for the Comprehensive Bail Program over the fiscal plan.

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- On April 4, 2022 the Attorney General issued a Directive for the BCPS to implement a Comprehensive Bail Program by the end of 2022. The Directive was intended to allow government to enter into agreements on hours of work and other conditions with individual Crown Counsel, rather than having an overarching agreement on terms and conditions for Comprehensive Bail with the Crown Counsel Association (CCA). The basis for the Directive is language in the Crown Counsel Act that allows for the AG to direct the ADAG on matters “respecting the administration” of the BCPS.
- The CCA grieved BCPS’s implementation of the AG Directive, alleging that the BCPS entered into individual agreements with Crown Counsel, despite the Crown Counsel Agreement requirement that terms and conditions of employment for all Crown Counsel be negotiated with the CCA as exclusive bargaining agent for Crown Counsel. The Grievance Arbitrator ruled in the CCA’s favour.
- The Government sought judicial review of the Arbitrator’s decision, arguing that it was made in excess of jurisdictional error, was unreasonable, and wrong in law and that it unreasonably fetters the authority of the AG. The judicial review application was denied, and the Government elected not to appeal.

Contact: Grant Wong, A/Director, Legal Operations, BCPS	Mobile: Personal Security
Contact: Brian Anderson, ED, Business Operations, BCPS	Mobile: Personal Security

2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 27, 2024

Crown Counsel Association Bargaining

KEY MESSAGES:

- The Agreement between the Employer and BC Crown Counsel Association expired on March 31, 2019.
- Key conditions remain in force, including linkage of Crown Counsel salaries to those of Provincial Court Judges.
- Through operation of the linkage, top Crown Counsel salaries are pegged at 85 per cent of Provincial Court Judges.
- The salary linkage has resulted in Crown Counsel receiving the following general wage increases effective April 1 of each of the following years: 1.51 per cent in 2019, 2.22 per cent in 2020, 2.26 per cent increase in 2021 and 2.21 per cent in 2022.
- With the Government's acceptance of the most recent Judicial Compensation Commission Report, through operation of the linkage, Crown Counsel received an 18.89 percent increase in 2023 and are scheduled to receive a further 4.96 percent in 2024.

FINANCES:

- Budget 2024 provides funding for the cumulative 2022, 2023 and 2024 increases, totalling \$38.427 million.

STATISTICS:

- There are currently approximately 534 Crown Counsel Association (CCA) members and a further 20 who are inactive employees (for example, on parental leave).
- Prior to the anticipated April 1, 2024, 4.96 per cent increase, Crown Counsel salaries range from \$112,972 to \$291,129 annually and average approximately \$209,784, based on current demographics.
- Prior to the scheduled April 1, 2024, 4.96 per cent increase, Crown Counsel Manager (CCM) salaries range from \$240,932 to \$311,508 annually and average approximately \$285,176, based on current demographics. There are currently 38 Crown Counsel Managers. This does not include the Assistant Deputy Attorney General, whose present salary falls well below the top salary of Crown Counsel Managers.

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BACKGROUND:

- A bargaining session held in the months leading up to expiration of the agreement in 2019 failed to result in a new agreement. The CCA’s unwillingness to give up the salary linkage to judges and the government’s unwillingness to accept it in a new agreement (because doing so would trigger “me too” provisions in a variety of other collective agreements) have led to a bargaining impasse, which continues up to the present day.
- Budget 2021 provided funding of \$8.6 million to fund the 2019-2021 increases, including lockstep and benefits.
- Subject only to job action being taken by the CCA, a lock-out by the government or negotiation of a new agreement, the salary linkage to PCJs will continue indefinitely. All other negotiable terms and conditions, including the need to provide better programs and supports for growing mental health challenges and concerns for Crown Counsel, remain unresolved as long as the bargaining impasse continues.

Contact: Brian Anderson, Executive Director, Business Operations, BC Prosecution Services	Mobile: Personal Security
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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 28, 2024

R. v. Jordan; Judicial Stay for Unreasonable Delay

KEY MESSAGES:

- On July 8, 2016, in its decision *R v Jordan*, the Supreme Court of Canada established binding timelines for the processing of criminal cases in Canada.
- Systemic delay (excluding delay clearly attributable to the defence) that extends beyond the established timelines is presumptively “unreasonable” under s. 11(b) of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The established timeline for Provincial Court criminal cases is 18 months and the established timeline for BC Supreme Court criminal cases is 30 months.
- Unless Crown Counsel can justify systemic delay that exceeds these thresholds on the basis of “exceptional circumstances”, the constitutional right to be tried within a reasonable time is violated and the prosecution is liable to be judicially stayed (i.e., terminated) by a judge.
- The BC Prosecution Service (BCPS) has been actively working on reducing systemic delay for a number of years and continues to do everything it can to meet the timelines established by the Supreme Court of Canada in the cases it prosecutes.
- Since the release of the *Jordan* decision, there has been a general trend of fewer judicial stays in criminal cases in B.C.; however, there was an increase in 2023, back to pre-pandemic levels (2017 – 16; 2018 – 12; 2019 – 8; 2020 – 9; 2021 – 5; 2022 – 3; 2023 – 13)
- As of February 28, 2024, there have been three judicial stays in 2024, one in January and two in February.

BACKGROUND:

- Starting in 2012, BCPS has implemented several process reforms that were specifically designed to address the problem of delay. These reforms were substantially completed in December 2015 and include:
 - Enhanced Crown file ownership to reduce file churn;
 - Province-wide quality standards for proactive criminal case management, including front-end disclosure and online charge assessment;
 - Increased flexibility on the use of direct indictments;
 - Implementation of a province-wide electronic file closing survey to gather business intelligence on material process and file developments;
 - Implementation of a Major Case Management model to bring a project management approach to the largest prosecutions.
- As part of an ongoing process of continuous improvement, the BCPS has been developing and rolling out new reforms and initiatives since 2016. These include:

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- Streamlining of administrative processes, for example, the **Administrative Business Centre**, which provides staff with centralized business documentation that is updated continuously.
- Implementation of the **Crown Counsel Scheduling System**, which facilitates integrated electronic case scheduling with the Provincial Court and supports the long-term sustainability of Crown file ownership.
- Implementation of the **Comprehensive Bail Program** in which the BCPS assumed responsibility for all after-hours charge assessment and bail processes across the province.
- Implementation of the **Comprehensive Disclosure Strategy (CDS)** aimed at increasing efficiencies and reducing delay in criminal case disclosure.
 - The most recent CDS initiative is the **Digital Evidence and Disclosure Management System (DEMS)**, which was launched in 2023 and will be fully implemented by mid-2024. DEMS is a technology platform that facilitates the end-to-end management of digital evidence and disclosure directly from police agencies to the BCPS.
- The completed reforms, coupled with ongoing initiatives, help the BCPS to mitigate concerns about delay.

Contact: Damienne Darby, Communications Counsel, BCPS

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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 27, 2024

Prosecuting Hate Crimes

KEY MESSAGES:

- On February 16, 2024, the BC Prosecution Service (BCPS) publicly released a revised Hate Crimes policy (HAT1). The revised policy includes the following significant changes:
 - it clearly defines “hate crimes” for the purposes of the policy to include a defined list of offences (including new offences relating to Holocaust denial and conversion therapy) AND any *Criminal Code* offence motivated by bias, prejudice, or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression, or on any other similar factor;
 - it provides specific guidance for hate crimes targeting Indigenous victims and Indigenous communities.
- The BCPS independently updated HAT 1 to reflect developments in relevant law and practice. The BCPS was aware of and considered the Report of the BC Human Rights Commissioner “From Hate to Hope” (released March 7, 2023) on systemic responses to hate incidents arising during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The BCPS has a designated resource counsel group with members across the province available to advise Crown Counsel dealing with these offences. Resource materials address case law, subject-matter publications, and links to partner agencies. The lead Hate Crime resource counsel meets regularly with the police-based BC Hate Crime Team, in addition to participating in larger in-person meetings with both resource counsel and representatives from various police services.

FINANCES:

- No financial impacts at this time.

BACKGROUND:

- HAT 1 reminds prosecutors that the *Criminal Code* contains a number of specific hate-related offences and sentencing provisions, while also making clear that any offence that is motivated by hate is potentially subject to a more severe punishment, since that motivation is an aggravating factor on sentencing. The invocation of the aggravated sentencing factor was not previously tracked by BCPS and likely constitutes the bulk of hate crime files it prosecutes. Sentencing cases invoking the aggravated sentencing factor will now be tracked internally.

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- The revised HAT1 policy refers to the new antisemitism offence (Holocaust denial) but does not articulate a specific definition of antisemitism.
- The existing Criminal Code prohibitions against public incitement of hatred and the willful promotion of hatred against “any identifiable group” (Section 319(1) and (2)), and the definition of an “identifiable group” in section 318(4), are broad enough to cover antisemitic conduct. The same is true for the aggravating sentencing factor under s. 718.2(a)(i).
- The definitions in s. 318(4) and s. 718.2(a)(i), cited above, are also broad enough to cover Islamophobic conduct.
- The Crown Counsel Policy Manual merely provides guidance to Crown Counsel in the exercise of their prosecutorial discretion. Policy does not have the force of law and cannot add to or change the law. Changes to the definitions in the *Criminal Code* or legal tests for proving offences may only be made by the federal government.
- In addition to the work of the BCPS, Government has initiated a program to support the victims of hate crimes, the Anti-Hate Community Support Fund:
 - The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General has established the Anti-Hate Community Support Fund to support identifiable groups in B.C. who have experienced, or who are at risk of experiencing, hate-motivated crimes, or incidents. The fund is intended to support organizations, such as places of worship or cultural community centres, that have sustained damages to their site(s) or are seeking to enhance security measures in and around their site(s).
- The Attorney General wrote to the federal Minister of Justice, the Honourable Arif Virani, on February 14, 2024, describing B.C.’s Hate Crime initiatives and inviting legislative improvements.
- On February 26, 2024, the federal Minister of Justice introduced Bill C-63 in Parliament which, in addition to addressing on-line harms, would amend the *Criminal Code* to add a new hate crime offence, define hatred, increase maximum punishment for hate crimes, and create a new preventative recognizance to prevent hate crimes. BCPS will monitor the bill’s progress and whether amendments to HAT 1 are required if it passes.
- No comment can be provided about any hate-related prosecutions that are currently before the courts.

Contact: Trevor Shaw, Director, Criminal Appeals and Special Prosecutions, BCPS	Mobile: <small>Personal Security</small>
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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 16, 2024

Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative

KEY MESSAGES:

- As part of the Government's *Safer Communities Action Plan*, the Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative (ReVOII), led by BC Corrections, began serving all communities in the province by standing up twelve hubs on May 1, 2023.
- The BC Prosecution Service (BCPS) assigned dedicated Crown Counsel and professional staff to its High-Risk Offender Identification Program, and five, newly created, Regional ReVOII prosecutions teams. The regional prosecution teams include dedicated Crown Counsel who make decisions about charge assessment and, where appropriate, conduct the bail hearings and prosecutions involving individuals prioritized into ReVOII. The regional prosecution teams also provide criminal law advice to law enforcement.
- Since implementation, a total of 377 prioritized individuals (as of February 15, 2024) have been identified.
- Coordinated, consistent, and streamlined information sharing and dedicated resources have assisted prosecutors in making principled and informed decisions about charge assessments, bail release, and prosecutions in relation to the prioritized individuals.
- Police and probation work collaboratively, focusing on enhanced investigation, enforcement, and monitoring of prioritized individuals. Where an individual is returning to the community after serving a provincial custodial sentence, enhanced release planning tailored to their unique needs occurs prior to release by dedicated correctional teams.
- ReVOII's multi-agency response ensures that prioritized individuals are continuously monitored from investigation, charge assessment, bail, trial or plea, and sentencing, through to enhanced release planning and ongoing case management of community supervision orders.
- ReVOII Crown Counsel continue to fulfill their constitutional obligations to act as independent ministers of justice, applying the governing law and BCPS policies, including the revised BCPS bail policy and recent amendments to the *Criminal Code*. ReVOII Crown Counsel also continue to apply the law and principles governing the BCPS Indigenous Justice Framework to cases involving prioritized individuals who identify as Indigenous.
- It is too early to provide reliable measurements of program effectiveness, but early indications are promising and suggest ReVOII is having a positive impact, interrupting the cycle of reoffending, improving justice system responses, and holding prioritized individuals more accountable.

FINANCES:

- BCPS FTEs: 21 Crown Counsel and 21 Professional Staff including: 6 paralegals and 15 senior legal analysts.

Salary and Benefit Costs for ReVOII FTEs (millions)	FY 22/23	FY 23/24 Forecast	FY 24/25
Approved Contingency Funding	\$2.378	\$8.162	\$8.553
Forecasted Salary and Benefit Expenditures			
Crown Counsel	-	\$5.330	\$6.474
Paralegals	-	\$0.391	\$0.542
Senior Legal Analysts	-	\$0.842	\$1.202
Total	-	\$6.563	\$8.218

Note: BCPS did not have the ReVOII program running in FY 22/23. Assumed 2% increase for BCGEU in FY 24/25

STATISTICS:

- Data from BC Corrections, below, provides a profile of the 361 ReVOII program participants as of January 11, 2024.
 - Average Age: 37.
 - Gender: 92% identify as men and 8% as women.
 - Ethnicity: distribution is similar to the current BC Corrections' custody population:

White	53%
Indigenous	32%
Black	7%
South Asian	3%
Asian	< 1%
Other/Unknown	5%

- On average, program participants have 4 current violent charges or convictions and 10 prior violent or related convictions.
- 64% of the ReVOII program participants have significant mental health challenges.
- 94% of ReVOII program participants have significant substance use challenges.
- 22% of ReVOII program participants report having stable housing at program intake. For the remainder, 40% reported having unstable housing (i.e. precarious housing conditions such as couch surfing, shelter, or being at risk for homelessness) and 38% reported being unsheltered (i.e. living in a tent or sleeping on the street).

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BACKGROUND:

- The BCPS has access to \$8.553 million in contingency funding for fiscal year 24/25, an increase from the \$8.162 million in fiscal year 23/24.
- BCPS ReVOII executive leads continue with cross-government engagement to enhance supports to ReVOII. In November 2023, dedicated Community Integration Specialists from SDPR began supporting ReVOII, and conversations are ongoing with MMHA and MoH.
- BC Corrections and BCPS are committed to the core principles and recommendations of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy and the draft Métis Justice Strategy. Consultations with the BC First Nations Justice Council are ongoing.

Contact: Michael Fortino, A/Deputy Regional Crown Counsel, BCPS

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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 18, 2024

Special Prosecutions

KEY MESSAGES:

- Special Prosecutors are appointed when the Assistant Deputy Attorney General considers it in the public interest to do so, usually to avoid any potential for real or perceived improper influence in the administration of justice.
- Special Prosecutors are senior lawyers external to government who are able to make their decisions independently of both Government and the BC Prosecution Service.
- In order to protect the integrity and independence of the Special Prosecutor system, it would not be appropriate to comment on, or discuss, any ongoing matter that is being managed by a Special Prosecutor.

Contact: Damienne Darby, Communications Counsel, BCPS	Mobile: <small>Personal Security</small>
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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 20, 2024

Assessment of Criminal, Family, and Civil Scheduling Timeliness

KEY MESSAGES:

- The Ministry is committed to reducing delays and improving the timeliness of matters coming before the courts.
- It is recognized that there is a need to make improvements and reduce delays. We have supported this area with program enhancements and technology innovations.
- The justice system has developed innovative solutions and adaptive processes that continue to provide and improve access to justice through electronic and virtual methods in both the Supreme Court and Provincial Court.
- In collaboration with the Provincial Court, innovative processes such as the Early Resolution and Case Management Model in Victoria and Surrey are helping people resolve their family law matters, often without needing to go to court – significantly reducing caseload pressures. Those who do proceed to court are better prepared, making each appearance more meaningful and productive.
- The complement of Provincial Court judges remained relatively constant in 2023; however, the Supreme Court judge complement, set by statute, had 12 vacancies¹. Filling judge vacancies on the Supreme Court of BC is a federal responsibility.

STATISTICS:

- The September 2023 Provincial Court of BC Semi-Annual Time to Trial Report showed provincial weighted times to trial increased by 8% between September 2022 and 2023.
- 12 out of 15 time to trial measures exceeded OCJ established standards, including Criminal trials 2-4 days long, Small Claims settlement conferences, Small Claims trials less than two days, Small Claims trials between 2-4 days long, and all types of Family trials.

Provincial Court - Criminal matters

- As of September 2023, the time to schedule a criminal adult trial was:
 - Less than 2 days – delay of 6.1 months (OCJ standard 6 months)
 - 2 to 4 days – delay of 7.6 months (OCJ standard 7 months)
 - 5 days or more – delay of 8.0 months (OCJ standard 8 months)
- In 2023, there were 19 Provincial Court Adult cases and zero Supreme Court cases judicially stayed due to systemic delay. This is the highest number of cases judicially stayed since 2018, though lower than the preceding period between 2009 and 2018 when the average count was 44 per year.
- In January 2024, there was one Provincial Court Adult case judicially stayed.

¹ As of February 1, 2024, Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs Canada: [Federal Judicial Appointments - Number of Federally Appointed Judges in Canada \(fja.gc.ca\)](https://www.fja.gc.ca/en/federal-judicial-appointments)

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Provincial Court - Family matters

- As of September 2023, the time to schedule a Family Law Act trial was:
 - Less than 2 day trial – delay of 5.6 months (OCJ standard 4 months)
 - 2 to 4 days – delay of 6.7 months (OCJ standard 5 months)
 - 5 days or more – delay of 7.7 months (OCJ standard 6 months).
- As of September 2023, the time to schedule a child protection hearing was:
 - Less than 2 days trial - delay 5.2 months (OCJ standard 3 months)
 - 2 to 4 days - delay of 6.3 months (OCJ standard 4 months)
 - 5 days or more - delay of 7.3 months (OCJ standard 6 months).

Provincial Court - Civil matters

- As of September 2023, the time to schedule a small claims trial was:
 - Less than 2 day trial (SPC²) – delay did not exceed 4 months (OCJ standard 4 months)
 - Less than 2 days trial (non-SPC) – delay of 6.1 months (OCJ standard 5 months)
 - 2 to 4 days (non-SPC) – delay of 6.6 months (OCJ standard 6 months)
 - 5 days or more (non-SPC) – delay of 7.7 months (OCJ standard 8 months).

Supreme Court – Criminal, Family, and Civil

- Delays are not specifically tracked by the Supreme Court of BC; however, a proxy measure sourced from Supreme Court scheduling data shows that the time it takes to get a trial in Supreme Court is generally increasing in Supreme Civil and Supreme Family.
- Supreme Court time to trial delays vary from location to location ranging from 3.9 months to 17.2 months for civil trials and 1.3 months to 12.1 months for criminal trials. Notably, comparing 2023/24 YTD³ with 2019/20, the highest median time to schedule a criminal trial in Supreme Court increased by 6.5 months.
- The 2022 Annual Report – Supreme Court of British Columbia states that the ratio of matters bumped to heard remains high. Notably, 10.9% of all long chamber applications were bumped in 2022, and more trials were bumped in 2022 (16.3%) than in 2021 (13.5%). The Supreme Court reports that the main cause of bumping is a shortage of judges available to hear matters.

BACKGROUND:

- One indicator of timeliness is the Provincial Court Office of the Chief Judge’s (OCJ) Time to Trial Update reports. The most current data is from September 30, 2023. This OCJ report is typically released twice a year, reporting on the March and September survey results, approximately 3 months after the survey completes. The next report is expected to be released in June/July 2024 for the March 31, 2024 time period.

² Summary Proceedings Court

³ FY 2023/24 FYD includes data to February 20, 2024

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- B.C. has been diligent in monitoring judicial stays due to systemic delay since the *R. v. Jordan* Supreme Court of Canada decision in 2016.
- The courts introduced several initiatives to reduce overall delays in the justice system:
 - The addition of Case Planning Conferences for Supreme Family matters to bring parties together during the early stages to discuss how the case will proceed.
 - Method of Attendance and Application Record pilot project expansion province-wide to allow for judicial flexibility and efficient use of judicial resources.
 - Simplification of court-related processes for Supreme Civil matters conferences.
 - Guided pathway applications (like the Court of Appeal and Family Law Act Apps) that assist self-represented litigants reducing delay by facilitating the correct completion of documents to move through the court system in a timely way.
 - Implementation of a new regional scheduling model for provincial family and small claims conferences. Setting conferences as virtual appearances allows for flexibility in scheduling judicial resources and balancing demands within the region. Remote attendance options also improve participant availability and result in earlier appearance dates, while reducing the need for participants to travel.
 - The Virtual Bail model that enables more efficient use of judges, through improved scheduling, communication, and coordination within the justice system.
 - The Early Resolution Process in Victoria and Surrey, which shows a reduced number of cases proceeding to court, improved understanding and readiness for participants, and more effective and efficient use of Court.
 - New processes in the CFCSA Rules that will remove barriers to the effective exercise of Indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services.
 - The Access to Court Material (ACM) application that allows lawyers to access family and criminal documents; this has increased preparedness for court and the more efficient running of courtrooms such as family remand court.
- Timeliness can be impacted by several factors.
 - The number and proportion of judicial resources devoted to criminal, civil, and family matters, together with the relative caseload and courtroom availability.
 - Judicial vacancies and turnover impact judicial capacity. B.C. currently has 12 Supreme Court Justice vacancies.
 - Some lengthier delays can be due to a limited number of court sitting days at smaller court locations. These smaller locations cannot accommodate larger trials and have difficulties reacting to caseload fluctuations.

Other key drivers of civil and family case timeliness include capacity, participant readiness, implementation of more efficient processes, alternatives to court, and overall caseload trends.

Contact: Cindy Eng, Manager, Court Services Branch	Mobile: Personal Security
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KEY MESSAGES:

- Budget 2024 provides new funding to address pressures in the Court Services Branch.
- This funding includes support for the wage increases under the collective agreement, funding to support the expansion of Nanaimo Correctional Centre, the renovation of the Port Coquitlam Law Courts to include the BC Supreme Court, and for caseload pressures to operate vehicles, transcription services and court interpreters.
- CSB is managing funding pressures related to amortization for capital assets, ongoing cost increases for transcription, court interpreters, maintenance costs for expanded IMIT systems along with other caseload pressures.

FINANCES:

- Budget 2024 and prior budget decisions include funding increases of \$7.383 million (4.97%) and 10.00 FTEs for the following items:
 - New wage mandate funding (\$1.865 million/0.00 FTEs) in addition to previously scheduled funding increases of \$2.392 million (0.00 FTEs) for \$4.257 million to support collective agreement costs and management salary adjustments.
 - Funding to support the expansion of Nanaimo Correctional Centre (\$0.856 million/ 6.00 FTEs). This funding will be used to operate a virtual appearance hub at the centre so that those in custody can appear remotely at hearings, and to support changes in prisoner transport requirements resulting from the expansion.
 - Funding to support the renovation of the Port Coquitlam Law Courts to include BC Supreme Court (\$0.490 million /4.00 FTEs). This funding will support the registry adding Supreme Court filing services, and the inclusion of jury trials at the Law Courts to include jury trials, and renovations to support higher security matters.
 - Caseload pressure funding (\$1.776 million/0.00 FTEs) for court interpreters, vehicles and court transcription costs. These costs have increased due to market conditions and growing caseload volumes; and other Prior Year decisions \$0.004 million/0.00 FTEs).
- This funding will be used to support approved service delivery growth, negotiated labour agreements, and increased complements of Provincial and Supreme Court justices.
- Budget 2024 also included ministry funding for Northern, Interior and Vancouver Island Virtual Bail, which will be allocated to branches at a future date.

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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 21, 2024

Recruitment and Retention for Court Administration and BC Sheriff Service

KEY MESSAGES:

- The Ministry is working to improve recruitment and retention for both Court Administration (CA) and the BC Sheriff Service (BCSS). This work is urgent for the BCSS which had 250 incidents related to staff shortages during 2023. This work is also urgent for CA to ensure that sufficient staff are available to support both in-court and registry operations.
- Government has increased compensation to improve staff retention. The 18th (2019) and 19th (2022) collective agreements provided Sheriffs and Court Clerks with new temporary market adjustments to increase pay by up to an additional 15.9% of salary. Government also negotiated with the BCGEU to provide a \$10,000 per year recruitment and retention incentive to sheriffs, which amounts to up to 14.8% of salary.
- The Ministry successfully marketed BCSS as a career path with 60 new recruits selected from the August 2023 posting and over 800 applications to the December posting.
- The Ministry continues to explore other options to recruit and retain the employees who provide these valuable court administration and sheriff functions.

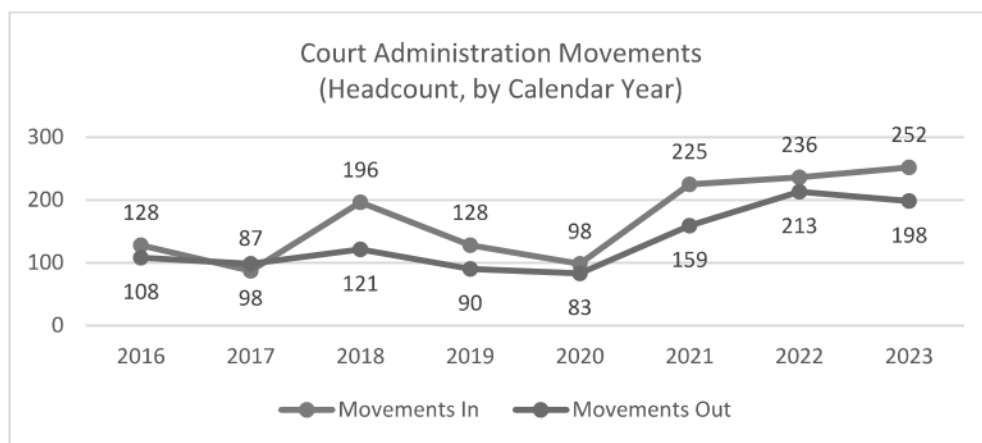
FINANCES:

- \$4.3M (which includes a \$2.4M prior year decision) was provided to the Court Services Branch for the wage mandate in 2024/25. A portion of this funding will be used to support new and existing temporary market adjustments that increase salaries to improve staff retention.

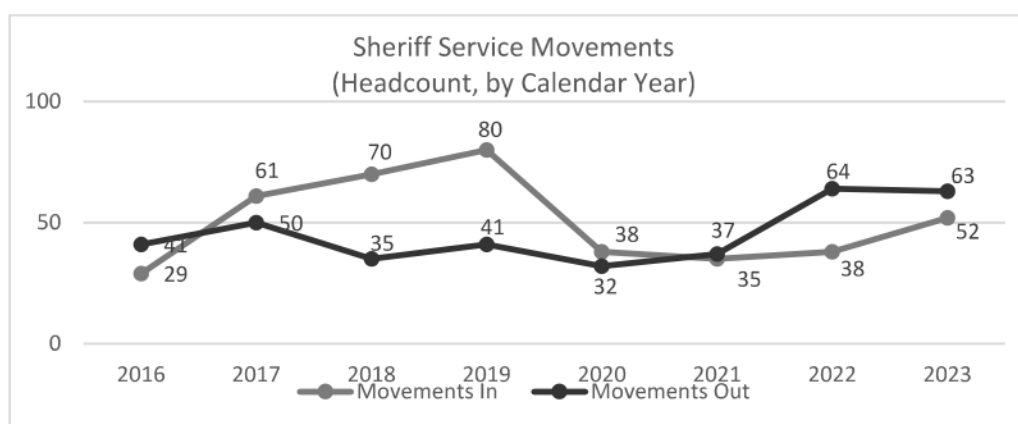
STATISTICS:

- Employee attrition in CA has increased from 10.8% in 2019/2020 to 18.7% in 2023/24. Sheriff service has increased from 6.3% in 2019/20 to 11.3% in 2023/24.
- Net movements in both BCSS and CA are shown in the tables below.

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Source: Strategic HR, 240215 CA Movement Database CY 2016-2023, extracted on February 14, 2024



Source: Strategic HR, 240214 BCSS Movement Database CY 2016-2023, extracted on February 14, 2024

BACKGROUND:

- Government has taken a number of measures to improve retention for both BCSS and CA. These include:
 - Temporary Market Adjustments (TMA) in the 18th (2019) and 19th (2022) BCGEU collective agreements. Most front-line sheriffs now get an additional 9.2% as a TMA on top of the salary lifts provided in each agreement. Court clerks now have a TMA that adds 5.75% to salary.
 - The ministry received \$7.270 million for 2023/24 and \$4.717 million in Contingency funding for a Recruitment and Retention Incentive Payment for sheriffs of up to \$10,000 per year. This adds to up to 14.8% to the base pay of a sheriff. A \$1,000 referral incentive for Court Clerks and Registry Clerks to encourage staff to recommend qualified people apply for positions in the branch. This incentive has been in place for BCSS for several years.
 - Increased virtual processes, including virtual bail, which allow staff in one courthouse to cover a pressure in another location.

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- The Ministry has successfully marketed BCSS as a career path and increased the number of sheriff recruits in training. In 2021, only 33 of 72 (45.8%) training seats were filled and only 38 of 72 (52.8%) were filled in 2022. In contrast, the Ministry has temporarily increased class size to accommodate 60 recruits in the current class and is presently processing more than 800 applications for the next class.
- To meet operational requirements of the court, BCSS is:
 - Incurring significant overtime and travel costs, both to complete work outside of the normal working hours and to get sheriffs to understaffed locations.
 - Managers, supervisors, training officers, and protective intelligence officers are being assigned to operational duties. This approach is not sustainable.
 - Leave is being denied on a regular basis.
- Where possible, CA is using virtual service options, such as virtual bail to meet operational requirements. CA’s overtime and compensated time off use has increased from 10,327 hours per year to 14,733 hours per year – a 43% increase over the prior fiscal year. CA is also crossing training registry clerks to be available to serve in the court room, which results in delays to file processing, impacting timely access to the court.
- In 2023, total STIIP use by BCSS decreased by 42% over 2022. STIIP use from April 1st to December 31st has decreased by 19% this fiscal year over the previous fiscal year. CA STIIP use has decreased by 3.1% this fiscal year.
- During 2023, 250 hearings were impacted by the lack of sheriff availability. In 117 of these cases, the judges decided to proceed without a sheriff. The remaining hearings were delayed or cancelled.
- For BCSS, officers frequently depart for local police forces and the RCMP. These police forces pay officers \$30k-\$40k per year more to officers. Attrition rates increased from 6.3% in 2019/20 to 11.3% in 2023/24.

CA is still experiencing higher than normal attrition with an increasing number of employees leaving the branch. The attrition rate increased from 10.8% in 2019/20 to 18.7% in 2023/24.

Contact: Chris Steinbach, Director, Finance and Administration, Court Services Branch	Mobile: ^{Personal Security}
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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Courthouse Security

Last updated Date: February 21, 2024

KEY MESSAGES:

- The safety and security of all court users and staff is a top priority.
- BC Sheriff Service (BCSS) members are present in each courthouse to ensure the safety of all court users.
- Sheriffs are present in common areas, courtrooms, and on courthouse grounds.
- All weapons of any kind are strictly prohibited from being brought into a courthouse.
- Sheriffs consider a wide range of factors and use multiple strategies to assess and mitigate risks to court users, and shift resources throughout the province daily in response to changing operational and security requirements.
- Sheriffs develop and implement different security measures to reduce risk at courthouses and in courtrooms. Because of security reasons, the ministry cannot provide further details.
- The ministry will be reviewing the facts of the incident involving a crown prosecutor who was assaulted in the Downtown Eastside (DTES) on February 2, 2024, to determine if further measures may be taken.
- It is imperative to balance the concept of open and accessible courts with courthouse safety. Imposing strict courthouse safety measures may cause intimidation for some court users and be perceived as an access to justice barrier.
- We will work closely with our partners to review security procedures for all court users and staff.

BACKGROUND:

February 2, 2024 – 222 Main Courthouse

- Two women were assaulted in the DTES – Chinatown area by an individual. One of the victims was a Crown prosecutor, on the way to work from the parking garage to the 222 Main Street courthouse, escorted by a private security guard.
- There is currently no evidence to suggest that the attack was connected to her occupation (Crown counsel), and her destination (the courthouse). It appears to be a random attack.
- Security Concern

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- Local security working group recommendations approved by the Deputy Attorney General in March 2023 remain in place (see incident information from September 14, 2022).
- The BC Crown Counsel Association has asserted that the 222 Main Street courthouse should be moved away from the DTES to a safer location.

December 8, 2023 – Vancouver Law Courts

- Security at British Columbia’s courts was in the spotlight amid allegations someone brought a gun into the courtroom for the verdict of the Ibrahim Ali case. The Trial Lawyers Association of B.C. [released a statement](#) and expressed that, “The safety of lawyers and of all legal professionals, both inside and outside of court, should be taken very seriously.”

September 14, 2022 – 222 Main Street Courthouse

- Personal Security; Security Concern
- There is currently no evidence to suggest that the attack was connected to her occupation (Crown counsel), and worksite (the courthouse). Motivations are unknown.
- Ministry employees raised safety concerns in connection with this incident, as well as prevalent homeless encampments and multiple assaults and shootings in the area. Measures were taken in response to this. A safety committee was created in September 2022. In addition to the recommendations below, other measures were taken, including additional training for staff and outreach to the community, including police.
- Five recommendations from the local security working group were approved by the Deputy Attorney General in March 2023 for FY 2023/24. Other than net new requirements for parking stalls, all had been in place since November or December 2022. The recommendations were:

Security Concern

- Staff feedback about the programs has been positive.

May 25, 2021 – Vancouver Law Courts

- A woman used a filleting knife and hammer in an attempt to kill her “online nemesis” inside a Vancouver courtroom. She was sentenced to 12 years in prison on Nov. 30, 2023.

- A joint employer-union accident investigation occurred as a result of the incident that occurred on May 25th, 2021. The review identified eight findings and subsequent recommendations:

Security Concern

Security at B.C. Courthouses

- Sheriffs are trained to protect court users through visible safety methods (uniformed presence, metal detectors, etc.) and other means (i.e. video surveillance, threat assessments).
- Some courthouses employ controlled access points at their entrances and/or at particular courtrooms. The employment of a controlled access point is based on Security Concern
Security Concern
- It is imperative to balance the concept of open and accessible courts with courthouse safety measures. Imposing strict courthouse safety measures may cause intimidation for some court users and be perceived as an access to justice barrier.
- Racialized individuals, including Indigenous peoples may be intimidated by the court process already and the increase of security measures Security Concern
Security Concern
- There are four courthouses (Surrey, Abbotsford, Vancouver Provincial and the Downtown Community Court) that have Security Concern access points with search gates.
- Security Concern

Contact: Erin Turner, Director, Policy, Legislation and Planning, CSB	Mobile: Personal Security
Contact: Roger Phillips, Deputy Chief, BC Sheriff Service, CSB	Mobile: Personal Security

2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Sheriff Resourcing

Last updated: February 20, 2024

KEY MESSAGES:

- Sheriffs are a critical part of our justice system and are integral in ensuring people have safe access to court services.
- Much like other law enforcement agencies across the country, ongoing recruitment and retention challenges are impacting the service.
- A recent internal review has helped us better understand the concerns of sheriffs and make changes to position the BC Sheriff Service (BCSS) for success.
- The ministry continues to work closely with the sheriff service on a comprehensive number of changes, fulfilling our vision to be recognized as an international leader in providing protective and enforcement services for the B.C. justice system.
- Initiatives include improving sheriff pay and benefits, retention incentives, a new marketing strategy to increase public awareness of career opportunities, and increasing accessibility and support for applicants.
- The actions being taken are having a positive impact. The August 2023 posting saw a record number of 624 applications received, which will result in a spring class of approximately 60 new recruits. Similarly, the December 2023 posting resulted in 829 applications. These are significant increases when compared to the same recruitment periods last year, which brought in just over 200 applicants each.
- There are currently 526 fully trained sheriffs.
- The ministry is working to ensure our courts are appropriately staffed and will continue to make improvements.
- We are very grateful for the important work sheriffs do and we will continue to work to address the critical issues they have identified so they can carry out their roles safely and effectively.

TOP ACTIONS TO DATE:

- Implemented a retention incentive payment for included staff and a special management compensation adjustment for excluded staff.
- Submitted a proposal to the federal government to improve pension provisions for sheriffs.
- Updated the marketing strategy for BCSS and executed a public advertising campaign.
- Created and hired a dedicated manager of recruitment and retention.
- Designed and implemented a new and more accessible fitness test.
- Removed financial barriers to achieve low-cost, low-travel application process.
- Implemented a Regional Ambassador program for sheriffs to attend recruitment events and provide support to applicants in their communities.

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- Created a pooled competition model, once a year, to fill sergeant and staff sergeant positions.
- Transitioned from a provincial recruit hiring model to a regional one, offering transparency to applicants as to available work locations and the ability to apply for jobs in their own communities.
- Increased and diversified training opportunities for sheriffs across the province.
- Initial research and identification of a framework to support a sheriff-specific leadership and supervisory development program.
- Collaborating with the Justice Institute of BC to revamp and modernize the Sheriff Recruit Training Program.
- Updated vehicle radios and planning to replace handheld radio devices.

BACKGROUND:

- Due to staff shortages, the BCSS is struggling to meet service level requirements. This means that court hearings may not proceed, be stood down, or be significantly delayed because of an absence of sheriffs to staff the hearings.
- There have been two reports on sheriff staffing and recruitment challenges. In 2019, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) produced the review, *Managing Human Resources at the B.C. Sheriff Service*. The OAG published a progress report on July 25, 2023 *Annual Follow-up Report: Status of Performance Audit Recommendations (2019–2021)*. The ministry also conducted an internal report, *Understanding Recruitment and Retention in the BC Sheriff Service*, which highlighted similar concerns, with an additional focus on pay and benefits.
- On August 4, BC Public Service Agency (PSA) and the BC General Employees' Union reached an agreement to implement a recruitment and retention incentive payment for included sheriffs, adult corrections officers, and youth custody officers. The payment available to eligible employees is \$10,000 per year, in two \$5,000 payments, effective July 1, 2023.
- There were 250 and 23 instances of sheriff shortages in 2023 and 2024 YTD (up to February 15, 2024) respectively. An instance refers to when a court proceeds without a sheriff present, a court is delayed, or a court is cancelled as a result of a sheriff shortage.

Security Concern

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Security Concern

Contact: Alvin Lau, Senior Policy Analyst, Policy, Legislation and Planning, CSB	Mobile: Personal Security
Contact: Jackie Smith, Deputy Chief, Central Programs, BC Sheriff Service, CSB	Mobile: Personal Security

KEY MESSAGES:

- On March 30, 2022, the Declaration Act Action Plan (Action Plan) was launched during a special event and tabled in the Legislature.
- The Action Plan outlines significant actions the Province will undertake in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples over the next five years to advance reconciliation.
- The Ministry is leading five actions within the Action Plan:
 - Action 2.3: Issue guidelines from the Attorney General of B.C. to Ministry legal counsel regarding the conduct of civil litigation involving the rights of Indigenous Peoples.
 - Action 3.6: Introduce anti-racism legislation that addresses Indigenous-specific racism.
 - Action 3.10: Implement improvements to public safety oversight bodies and complaints processes, such as enhanced investments in the BC Human Rights Tribunal and new models for including Indigenous laws in complaints resolution (with PSSG).
 - Action 3.12: Prioritize implementation of the First Nations Justice Strategy (the 'Strategy') to reduce the substantial overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples involved in, and impacted by, the justice system. This includes affirming First Nations self-determination and enabling the restoration of traditional justice systems and culturally relevant institutions (with PSSG).
 - Action 3.13: Prioritize endorsement and implementation of the Métis Justice Strategy to reduce the substantial overrepresentation of Métis Peoples in and impacted by the justice system. This includes affirming Métis self-determination and enabling the restoration of traditional justice systems and culturally relevant institutions (with PSSG).
- The litigation guidelines referred to in Action 2.3 were released as the Directives on Civil Litigation involving Indigenous Peoples on April 21, 2022.
- The remaining action items continue to progress, including implementation of the Strategy, the finalization of the Métis Justice Strategy, development of anti-racism legislation that will address the broader challenges of systemic racism in B.C., and improvements to public safety oversight bodies and complaints processes.

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FINANCES:

- Budget 2024/25 provides \$19.889 million from prior years funding decisions to the BC First Nations Justice Council to advance the BC First Nations Justice Strategy, including Indigenous Justice Centres, and Gladue Services. The total investment over the fiscal plan from prior year decisions is \$55.607 million. Unless already funded, initiatives focused on the actions of the Action Plan will be subject to the regular Treasury Board approval process.

STATISTICS:

- The Action Plan was co-developed with Indigenous Peoples, including approximately 150 meetings with Indigenous leadership, over 100 written submissions, contributions to an online engagement website, and direct input on the consultation draft.

BACKGROUND:

- The *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act)* passed into law on November 26, 2019, and brought the articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) into B.C. law.
- Section 4 of the Declaration Act requires Government to prepare and implement an action plan to achieve the objectives of UNDRIP.
- The Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) led the development of the Action Plan on behalf of Government and continues to maintain overall responsibility for the advancement and reporting of the Action Plan.
- At the time of the release of the Action Plan, the Ministry was also responsible for a sixth action, Action 4.25, related to increasing both on- and off-reserve housing. As the responsibility for housing has now transferred to the Ministry of Housing, the Ministry is no longer directly involved in the advancement of this action.
- The Ministry is also participating in three actions within the Action Plan: ending violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people; police reform; and addressing the disproportionate impacts of the overdose public health emergency on Indigenous Peoples.
- Section 5 of the Declaration Act requires the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation to prepare a report each year for the 12-month period ending on March 31 that summarizes the government's efforts to implement the articles of UNDRIP. The annual report is required to be presented by June 30 each year.

Contact: Colleen Spier KC, ADM, Indigenous Justice Secretariat	Mobile: ^{Personal Security}
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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Indigenous Justice Centres

Last updated: February 20, 2024

KEY MESSAGES:

- Indigenous Peoples in B.C. continue to be overrepresented in the criminal justice system, due to long-standing systemic racism and the impacts of intergenerational trauma from residential schools.
- To better address the overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in the justice system, the Province endorsed a First Nations Justice Strategy in February 2020; Indigenous-led by the BC First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC).
- Strategy 4 of the First Nations Justice Strategy commits to establishing 15 Indigenous Justice Centres (IJC) across British Columbia within five years.
- IJCs take a holistic approach to client and community wellness by facilitating connections to supports such as Elder and Knowledge Keeper guidance, housing, mental health and addictions treatment, and employment services, in addition to providing legal advice, information and representation on both criminal and child protection matters.
- There are currently nine physical IJCs operating in B.C.—Prince George, Prince Rupert, Merritt, Chilliwack, Vancouver, Victoria, Nanaimo, Surrey, and Kelowna.
- There is also a Virtual IJC to provide no-cost legal services to Indigenous clients living in under-served areas where legal advice or representation is difficult to access or non-existent.
- The remaining six physical IJCs are expected to be announced by BCFNJC during Spring 2024 and opened by the end of fiscal 2024/2025.
- IJCs play an integral role in developing Indigenous justice services capacity, as well as in the direct delivery of Gladue services for Indigenous Peoples.

FINANCES:

- Budget 2024/25 provides approximately \$17.829M to BCFNJC for the Indigenous Justice Centres from prior years budget decisions.
 - \$17.179M in funding for the expansion of the 6 IJCs and the operations of the nine physical IJCs
 - \$0.650M towards the operation of the Virtual IJC
- Budget 2020, 2022 and Budget 2023 invested a total of \$71.362 million for fifteen Indigenous Justice Centres and a Virtual Indigenous Justice Centre

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IJC Funding - \$ Millions	Budget	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	Total
Indigenous Justice Centres ¹	2020	2.300	2.300	2.300	2.300	2.300	11.500
Virtual IJC FY23	2022	0.650	0.650	0.650	0.650	0.650	3.250
Indigenous Justice Centres ²	2023		16.035	14.879	12.849	12.849	56.612
Total		2.950	18.985	17.829	15.799	15.799	71.362
¹ Four Indigenous Centres							
² Ten Indigenous Justice Centres over 2 years							

Government Financial Information

STATISTICS:

- Number of clients served in the Prince George, Prince Rupert, Merritt, Chilliwack, and the Virtual IJC from January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023.

<u>Measure</u>	<u>Count (January 1, 2023- December 31, 2023)</u>
IJC Clients	199
Criminal Matters	157
Child Protection Matters	40
Other Matters	33
Total Legal Matters	230
Referrals outside services because the requested service is out of scope (not legal clients; Indigeneity not always tracked)	652
Outreach wraparound services that an IJC can provide to legal clients	80
Total People Served (legal issues and referrals)	851

Note: The Vancouver, Victoria, Nanaimo, Surrey, and Kelowna IJCs opened in early 2024.

BACKGROUND:

- The IJCs have been identified by the BCFNJC as a high priority action area within, and cornerstone of, the BC First Nations Justice Strategy.
- The IJCs provide the necessary infrastructure and community capacity to allow communities to identify and implement programs based on wrap around, culturally relevant services for the people within their communities.
- The IJCs provide culturally appropriate information, advice, support, and representation to clients, with a primary focus on criminal law and child protection.

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- The IJCs also have outreach and support staff to assist clients to address wellness needs holistically and begin the process of tackling the factors that brought them into the justice system.
- The IJCs are community-specific so if these supports are already provided in the community, clients will be connected through guided referrals.

Locations for the next six IJCs are being determined by the BCFNJC based on Expressions of Interests received from communities, and on demand. These IJCs will be opened by the end of fiscal 2024/2025.

Contact: Colleen Spier KC, ADM, Indigenous Justice Secretariat
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KEY MESSAGES:

- The Ministry is working with the BC First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC) on the implementation of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy (the Strategy).
- Implementing the Strategy is one of the Province’s commitments under the Declaration Act Action Plan.
- The Strategy is leading transformative changes to the justice system to improve outcomes for Indigenous Peoples interacting with the justice system and to reduce the overincarceration of Indigenous Peoples.
 - A crucial commitment that the Province has made is to fund the network of 15 Indigenous Justice Centres throughout B.C. by the end of fiscal year 2024/2025 in alignment with the Strategy.
 - The Province also funds the delivery of Gladue Services by BCFNJC as part of implementing the Strategy.
 - The Province has recently expanded access to virtual bail, so more accused people can attend bail hearings in their home communities instead of travelling to a bigger centre where they are disconnected from family and community supports.
- The Indigenous Justice Secretariat (IJS) leads the transformative work and implementation of the Strategy within Government, including influencing social sector areas that provide health and housing supports for individuals in the justice system. At the core of the Strategy is the rebuilding of First Nations justice systems as an expression of self determination. The IJS has a vital role in supporting First Nations in that rebuilding work.
- IJS is responsible for cross-ministry implementation of the Strategy and operationalization of the identified priorities within Government. This includes implementation of the Declaration Act where it intersects with justice, as well as supporting relationships with the Province and Canada to advance jointly identified priorities, funding, and partnership opportunities where the Strategy aligns with provincial and federal mandates.

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FINANCES:

- Budget 2024/25 provides approximately \$19.00M to BCFNJC from previous years budget decisions to advance the BC First Nations Justice Strategy, including Indigenous Justice Centres, and Gladue Services. This includes:
 - \$17.179M in funding for the expansion of the 6 IJCs and the operations of the nine physical IJCs;
 - \$0.650M towards the operation of the Virtual IJC; and
 - \$1.246M Gladue services and reports.
- Budget 2024/25 provides approximately \$1.40M funding for staffing the Indigenous Justice Secretariat.

BACKGROUND:

- The Strategy was endorsed on February 26, 2020, and an Implementation Workplan (“Workplan”) was approved at Cabinet in July 2021. Government Financial Information; Intergovernmental Communications
- Advancing the Strategy is an Action in the Declaration Act Action Plan, and an item in the Attorney General’s Mandate Letter.
- BCFNJC, Justice Canada, and the Province signed a Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2021 that committed to advancing the work under the Strategy and to collaboration on the Federal Indigenous Justice Strategy. Public Safety Canada signed onto the MOU in May of 2023.
- The Government of Canada has committed \$8.9M over five years (2021/22 to 2025/26) to BCFNJC as it continues to support and expand the number of IJCs and the VIJC in B.C.
- The Province is committed to working in partnership with BCFNJC, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in the criminal justice system, which has its roots in long-standing systemic racism and the impacts of intergenerational trauma from residential schools.
- The Strategy is Indigenous led to ensure that Indigenous Peoples are central in shaping how they are treated by the justice system.

Contact: Colleen Spier KC, ADM, Indigenous Justice Secretariat

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KEY MESSAGES:

- Advancing a Métis Justice Strategy is an action in the Declaration Act Action Plan, which outlines significant actions the Province will undertake in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples over the next five years to advance reconciliation.
- The Province received the Métis Nation of BC (MNBC) Board approved final draft embargoed Métis Justice Strategy (MJS) on December 23, 2021.
- The Indigenous Justice Secretariat (IJS) of the Ministry of Attorney General worked with MNBC to develop an Implementation Workplan (“Workplan”) to guide the implementation of the MJS.
- Consultation on the Workplan and final draft MJS occurred in early fall 2022.
- MNBC added an additional recommendation 12 on Youth Justice that required additional consultation between Ministry of Children and Family Development and MNBC in early 2023.
- IJS consulted with eleven ministries on development of the Workplan.
Intergovernmental Communications
-
- The Distinctions-Based Approach Primer was released in December 2023.
Intergovernmental Communications
-

BACKGROUND:

- In April 2019, in response to the change in mandate of the BC First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC), MNBC formed its own justice council, the Métis Nation British Columbia Justice Council (MNBCJC), to address the ways the justice system interacts with Métis Peoples within B.C. and to inform a Métis-specific justice strategy developed in partnership with the Ministry of Attorney General and the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General.
- The development of the draft Métis Justice Report in 2019/2020, which provided the foundation for the MJS, occurred after seven regional consultation sessions were held to ensure participation of community members from the then 38 Métis Chartered Communities (there are currently 39 Métis Chartered Communities in BC).

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- In January 2021, the MNBCJC provided an embargoed draft of the Strategy to the Indigenous Justice, Policy, and Legislation Division (known today as the Indigenous Justice Secretariat [IJS]). IJS consulted with 11 ministries on the draft MJS and received oral and written feedback. The draft MJS received a positive response from partner ministries and only minor suggested changes were delivered to the MNBCJC on July 30, 2021. All but one of the suggested changes were incorporated into the final embargoed MJS.
- IJS continues to work with BCFNJC and MNBC to establish an ongoing venue for engagement on the pan-Indigenous services that BCFNJC provides under the First Nations Justice Strategy—Indigenous Justice Centres and Gladue.

Contact: Colleen Spier KC, ADM, Indigenous Justice Secretariat
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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Gladue Services

Last updated: February 20, 2024

KEY MESSAGES:

- Indigenous Peoples continue to be substantially overrepresented throughout the criminal justice system. To address this problem, the Supreme Court of Canada has held that consideration of Gladue factors is required for all criminal court proceedings involving Indigenous people, and that Gladue principles should inform the justice system more broadly.
- Gladue reports provide courts with comprehensive information about an Indigenous offender's background and community, along with available options for sentencing and bail that offer realistic and viable alternatives to prison sentences.
- Gladue services in B.C. were transferred from Legal Aid BC (LABC) to the Gladue Services Department (GSD) of the BC First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC) on April 1, 2021, pursuant to Strategy 6 of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy.
- The GSD operational priorities include increasing the capacity and number of Gladue writers, developing Gladue awareness and education programs, and formalizing the Gladue reporting process across justice system stakeholders.
- The GSD's resource model is primarily decentralized with staff and contractors operating at the community level wherever possible, specifically in partnership with the recently opened Indigenous Justice Centres (IJs) across B.C.
- The GSD operates as a branch of the BCFNJC. The annual budget for the GSD is delegated by BCFNJC as consistent with any agreements reached between BCFNJC and the Province and/or other external funders.

FINANCES:

- Budget 2024/25 provides \$1.246M to BCFNJC for Gladue Services and reports from previous years budget decisions.

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STATISTICS:

Fiscal Year	Requests Received	Reports Completed
2017/18 (LABC)	136	131
2018/19 (LABC)	240	216
2019/20 (LABC)	298	289
2020/21 (LABC)	259	215
2021/22 (BCFNJC)	455	308
2022/23 (BCFNJC)	508	315
2023/24 (through Feb 15, 2024) (BCFNJC)	502	370

- The difference between requested reports and completed reports on an annual basis reflects the volume of in-progress and to be assigned reports.

BACKGROUND:

- Gladue reports are used for bail, sentencing, appeals, long-term offender hearings, dangerous offender hearings and parole hearings, to improve access to justice, promote Indigenous self-determination, and address systemic racism.
- Since BCFNJC took on responsibility for delivering Gladue Services, there has been a notable increase in the demand for Gladue Reports. Subsequently, BCFNJC has transitioned the model of service delivery from a roster of contracted writers to a team of staff writers to better meet demand.
- The GSD's number one priority is to produce Gladue Reports within an eight-week turnaround and will provide Gladue Reports to individuals with a legal aid lawyer, with private legal counsel, and to those who are unrepresented.
- The second priority for GSD is to produce high quality Gladue Reports that maintain the standard of Gladue Reports to ensure that they are sufficiently reliable for the court use.
- The GSD has developed comprehensive in-house training for Gladue Writers.
- The GSD has a Gladue Aftercare Program and will seek to have a Gladue Support Worker located at each IJC. The Gladue Support Worker will work directly with individuals throughout the entirety of their healing plan.
- The goal of the Gladue Support Worker is to reduce recidivism, promote risk mitigation, decrease victimization, increase rehabilitation and community safety.

Contact: Colleen Spier KC, ADM, Indigenous Justice Secretariat	Mobile: Personal Security
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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 20, 2024

Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of BC

KEY MESSAGES:

- Indigenous Peoples in B.C. continue to be overrepresented in the criminal justice system, due to long-standing systemic racism and the impacts of intergenerational trauma from residential schools.
- The Indigenous Courtworker (ICW) program ensures Indigenous Peoples in conflict with the law receive fair, equitable, and culturally sensitive treatment while in the court system.
- Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of BC (NCCABC) operates in 51 of B.C.'s courthouses, as well as providing supports to clients in virtual bail hearings, two First Nations Courts (New Westminster and Duncan) and the Downtown Community Court in Vancouver.
- For over 50 years, NCCABC has provided culturally appropriate services to Indigenous Peoples in conflict with the law and ensures they participate fully in the justice system through a holistic approach of prevention and intervention. Support services are accomplished by assisting persons involved in the criminal justice system; providing access to counselling and referral services for clients with substance abuse and detox support issues; and providing advocate services for Indigenous families and youth.
- The work of the NCCABC aligns with Province's commitment of working with Indigenous leadership to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in the criminal justice system, which has its roots in long-standing systemic racism and the impacts of intergenerational trauma from residential schools.

FINANCES:

- This program is managed by the Indigenous Justice Secretariat (IJS) of the Ministry of Attorney General.
- The Province provides \$1.76 M annually to NCCABC to deliver the ICW program. The federal government matches this funding.
- The federal/provincial funding agreement covers five years—fiscal year 2023/2024 to 2027/2028.

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STATISTICS:

- Fiscal Year 2022/2023, NCCABC provided the following support:
 - Clients provided out of court services: 10,137.
 - Clients provided in court services: 9,474.
 - Total Clients served: 19,611.

BACKGROUND:

- BC Corrections was responsible for the NCCABC program and contract until fiscal year 2023/2024 when the program was transferred to the IJS.
- NCCABC was founded in 1973 and has been part of the implementation of reconciliation for Indigenous Peoples within the justice system for over 50 years.

Contact: Colleen Spier KC, ADM, Indigenous Justice Secretariat	Mobile: <small>Personal Security</small>
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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 20, 2024

Transition of Indigenous Legal Aid Services

KEY MESSAGES:

- The Province is supporting the BC First Nation Justice Council (BCFNJC) with the development of a workplan to transition legal aid services from Legal Aid BC (LABC) to BCFNJC.
- This transition is in alignment with the BC First Nations Justice Strategy (the Strategy) and will provide more effective access to justice, and improve legal counsel and legal aid services to Indigenous people navigating the criminal justice system.
- In July 2023, BCFNJC approved plans to carry out the work required to transition legal aid services. The plan sets out a phased approach as follows:
 - Phase 1 (March – September 2023): Research, Pre-Engagement and Team Development (Complete)
 - Phase 2 (September – December 2023): Province-wide Engagement (Complete)
 - Phase 3 (January – May 2024): Model Development and Further Engagement (In progress)
 - Phase 4 (June 2024 – December 2024): Finalize Model, Pilot Components of the Model, Further Engagement, and Develop Implementation Plan
 - Phase 5 (2025 and beyond): Implementation of Model
- It is anticipated that the new legal aid model will be delivered by BCFNJC through Indigenous Justice Centres and implemented in a phased approach, starting with a series of small pilot projects in Summer 2024.

BACKGROUND:

- Strategy 5 of the First Nations Justice Strategy commits to the Establishment of First Nations Legal Services. This includes the development of a workplan to transition legal aid services for Indigenous people from LABC to BCFNJC, an as Indigenous-led organization.
- In February 2022, BCFNJC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with LABC to establish a collaborative relationship and to transfer responsibility for the delivery of legal aid services for Indigenous people to BCFNJC.
- BCFNJC is working in partnership with LABC and the Province to implement the transfer of legal aid services for Indigenous people and is in the process of developing an

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innovative and holistic model of legal aid services that reflects the need for better, more effective, more culturally informed legal counsel and legal aid services.

- In 2023, through Criminal Legal Aid project funding, the IJS hired 4 FTEs and BCFNJC hired a Provincial Director of Legal Aid Services and 1.5 FTEs to support this legal aid transfer initiative.
- In Fall 2023, engagement was conducted to gather feedback from Indigenous Peoples, justice service providers, and legal professionals on the current and future state of legal aid services. The Legal Aid Services team held 18 in-person community sessions, 17 in-person legal professional sessions, 3 virtual community sessions and one virtual lawyer session. A *What We Heard Report* is being drafted to identify recommendations to guide the development of a legal aid services delivery model for Indigenous people.
- Model development is currently underway; feedback and recommendations resulting from engagement is being used to develop the model. Further engagement is being conducted to address gaps in feedback.
- It is anticipated that the new legal aid model will be implemented in a phased approach, starting with a series of small pilot projects. As model development occurs, pilot projects will be identified and run in both urban and rural areas. Engagement and evaluation will be conducted on these pilot projects to ensure that the proposed model is meeting the community's goals before full implementation. Once a model has been developed, further engagement will be held to verify what we heard and obtain feedback on the proposed model.
- Once a model has been developed, an implementation plan will be drafted, and a business plan will be prepared to outline the funding requirements for the transition of legal aid services to BCFNJC.

Contact: Colleen Spier KC, ADM, Indigenous Justice Secretariat
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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 20, 2024

BCFNJC Collaboration and Provincial Funding

KEY MESSAGES:

- The Ministry is working with the BC First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC) on the implementation of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy (the Strategy).
- The work of implementing the Strategy is coordinated under the Indigenous Justice Secretariat in the Ministry of Attorney General.
- The Strategy has implications across the justice and social sectors, and as such, to advance it, BCFNJC engages with numerous other ministries to seek funding and support to implement the Strategy.
- Strategy 16 of the Strategy calls for two actions regarding collaboration on implementing the Strategy.
 - The first (16A) is hosting a First Nations Justice Forum. In March 2023, BCFNJC hosted their first Forum since 2020. This year's Forum is scheduled for April 8-10, 2024 with a theme of Collaboration.
 - The second (16B) is reporting on the implementation of the Strategy. BCFNJC is developing a reporting dashboard, to be informed by a tracking tool jointly completed by the Province and BCFNJC to report out on the successes and challenges of implementing the Strategy.

FINANCES:

- Budget 2024/25 provides approximately \$19.00M to BCFNJC from previous years budget decisions to advance the BC First Nations Justice Strategy, including Indigenous Justice Centres, and Gladue Services.
- Through the Gender Based Violence Action Plan, BCFNJC is receiving funding of \$0.600M in 2024/25 to support BCFNJC having a dedicated team of three FTEs to develop and deliver standards of cultural competency training for the justice sector, and for the hiring of a Provincial Director to oversee BCFNJC's Women and Children portfolio.

BACKGROUND:

- BCFNJC has engaged the following ministries for the purpose of funding initiatives aligned with the BC First Nations Justice Strategy:
 - Ministry of Children and Family Development awarded \$0.310M to BCFNJC for engagement on the Indigenous Youth Justice and Prevention Plan (Strategy 10).

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- Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General has provided a grant in 2023/24 of \$0.050M to BCFNJC for engagement on the Policing and Public Safety Modernization Working Group.
- Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions has had preliminary discussions with BCFNJC at the First Nations Leadership Gathering about the potential to support “Auntie” (Resource and Outreach Worker) positions in Indigenous Justice Centres.
- BCFNJC is currently engaging with the following ministries to align services to support clients:
 - Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and Ministry of Attorney General to collaborate on providing services from Indigenous Justice Centres (see Note 24) and Gladue Services (see note 27) to support Indigenous clients in the Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative program.
 - Ministry of Children and Family Development, Youth Justice Services, to collaborate on providing services from Indigenous Justice Centres and Gladue Services to support Indigenous youth who are involved in the justice system and youth who have the potential of becoming involved in the justice system.
 - Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction is engaged with BCFNJC on the potential for Community Integration Specialists to work with Indigenous Justice Centre staff to support clients.
 - Public Safety Canada has funded BCFNJC \$7.5M over 5 years to advance a Diversion Pilot Project in Prince George. This pilot is likely to include collaboration with the Ministry of Housing, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, and other public bodies in order to be fully implemented.
- BCFNJC is receiving \$0.130M in 2024/25 from the Ministry of Attorney General through the Safe Supports Initiative for a Family Court Support Worker in the Prince George Indigenous Justice Centre.
- Additionally, BCFNJC has been engaged with the Ministry of Attorney General on legislative and regulatory projects that intersect with their mandate, including the Legal Professions Regulatory Reform project.

Contact: Colleen Spier KC, ADM, Indigenous Justice Secretariat
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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 23, 2024

Indigenous Justice Secretariat

KEY MESSAGES:

- The Ministry has implemented an Indigenous Justice Secretariat (IJS) to fulfill the commitment made by the Province in Strategy 9 of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy (the Strategy).
- The IJS is led by an Indigenous Assistant Deputy Minister, Colleen Spier KC, who is responsible for leading the Province's implementation of the Strategy in partnership with the BC First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC).
- IJS supports BCFNJC in the implementation of the Strategy including support for operational initiatives such as Indigenous Justice Centres, and the transition of Gladue Services and Legal Aid for Indigenous people to the BCFNJC.
- The creation of the IJS and the transition of justice services to Indigenous controlled entities, builds capacity towards an Indigenous based justice system.
- The IJS leads the transformative work and implementation of the Strategy within Government, including influencing social sector areas that provide health and housing supports for individuals in the justice system.
- At the core of the Strategy is the rebuilding of First Nations justice systems as an expression of self determination. The IJS has a vital role in supporting First Nations in that rebuilding and implementation work. This includes the IJS advancing within government changes to laws, policies, and practices that are directly responsive to what First Nations Leadership determine is needed for Strategy implementation and rebuilding of their justice systems.
- The IJS is responsible for cross-ministry implementation of the Strategy and operationalization of the identified priorities within Government. This includes the implementation of the *Declaration Act* where it intersects with justice, as well as supporting relationships between First Nations, the Province, and Canada to advance jointly identified priorities, funding, and partnership opportunities where the Strategy aligns with provincial and federal mandates.
- The IJS is also responsible for the provincial Indigenous Specialized Courts Strategy.
- In addition to supporting the BCFNJC in advancing the Strategy, the IJS is working with Métis Nation BC (MNBC) to advance the Métis Justice Strategy (MJS). The Province is working to obtain endorsement of the MJS in the coming months.

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- The IJS is also the contract manager for the Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of BC (NCCABC).
- The IJS provides provincial support to Canada in the development of the Federal Indigenous Justice Strategy.

FINANCES:

- Budget 2024/25 provides \$22.363M to the IJS, \$1.45M in funding for staffing the IJS.

BACKGROUND:

- The Strategy was endorsed on February 26, 2020, and an Implementation Workplan (“Workplan”) was approved at Cabinet in July 2021.^{Advice/Recommendations}
Advice/Recommendations
- The Strategy aims not only to make short-term transformation but also transformation that is multi-generational across two tracks of change. Track 1: reforming the existing justice system while providing a foundation for track 2 work which is restoring first nations legal traditions.
- Since the endorsement of the Strategy, the BCFNJC prioritized the creation of the IJS to fulfil the commitment of Strategy 9: *Establish a Cross-Ministry Indigenous Justice Secretariat under the leadership of the Ministry of the Attorney General to lead the transformative work within government as identified within this Strategy.*
- The Province is committed to working in partnership with the BCFNJC, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in the criminal justice system, which has its roots in long-standing systemic racism and the impacts of intergenerational trauma from residential schools.
- Advancing the Strategy and the MJS are Actions in the *Declaration Act Action Plan*.

Contact: Colleen Spier KC, IJS	Mobile: ^{Personal Security}
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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 15, 2024

**Office of the Human
Rights Commissioner**

KEY MESSAGES:

- The work of the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (the Commissioner) intersects with the work of the Ministry of Attorney General in a number of areas that align with government's commitment to protect and promote human rights under the *Human Rights Code*, as well as British Columbia's obligations under international human rights treaties.
- The Deputy Attorney General is leading a whole-of-government response to the report: *From Hate to Hope: Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic*, issued by the Commissioner in March 2023. It is anticipated that findings from this report will inform the Province's approach to dismantling hate, as well as systemic racism.
- In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, ministry staff are currently dedicating significant resources to cooperate with and respond to the information request regarding the Commissioner's most recent inquiry into how designated agencies under the *Adult Guardianship Act* exercise their powers under section 59(2) (emergency assistance).
- The Commissioner, social justice groups and some Indigenous Peoples continue to advocate that 'social condition' is added as a protected ground of discrimination under the Human Rights Code. This change would be complex, both in substance and in scope, and would require additional policy work and broad consultations to ensure potential implications are given due regard.
- Commissioner Kasari Govender began her 5-year term on September 3, 2019, and will be completing that term on September 3, 2024. A Special Committee to Appoint a Human Rights Commissioner was established on November 29, 2023, to select and unanimously recommend the appointment of a Human Rights Commissioner from September 4, 2024.

BACKGROUND:

- The Commissioner has identified arbitrary detention, hate and the rise of white supremacy as key issues. This aligns with the Commissioner's work on hate during the pandemic and the inquiry into the *Adult Guardianship Act*.
- In March 2023, the Commissioner released the report: *From Hate to Hope: Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic*. The report identifies ten recommendations addressed to various ministries, namely Attorney General, Public Safety and Solicitor General, Education and Child Care, Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, as well as the

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BC Public Service, and may involve ministries not identified in the Report including the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and the Ministry of Finance.

- The *Adult Guardianship Act* provides a framework for support and assistance for adults who are experiencing abuse, neglect or self-neglect. In 2019, the B.C. Supreme Court heard the case of *A.H. v. Fraser Health Authority*, which examined the scope of the emergency powers in s. 59(2)(e) of the *Adult Guardianship Act* and found the petitioner to have been detained unlawfully.
- In 2021 an inter-ministry committee consisting of representatives from the Ministries of Health and Attorney General and the Public Guardian and Trustee initiated a broad review of Part 3 of the *Adult Guardianship Act*. It is with knowledge of this inter-ministerial work that the Commissioner has issued the request for information.
- The Commissioner is currently engaged in two other inquiries. One inquiry is investigating Media Exclusion Zones implemented by the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) with information being sought from the VPD and the City of Vancouver. A second inquiry is examining the concern that police use of force practices are disproportionately affecting racialized communities and those with mental health concerns. Information for this inquiry is being sought from PSSG and community organizations.
- A list of potential Human Rights Code amendments is maintained by Ministry of Attorney General staff for consideration and further analysis if and when required.

Contact: Paul Craven, ADM, Justice Services Branch	Mobile: ^{Personal Security}
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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

BC Human Rights Tribunal

Last updated: February 15, 2024

KEY MESSAGES:

- Government's ongoing public commitment to protecting human rights has established priorities on important issues such as accessibility, reconciliation, anti-racism and the establishment of the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner.
- These priorities have increased awareness of human rights in B.C. and have contributed to an incremental increase in human rights complaints, between 2017-2020, resulting in a backlog of cases at the BC Human Rights Tribunal (BCHRT).
- BCHRT was initially structured and funded to process approximately 1,100 cases per year. From April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023, 2,624 new complaints were filed, and the BCHRT anticipates that case volume will hold steady at roughly 2,500 per year.
- The proportion of new complaints related to public health measures arising from the COVID-19 pandemic dropped significantly in the 2022-23 fiscal year, from roughly 30% to 10% of total new cases filed. Meanwhile, the proportion of new complaints filed by people who self-identified as Indigenous increased from 11% to 14%.
- The 2020 release of Justice Ardith Walpetko We'dalx Walkem's *Expanding Our Vision: Cultural Equality & Indigenous Peoples' Human Right Report* and the recent release of the *Declaration Act Action Plan* have also put additional focus on the need for new services to meet the needs of Indigenous Peoples.
- Since the BCHRT Chair's initial appointment in August 2021, she has established a pandemic-specific case program; completed preliminary rounds of stakeholder consultations; and developed and launched multiple pilot projects, to, for example, reform complaint processes, increase accessibility and re-allocate resources to cases to increase efficiencies.
- The Province increased funding for the BCHRT in early 2023. The additional funding will support the BCHRT in addressing the increased caseload and allow the tribunal to appoint more members and hire additional support staff to meet clients' needs.
- Ministry staff are working collaboratively with the BCHRT to address the caseload challenges through managing human resources, process improvements, securing financial resources, and technological advancements.

FINANCES:

- The AG tribunal sector operating budget for fiscal 2024/25 is \$39.578 million.
- The BCHRT's operating budget for fiscal 2024/25 is \$8.256 million.

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- Budget 2024 provides an additional \$1.500 million base budget funding for BCHRT to help relieve caseload pressures.
- Treasury Board approved \$2.9 million increase to the base budget for the Tribunal in early 2023 to relieve existing budget pressures and ensure fair and equitable access to B.C.’s human rights system for all citizens of B.C.
- The BCHRT is supported by 47 FTEs (includes members and staff in both full and part-time positions).

BACKGROUND:

- The BCHRT is an independent, quasi-judicial body created under the BC Human Rights Code that is responsible for accepting, screening, mediating, and adjudicating human rights complaints.
- Ministry staff are supporting the BCHRT to effectively manage its growing caseload which is the result of systemic and unprecedented challenges within the past five years.
- These matters include the additions of Indigenous identity and gender identity and expression to the BC Human Rights Code, passing the *Accessibility Act*, passing the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, establishment of the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner which reinvigorated a focus on human rights issues, the “MeToo” movement, the “Black Lives Matter” movement and many pandemic-related complaints.
- The ministry has been actively working with the BCHRT on several strategies aimed at addressing its caseload which consist of:
 - relieving current resource and budgetary pressures in addition to forecasting future budget needs as related to case volumes;
 - developing and implementing a new case management system to process complaints efficiently;
 - updating BCHRT’s website to allow for a streamlined online public portal for submitting complaints; and
 - identifying opportunities for improving business and operational processes along with providing an implementation plan.
- The ministry continues ongoing dialogue with the tribunal and is confident the measures outlined above will, in time, address the complaint volumes and backlogged files.

Contact: Zac Kremler, ED, Justice Services Branch	Mobile: <small>Personal Security</small>
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KEY MESSAGES:

- Family violence is defined broadly in the *Family Law Act* to include physical and sexual abuse, psychological and emotional abuse including intimidation, harassment, coercion or threats, restrictions on personal/financial autonomy, stalking, intentional damage to property, harm and threats of harm to companion animals and in the case of a child, exposure to family violence.
- The Family Justice Services Division has staff across the province at Justice Access Centres and Family Justice Centres providing a variety of supports for families, including those experiencing violence.
- The Family Justice Services Division puts great emphasis on ensuring staff have specialized knowledge about the dynamics of family violence (including coercive control) and its effect on families and children. Staff are specially trained and skilled at identifying and responding to these issues in practice, including determinations related to the appropriateness of mediation.
- The Early Resolution Model under the Provincial Court Family Rules is operating in Victoria and Surrey. The Model builds on existing family justice services to provide individuals with family law matters early access to information and referrals, assistance resolving disputes out-of-court and support to increase preparedness for those proceeding to court.
- The ministry received temporary funding from the federal Justice Partnership and Innovation Program to explore supports for those experiencing intimate partner violence in families as they navigate the family court system. Initiatives include a family court support worker program, an information gatherer role focused on improving access to court data and documents and exploring ways to improve the experience of providing testimony and being cross-examined in family court.
- As part of the *Family Law Act* Modernization project, the ministry is looking at ways to improve the Protection Order system and how family violence is considered in decisions about guardianship, parenting arrangements and contact with a child. This will include reviewing the risk factors that the court must consider when assessing family violence in the context of the best interests of the child and whether to make a protection order.
- To understand the issues related to family violence and develop meaningful changes to policy and legislation, the ministry is engaging with organizations that support families dealing with violence, as well as hearing directly from those with lived experience of family violence.

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BACKGROUND:

- The temporary federal Justice Partnership and Innovation Program funding is \$1 million unmatched for each of fiscal 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25, and 2025/26.
- A key step in the Early Resolution Model is the needs assessment with a Family Justice Counsellor. This provides early and on-going screening for family violence, identification of legal and non-legal needs, access to legal information, referrals to community organizations and legal advice and support to prepare for the appropriate next step.
- The Model does not mandate consensual dispute resolution (e.g., mediation). While all parties seeking to resolve a family law matter complete the needs assessment and a parenting education course (Parenting After Separation), the consensual dispute resolution requirement only applies to families for whom participation in a mediation or collaborative family law process is appropriate.
- Consensual dispute resolution may not be appropriate due to issues such as family violence, power imbalances or capacity to participate.
- All needs assessments provided by Family Justice Counsellors include the same screening for family violence, regardless of whether the family is involved with the courts. It is the degree to which parties are compelled to engage in the service that varies between the different types of provincial court registries (e.g. parenting education registries, family justice registries, early resolution registries).
- All Parenting After Separation courses include a section on family violence that covers information on the impact on children and parenting as well as safety measures.
- Ministry staff participated in the Gender-Based Violence Action Plan work being led by the Gender Equity Office and the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General.
- Ministry staff are active on a number of cross-sector coordinating committees in B.C. as well as those with federal, provincial and territorial colleagues.
- For more details on Early Resolution see note 39-Early Resolution Program Expansion.
- For more details on Legal Aid and family violence see note 36-Legal Aid British Columbia Funding.

Contact: Jodi Roach, Legal Counsel, JSB	Mobile: <small>Personal Security</small>
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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 15, 2024

Legal Aid British Columbia Funding

KEY MESSAGES:

- The Province recognizes the importance of legal aid services for British Columbians and continues to work with, and provide funding to support, Legal Aid BC to deliver services and increase access to justice.
- Budget 2024 includes \$149.897M in government revenues for Legal Aid BC (LABC). This is an increase of \$21.500M over the 2023/24 budget and a total increase of \$75.222M over the 2016/17 budget.
- The Budget 2024 funding increase includes:
 - \$8.052M to expand family legal aid, including the creation of a multidisciplinary intensive family law clinic, expanding eligibility for family law legal aid services, and increasing intake capacity.
 - \$1.113M to provide legal advice services for the incremental expansion of the early resolution program.
 - \$4.244M for ratified agreements under the Shared Recovery Mandate.
 - \$8.091M to ensure individuals involved in the immigration and refugee determination system receive access to legal aid services.

FINANCES:

- LABC has total budget of \$155.744M and receives 95% of its funding from the provincial and federal governments (\$149.897M for 2024/25; \$151.989M for 2025/26 and \$153.556M for 2026/27) with the remainder coming from the Law Foundation and the Notary Foundation.
- Budget 2024 includes \$29.120M over three years to expand family legal aid.

Expansion of Family Legal Aid				
	24/25	25/26	26/27	3-year total
Base	8.052	9.751	11.318	29.120

- As of January 2, 2024, LABC had a total of 210 FTEs including intake and administrative staff as well as lawyers and managers.

BACKGROUND:

- LABC is the key provider of legal aid services on behalf of the B.C. government. Ninety-five per cent of LABC's funding is provided by the provincial and federal governments.

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- The services provided by LABC include information, advice, and representation for financially eligible persons for serious family, child protection, and criminal law matters.
- Legal representation is also available for immigration and refugee matters, Mental Health Review Board Hearings, BC Review Board hearings, and those who have a prison issue for which the Charter of Rights and Freedoms establishes a right to counsel.

2024 Historic Family Legal Aid Expansion

- Budget 2024 includes \$29.120M over three years to expand family legal aid, giving Legal Aid BC the capacity to serve up to 4500 more family clients annually.
- The new multidisciplinary intensive family law clinic which will offer critical and extensive family law services to eligible clients experiencing family violence to meaningfully stabilize their family law situation.
 - Until the clinic is operational, new clients who would be eligible for clinic services once in operation can access an additional 25 hours of legal aid services.
- Additional funding will also enable LABC to expand financial eligibility to increase the number of individuals who will be eligible for family legal aid services:
 - Beginning April 1, 2024, the income threshold for eligibility will be aligned with whichever is higher: LABC’s 2022 eligibility thresholds or the most recent *Market Basket Measure* published by Statistics Canada.
 - In 2025 and 2026, the amount will be aligned with the most recent *Market Basket Measure* plus 2% on April 1 of each year.
 - When calculating financial eligibility for applicants experiencing family violence, the applicant’s assets will be excluded if the applicant is seeking family law legal aid within six months of leaving their abusive partner.
 - When calculating financial eligibility for family law legal aid for applicants experiencing family violence and who do not fit within the asset exclusion described immediately above, certain accounts will be excluded from the calculation, including accounts with a combined value of \$30,000 or less that are established for retirement, children’s education and supporting an applicant’s disability or their dependents’ disability.
- Government will also be providing LABC with funding to improve intake capacity to enable more people to have timely access to legal aid services.

Contact: Wendy Jackson, ED, Legal Access, JSB	Mobile: ^{Personal Security}
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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 15, 2024

Legal Professions Regulatory Reform

KEY MESSAGES:

- The ministry is working on a legislative proposal that aims to increase access to legal services for people in British Columbia and modernize and consolidate the regulatory framework for all regulated legal service providers in B.C.
- Key components of the proposal include:
 - The creation of a new category of regulated legal service provider called regulated paralegals; and
 - The establishment of a consolidated single statute and regulator for all regulated legal service providers in B.C. (lawyers, notaries, and regulated paralegals) with a clear public interest mandate and a modernized governance framework.

FINANCES:

- This project relates to independent regulators that are self-funded (through fees paid by the professionals they regulate). The intention is to create a new regulator that will also be self-funded by licensee fees.
- It is not anticipated that there will be associated financial implications for Government.

BACKGROUND:

Project Rationale

- Access to legal help (e.g. to a professional) is one component of a broader access to justice problem. At present, when a person has a legal problem, their choices are generally limited to hiring a lawyer or trying to solve the problem by themselves.
- In B.C., we do have the benefit of notaries, who have graduate-level training and can provide some limited legal services to the public, but they are regulated separately from lawyers and under an outdated statute.
- Many jurisdictions across North America are creating alternative categories of skilled and regulated legal service providers that can provide additional options for the public.
- This project will create a new option for people throughout British Columbia in regulated paralegals and will ensure greater consistency in the way that all legal service providers are regulated.

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Project Status

- The Ministry published an intentions paper in Summer 2022 as a vehicle for feedback and input from stakeholders and partners. The paper was published alongside an online survey.
- The Ministry received almost 100 individual written submissions and 775 individuals completed the online survey. A “What We Heard” report was published in May 2023 with a summary of submissions and feedback.
- The Ministry has, and continues to engage with, a number of stakeholders and partners, including the current regulators and foundations, Indigenous partners and associations.
- The Ministry is targeting the introduction of legislation this Spring (2024).

If asked about funding legal aid via PST on lawyers’ services

- There has never been any structured link between the tax on legal services and legal aid funding.
- The tax collected on legal services is no different from any other type of tax revenue.
- The revenue goes directly to government general revenues, which fund all government services, including legal aid.
- Budget 2024 includes \$149.897M in government revenues for Legal Aid BC (LABC). This is an increase of \$21.500M over their 2023/24 budget and a total increase of over \$75M over their 2016/17 budget. The government also continues to fund a network of eight legal clinics across the province.
- Legal aid services continue to be an important avenue to provide access to justice, but they are not, and cannot be, the only solution to the access to legal services crisis.

Contact: Katie Armitage, Legal Counsel, JSB	Mobile: <small>Personal Security</small>
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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 14, 2024

Family Compensation Act

KEY MESSAGES:

- Our government has received a great deal of feedback on the existing *Family Compensation Act* (FCA).
- We have heard that the current legislation should be reformed to expand access to justice and benefits for families grieving the loss of a loved one due to the wrongful act of another.
- As the government and private insurers are usually the defendants in wrongful death cases, we must also ensure any increase in compensation for families is fair to rate payers and taxpayers.
- Grieving families need better support when there is a wrongful death; that is why we are working to update the *Family Compensation Act* to give families an opportunity to address the injustice they have faced. My ministry continues to advance work on this important file.

BACKGROUND:

- The *Family Compensation Act* (FCA) permits spouses, parents, and children to sue a party that caused the death of a family member.
- The FCA only allows for pecuniary damages to be awarded to compensate financial loss suffered due to the death of a family member. Awards include lost financial support, funeral expenses, and medical and hospital expenses incurred on behalf of the victim.
- A key criticism of the FCA is that for families who do not experience a loss of financial support (for example if a dependent child or elderly parent dies), it is not financially worthwhile to pursue a claim under the existing legislation.

Advice/Recommendations; Cabinet Confidences

- Several advocacy groups, including “In Their Name” and the BC Wrongful Death Law Reform Society, continue to petition government to address the FCA’s lack of non-pecuniary damages. They argue the FCA denies families the ability to get justice and deter negligence by others.
- While the FCA does not explicitly allow for bereavement damages, courts may award some non-pecuniary damages to minor children of deceased parents, to compensate the loss of guidance, care, and companionship of the parent.

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- The conventional amount is \$35,000, which is the rough upper limit awarded to minor children for the loss of a parent. The amount is adjusted based on factors like age and the level of involvement of the parent in the child's life.

Advice/Recommendations; Cabinet Confidences

- In Spring 2023, a Charter challenge was filed against the Province that argues that the classes of family members entitled to bring claims under the FCA is underinclusive, as they exclude claims by Indigenous siblings who have suffered a financial loss, and that government has not met its obligations under the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Miller litigation).

Legal Information

Contact: Renee Mulligan, Legal Counsel, JSB

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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last update: February 15, 2024

Early Resolution Program Expansion

KEY MESSAGES:

- As a key part of reforms to the Provincial Court Family Rules (the Rules), the Ministry and Provincial Court introduced the early resolution model (the Model) in Victoria as a prototype in 2019, expanding to Surrey in December 2020.
- The Model builds on existing family justice services to provide individuals with family law matters early access to information and referrals, screening for family violence, assistance resolving disputes out-of-court, and help preparing for court.
- Evaluation results are very positive, indicating this Model benefits families by resolving family law matters in less adversarial ways, resulting in earlier resolutions and reducing pressures on the court. Similar trends have been shown in Surrey.
- Further expansion of the Model requires significant financial investment to support service delivery.

FINANCES:

Government Financial Information

- Budget 2021 provided \$2.016 million in 2021/21, \$1.886 million in 2022/23, and \$1.876 million in 2023/24 to fund ongoing costs for the family law early resolution model at the Surrey Courthouse. This includes support for Justice Services Branch, Legal Aid BC, and Court Services Branch.
- 14.5 FTEs were funded: 13.5 for Justice Services Branch (JSB) and 1.0 for Court Services Branch.

STATISTICS:

- Results from the final evaluation of implementation of the Model in Victoria (November 2021):
 - User feedback from families indicated benefits from the early resolution process, high rates of satisfaction, and overall support for the Model.
 - Reduced the overall need for court time (63% reduction in total family court time in Victoria Provincial Court).
 - Supported resolution out of court (only 31% of families who initiated the early resolution process proceeded to court).

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- Preliminary evaluation results from implementation of the Model in Surrey indicates similar trends and client experience.

BACKGROUND:

- The Model applies to all parties seeking to resolve a family law matter as defined by the Provincial Court Family Rules (the Rules): parental responsibilities and parenting time; child support; contact with a child; guardianship of a child; companion animals or spousal support. Parties seeking other orders such as those related to protection, enforcement, case management or priority parenting matters proceed directly to court as the Model requirements do not apply.
- The Model requires parties with a family law matter to complete the following services before filing an application in Provincial Court:
 - a needs assessment which includes early screening for family violence, identification of legal and non-legal needs, access to legal information, referrals to community organizations and legal advice; and support preparing for the appropriate next step;
 - a parenting education course; and
 - one Consensual Dispute Resolution (CDR) session, if appropriate.
- Parties can apply to the court for an exemption to any/all requirements.
- CDR under the Model is not mandatory, the requirement applies only if, following the needs assessment, a determination has been made that CDR is appropriate.
- The Model is designed to reduce conflict and build skills to prevent future conflict through earlier and more durable resolutions. It also helps families, many of whom are without legal representation, prepare for the next steps in resolving family law matters.
- Parties who reach agreement on some or all issues through CDR are referred for legal advice prior to signing any agreement. If CDR does not result in agreement on all issues, it often increases parties' understanding of their issues and prepares them for court.
- The Model is designed to provide early awareness and intervention through screening for family violence, referrals to community organizations and legal advice, and support preparing for next steps (including court). The Ministry puts great emphasis on ensuring staff providing services within the Model have specialized knowledge about the dynamics of family violence (including coercive control) and its effect on families and children.
- CDR may not be appropriate due to issues such as family violence, power imbalances, or capacity to participate. The process may be adapted to support safety and participation.

Contact: Stephanie Melvin, Executive Director, JSB
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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated February 15, 2024

Intimate Images Protection Act

KEY MESSAGES:

- The *Intimate Images Protection Act* (IIPA) came into force on January 29, 2024.
- The Province launched two new services that will provide new ways to stop or prevent distribution of intimate images without consent:
 - The Civil Resolution Tribunal (CRT) can now issue protection orders that require an intimate image to be deleted and/or removed from a website or social media platform, as well as award damages and administer penalties.
 - The Intimate Images Protection Service (IIPS) will offer emotional support, resources, assistance with applying to the CRT and communicating protection orders issued by the CRT to online platforms and perpetrators.
- The IIPA covers intimate images, near-nudes, videos, livestreams and digitally altered images including videos known as “deepfakes”.
- With the CRT’s Solution Explorer, there is now a fast-track legal process for getting a legal decision that an intimate image was recorded or distributed without consent and ordering people to stop distributing or threatening to distribute intimate images.
- The IIPS is working collaboratively with the CRT to ensure trauma-informed information and support is available to victims throughout the process.
- People can visit TakeBackYourImages.gov.bc.ca to learn more - and share with anyone who needs it. No one should have to suffer in silence.
- Addressing the harms of non-consensual sharing of intimate images is a critical part of our work to better protect people in B.C.

FINANCES:

- \$0.900M has been approved by Treasury Board in Budget 2024 to fund the implementation of IIPA by the CRT.
- For collecting and reporting on IIPA performance indicators, the CRT will implement a plan to meet reporting requirements under section 82 of the *Civil Resolution Tribunal Act*. Data will be collected through the CRT’s case management system and voluntary user surveys and will be published in future CRT annual reports. Metrics will include case volumes, time to resolution and user feedback.

STATISTICS:

- As of February 28, 2024, the CRT has received 34 applications for IIPA protection orders. Of the 34 protection order claims, 13 are in discussion with the applicant prior to issue Notice of Application. 6 applicants have been given instructions for how to serve a named respondent, the respondents for 2 claims have been served and we are waiting for a

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response. 4 claims are being prepped for adjudication, 3 are with a tribunal member for a decision, 1 claim has been withdrawn and 5 decisions have been issued. The CRT has also received 3 applications for damages and case managers are in discussions with each of these applicants prior to issuing a Dispute Notice.

- The Intimate Images Program has opened 33 Case Files and has answered 25 requests for information. Of the 33 case files the Intimate Images Protection Services has supported 10 clients in an application to the CRT. Of these 10 applications 8 are still in the CRT process, 1 order was made and sent out by the intimate Images Protection Service, one order was denied.

BACKGROUND:

- The IIPA received Royal Assent on March 30, 2023, and was brought into force January 29, 2024.
- B.C.'s legislation is unique in setting up a fast-track process through the Civil Resolution Tribunal, a fully remote, online, administrative tribunal designed around the needs of users, that is accessible by computer or mobile phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- The CRT's Solution Explorer creates a complementary process that exists alongside the existing criminal processes.
- The Solution Explorer provides a new, victim-focused legal tool to get these images offline and improve access to justice for victims of sexualized violence.

Contact: Tarynn McKenzie, Senior Policy Analyst, JSB	Mobile: ^{Personal Security}
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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 15, 2024

Legal Services Branch Cost Recovery

KEY MESSAGES:

- The Legal Services Branch (“LSB”) of the Ministry of Attorney General recovers the costs associated with providing most legal services to government.
- The charge-back rates were last reviewed and increased effective April 2021.

FINANCES:

- Estimates – Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2025 - Ministry of Attorney General – Ministry Operations – Vote 14 – Page 40.

BACKGROUND: (Subject to solicitor-client privilege)

Legal Information

- **For Fiscal Year 2022/23:**
 - Net expenditures were \$31.3M, which was over budget by \$2.9M
 - Gross expenditures were \$154.3M, including \$45.8M for outside counsel and experts.
 - Total recoveries for legal services were \$123.0M.
- **For Fiscal Year 2021/22:**
 - Net expenditures were \$33.1M, which was over budget by \$0.9M.
 - Gross expenditures were \$138.1M, including \$39.6M for outside counsel and

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experts.

- Total recoveries for legal services were \$105.1M.

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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 15, 2024

Legal Services Branch Litigation Costs

KEY MESSAGES:

- Information regarding the cost of litigation is generally privileged and cannot be disclosed. If an exception is to be made, it can only be done after the litigation has concluded, and any other privilege that attaches must be considered.
- Litigation costs include the hourly rate for legal services provided to the Province, as well as disbursement costs (including expert reports and travel) incurred by the Province with respect to a legal proceeding.
- The Legal Services Branch maintains a record of all litigation costs.

FINANCES:

- Estimates – Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2025 - Ministry of Attorney General - Ministry Operations – Vote 14 – Page 40.
- Estimates – Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2025 - Ministry of Attorney General - *Crown Proceeding Act* – Vote 16 – Page 43.
- The CPA Budget is \$24.5M annually. This budget is used to pay judgments, arbitration awards, settlements and court ordered costs.

BACKGROUND: (subject to solicitor-client privilege)

Legal Information

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Legal Information

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Contact: Kate Saunders, Supervising Counsel – Litigation, LSB	Tel: 250-356-8592	Mobile: Personal Security

2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 15, 2024

Crown Proceeding Act Settlements

KEY MESSAGES:

- The *Crown Proceeding Act* (“CPA”) vote is a statutory appropriation. Expenditures to the account can be of three (major) types:
 1. payments as a result of judgements;
 2. payments as a result of settlements; and
 3. the creation of liabilities where there is a reasonable prospect of loss, and where that loss can be quantified. These liabilities are charged to the *Crown Proceeding Act* account on an accrual basis when the prospect of loss and quantum of loss can be determined with reasonable certainty.
- Settlement amounts can be only disclosed once a proceeding has concluded, and the Attorney General has tabled the annual report before the Legislature under s. 15 of the CPA. This is the only mechanism for the disclosure of information relating to settlement amounts.

FINANCES:

- Estimates – Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2025 - Ministry of Attorney General - Ministry Operations – Vote 14 – Page 40.
- Estimates – Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2025 - Ministry of Attorney General - *Crown Proceeding Act* – Vote 16 – Page 43.
- The CPA Budget is \$24.5M annually. This budget is used to pay judgments, arbitration awards, settlements and court ordered costs.

BACKGROUND: (subject to solicitor-client privilege)

- Litigation defence costs incurred to defend the Province are recovered by LSB from client ministries. Settlements and judgments are paid from the CPA budget.
- The CPA establishes both the process and the timing of disclosure of settlement amounts. Section 15 requires that prescribed information be tabled in the Legislature each year, and thus be released publicly.

Legal Information

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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 15, 2024

Outside Counsel Retainers

KEY MESSAGES:

- The *Attorney General Act* establishes the Attorney General's roles as the legal advisor to government and the representative of government in legal proceedings.
- The Legal Services Branch is empowered under the Act to provide legal advice to client ministries and retain, contract or employ persons to provide legal services.
- Legal services are generally provided to ministries and agencies by legal counsel employed within LSB. However, where there is a conflict, a requirement for particular expertise, services in another geographic area and/or workload pressures, outside counsel are retained. These retainers are supervised by LSB legal counsel.
- Outside counsel fees are managed according to the Outside Counsel Fee Tariff.

FINANCES:

- Estimates – Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2025 - Ministry of Attorney General - Ministry Operations – Vote 14 – Page 40.

STATISTICS (subject to solicitor-client privilege):

Legal Information

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BACKGROUND: (Subject to solicitor-client privilege)

- Selection of outside counsel is carried out according to the following process, which ensures compliance with core government procurement policies:
 - Outside counsel are chosen from LSB’s Outside Counsel Prequalified List. Outside counsel may prequalify by submitting an application to LSB including work history, years of call, expertise and references. If a firm is applying to get on the prequalified list, every lawyer in that firm who wishes to be qualified must submit the required information.
 - In addition, lawyers wishing to do government work directly with individuals at risk, such as children, must undergo a criminal record check.
 - All outside counsel applications are submitted to LSB’s Manager of Procurement and Contracts who reviews the information and follows up as appropriate (e.g., reference checks) before adding lawyers.
 - Supervisors within LSB and client ministries must both approve outside counsel appointments in accordance with the fee tariff. Final approval for outside counsel appointments rests with the Assistant Deputy Attorney General, LSB.
- LSB is reviewing and updating its retainer policy and procedures for outside counsel.
- The process is designed to be fair, accessible, efficient, transparent, cost-effective, well documented, accountable and enhances internal Branch capacity where appropriate and ensures that necessary legal expertise is retained for particular tasks and to continue to comply with government general procurement policies and applicable agreements.

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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 12, 2024

Indemnity Policy and Practices Overview

KEY MESSAGES:

- Providing legal assistance and indemnities to public servants acting in the course of their employment is essential to the protection of the Crown's interest, the fair treatment of public servants and the effective management of government.
- Indemnity coverage is provided to public servants under the Excluded Employees (Legal Proceedings) Indemnity Regulation, under collective agreements and, where applicable, by way of *ad hoc* special indemnities pursuant to s. 72 of the Financial Administration Act when indemnity coverage is not otherwise available.
- Indemnity coverage under the Regulation is available to current or former excluded employees and members of the executive branch of government. Coverage is not available under the Regulation for Members of the Legislative Assembly, except for those serving as members of the Executive Council and in relation to matters arising from that role.

If asked about the total amount expended on employee indemnities:

- The Risk Management Branch of the Ministry of Finance is the appropriate source of this information.

If asked about a specific indemnity:

- Government cannot disclose information about indemnity coverage, including whether coverage has been requested, provided, denied or terminated. The only exceptions are where disclosure is required by law; disclosure is to persons involved in the coverage; or the persons involved consent. [If pressed: Questions regarding the potential existence of specific indemnities are better answered by my colleague the Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister of Finance].

FINANCES:

- Questions regarding finances should be referred to the Risk Management Branch of the Ministry of Finance.

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BACKGROUND:

- Providing legal assistance and indemnification to employees serves the public interest in effective government by protecting Crown's interests, motivating public servants to fully cooperate in legal and regulatory proceedings, protecting the Crown from vicarious liability by ensuring effective legal representation of public servants, ensuring the fair treatment of public servants, assisting the public service to attract and retain high quality employees and protecting public servants from loss, which enables them to carry out their duties in good faith without fear of the burden of financial loss or other adverse impacts if litigation occurs.
- The Regulation and applicable collective agreements set out the situations where indemnity coverage is available, coverage eligibility requirements and establish processes for granting and receiving indemnity coverage.
- Government provides *ad hoc* special indemnity coverage in relation to circumstances analogous to those covered by the Regulation, under section 72 of the *Financial Administration Act* and section 2 of the *Indemnities and Guarantees Regulation*. In such circumstances, coverage is not available to public servants under the Regulation or a collective agreement, but it is in the public interest to provide coverage.
- The Risk Management Branch of the Ministry of Finance is the appropriate source of information about the total amount expended on indemnities. Except in very limited circumstances, government cannot disclose information about coverage provided to public servants and Executive Council members.
- When a specific indemnity has been concluded under the Regulation, the amount of the indemnity is disclosed in the aggregate with other indemnities concluding within the same fiscal year. The Risk Management Branch discloses this information in the Consolidated Revenue Fund Guarantees and Indemnities Authorized and Issued Report for each fiscal year.

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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 28, 2024

Directives on Civil Litigation involving Indigenous Peoples

KEY MESSAGES:

- On April 21, 2022, the Province released the Directives on Civil Litigation involving Indigenous Peoples (the “Directives”).
- The purpose of the Directives is to improve the conduct of litigation involving Indigenous peoples in a manner that considers Indigenous human rights, constitutionally protected Aboriginal and treaty rights, and upholds the honour of the Crown in all matters involving the Indigenous peoples of British Columbia.
- A core objective of the Directives is to confirm an approach to litigation that prioritizes and promotes resolution, innovation and negotiated settlement, and that seeks to narrow or avoid potential litigation.
- The Province respects the right of Indigenous Peoples to choose their preferred forum to resolve legal issues, including the courts. In some instances, matters may require legal clarification or definition, and litigation may be unavoidable. When matters do result in litigation, these new directives instruct counsel to engage honourably and to assist the court constructively, expeditiously, and effectively.
- All counsel must follow these Directives in the approaches, positions and decisions taken on behalf of the Attorney General of British Columbia in civil litigation involving Indigenous peoples.

FINANCES:

- Estimates – Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2025 - Ministry of Attorney General – Vote 14 Ministry Operations Pages 39-41
- Estimates – Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2025 - Ministry of Attorney General – Vote 16 *Crown Proceeding Act* Page 43
- The CPA Budget is \$24.5M annually. This budget is used to pay judgments, arbitration awards, settlements and court ordered costs.

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BACKGROUND (subject to solicitor-client privilege):

- Item 2.3 of the “Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan” was to:
 - Issue guidelines from the Attorney General of BC to the Ministry of Attorney General legal counsel regarding the conduct of civil litigation involving the rights of Indigenous Peoples. (Action Plan)
- The Directives were released on April 21, 2022, and were published in the British Columbia Gazette on May 13, 2022.

Legal Information

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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 17, 2024

Anti-Racism Legislation

KEY MESSAGES:

- All British Columbians deserve fair and equitable access to the programs and services they need.
- Systemic racism and colonial biases have shaped the development and delivery of programs and services for generations, and this continues to hurt Indigenous Peoples and racialized individuals throughout B.C.
- To identify and address racism at a systemic level, government has committed to a whole-of-government approach by developing two pieces of anti-racism legislation:
 - The *Anti-Racism Data Act* (ARDA), which became law in June 2022, paves the way to safely collect, use and disclose race-based data to help identify systemic racism in programs and services across government.
 - Broader anti-racism legislation to be introduced in Spring 2024 will move beyond identification, requiring government to take a whole-of-government approach to address and dismantle systemic racism across government.
- I, and the Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives are mandated to:
 - Work with community partners, including B.C.'s Human Rights Commissioner, to develop and pass an Anti-Racism Act to better serve everyone in B.C.
- The Province funded 68 racialized non-profit organizations to conduct community-led anti-racism legislation engagement, which included racialized individuals of multiple intersecting communities, age groups, professions, languages, ethnic backgrounds, faiths and geographic regions within British Columbia. A total of over 5,000 individuals provided feedback.
- The Province also conducted an Engage-BC questionnaire that was open to the public from June to October 2023 and received 2,179 responses where the public provided their feedback on how the Province should address systemic racism.
- The Province is engaged in a distinctions-based approach to Indigenous co-development and consultation. Ministry staff have met with policy/technical staff from the First Nations Leadership Council, BC Alliance of Modern Treaty Nations, B.C. rights and title holders, Métis Nation BC, Modern Treaty Nations and BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres.
- What We Heard Reports from these engagements are planned for release in Spring 2024.

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FINANCES:

- Budget 2024 provides \$1.200 million for Anti-Racism legislation implementation.

STATISTICS:

- 34.4% of British Columbians and 54.5% of Metro Vancouver residents self-identified as a visible minority in 2021 (Census 2021).
- In Canada, between 2019 and 2020, the number of police-reported crimes motivated by race or ethnicity increased 80%, from 884 (45% of total hate crimes) to 1,619 (61% of total hate crimes), accounting for most of the national increase in hate crimes. Much of the rise in targeting race or ethnicity between 2019-2020 was the result of crimes targeting:
 - East or Southeast Asian populations (+202 incidents or +301%)
 - Indigenous populations (+44 incidents or +152%)
 - Black populations (+318 incidents or +92%)
 - South Asian populations (+38 incidents or +47%)
- In 2019 and 2020, race or ethnicity related incidents in B.C. increased by 122% (from 161 to 357 incidents), while those related to religion and sexual orientation did not change substantially.
- The Vancouver Police Department reported that in Vancouver, anti-Asian hate crime rose by 717% from 2019 (12 incidents) to 2020 (98 incidents).

BACKGROUND:

- Enacted in 2017, Ontario's *Anti-Racism Act* primarily focused on data collection for anti-racism purposes, initiated the creation of Ontario's Anti-Racism strategy and established an Anti-Racism Directorate.
- On March 24, 2022, Nova Scotia introduced the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act*, which moves beyond anti-racism to focus on systemic hate, equity and racism.
- On March 29, 2022, the Federal government launched national consultations for Canada's first ever National Action Plan on Combatting Hate. Findings from the national consultations may influence B.C.'s anti-racism legislation.
- The engagement approach will leverage previously acquired data from the ARDA engagement process, as well as the use of the recently approved Interim Approach.
- The Province of B.C. has several initiatives underway across government to address racism, such as amendments to the *Police Act* targeted for completion in 2026,

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addressing Indigenous specific racism in healthcare following up the “In Plain Sight” Report and the release of a provincial K-12 Anti-Racism in Education Action Plan in January 2023.

- The broader Anti-Racism legislation is slated to be introduced in Spring 2024.

Contact: Haiqa Cheema, ADM, Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism	Mobile: Personal Security
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Last updated: February 17, 2024

KEY MESSAGES:

- Government has a moral and ethical responsibility to tackle systemic racism in all its forms in across the province.
- We know there are policy gaps and barriers to accessing programs, and this disproportionately impacts Indigenous Peoples and racialized individuals.
- The *Anti-Racism Data Act* (the Act), which became law in June 2022, is an important tool to help the Province dismantle systemic racism. The Ministry of Attorney General and the Ministry of Citizens' Services worked collaboratively to develop the legislation.
- The Act enables government to collect and use demographic information such as race, gender and ancestry to identify and address systemic racism.
- With this information, the Province can identify where there are barriers and improve access to government programs and services for Indigenous, Black and people of colour.
- The legislation was informed by the input of more than 13,000 British Columbians through engagement with Indigenous Peoples and racialized communities. The feedback continues to inform the implementation of the Act.
- It was one of the first pieces of legislation to be co-developed with Indigenous Peoples in accordance with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.
- The implementation of the legislation is informed by Indigenous Peoples and the Anti-Racism Data Committee.
- The Ministry of Citizens' Services launched the BC Demographic Survey from June 14 to October 15, 2023, to help identify where people aren't getting equitable services. During that time, BC Stats distributed invitation letters to over 1.3 million households across the province. There were more than 200,000 responses.
- Anti-racism research priorities and process commitments related to how research will be done were developed in collaboration with the Anti-Racism Data Committee and Indigenous Peoples and were published in May 2023.
- The research priorities help ensure that the Province is focused on the areas that matter most to Indigenous Peoples and racialized communities.

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- Work on some of the research priorities has begun. Some phases of research could be done within a two-year time frame, but other more complex projects will continue to move forward after 2025. While the research priorities focus on specific sectors or programs, the Province will continue to address systemic racism in all government programs and services.
- Indigenous partners are starting to work with the Ministry of Citizens' Services to co-develop a new, updated data standard respecting Indigenous identity. The updated standard is expected to be published in 2024 and will provide a consistent way of asking about Indigenous identity in a distinctions-based way.
- Before June 1, 2024, the Ministry of Citizens' Services will provide their annual release of statistics and other information related to systemic racism and racial equity. The release will include a summary report on the BC Demographic Survey, initial statistics related to some of the research priorities, and an update on the implementation of the *Anti-Racism Data Act*.
 - The initial statistics released before June 1, 2024, will be information specific to diversity in BC Public Service, racial inequity in education, and racial inequity in healthcare outcomes.
 - This data will be used to implement action in the broader Anti-Racism legislation.
- In 2023, the Province moved forward with the co-development and public engagement of broader anti-racism legislation to be introduced in Spring 2024. The anti-racism legislation will require government to take action on systemic racism uncovered through data collection and other sources of information, and to provide supports to those who have been negatively impacted. Consultation and engagement with Indigenous, Black and people of colour on this legislation took place from March 2023 to February 2024.

FINANCES:

- All current work is being done within existing ministry resources to provide subject matter expertise to support the implementation of the Act.

BACKGROUND:

- While we have a lot of data about government services, we have not collected data that lets us see how people with diverse identities access and are affected by those services.
- The *Anti-Racism Data Act* enables the collection and use of personal information for the purposes of identifying systemic racism. It also commits government to develop standards and directives that ensure the demographic data is collected and used in a respectful and culturally safe way while community harms are prevented.

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- The BC Human Rights Commissioner, the BC Representative for Children and Youth and the Multicultural Advisory Council have all called for disaggregated demographic data to better understand racism and inequity in B.C.
- The information collected by the BC Demographic Survey will help to identify areas where people aren't getting equitable services because of systemic racism, so government can address them.
- The Anti-Racism Data Committee was established in September 2022 and has held 6 meetings so far in 2023/24. The Committee is made up of 11 members who represent a wide cross-section of racialized communities and geographic regions of B.C.
- Government is working in partnership with the committee to ensure that the implementation of the *Anti-Racism Data Act* is informed by the lived experiences and expertise of racialized people.

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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 20, 2024

Islamophobia and Antisemitism

KEY MESSAGES:

- Many of us in British Columbia share a deep concern over the rise in hate crimes tied to the ongoing conflict in Gaza.
- We stand united in our commitment to address this troubling trend.
- The Province is aware of the increase in reported hate-motivated crimes and incidents in several jurisdictions in B.C.
- Hate-related crimes or incidents can have a long-term effect on people's well-being, and no one should have to face the aftermath and trauma of such incidents alone.
- We will expand our anti-racism supports this year, including through the launch of a dedicated Racist Incident Helpline.
- The Helpline is a service that aims to offer a low-barrier and safe alternative for those hesitant to approach police, by providing a confidential and supportive environment for victims.
- As the Premier has said before: *"There is no place for Islamophobia or anti-Palestinian hate here. There is also no place for antisemitism or anti-Israeli hate here."*
- While we strongly support the right of every individual to express their opinions and exercise their right to free speech, we firmly reject hate and violence as means of expression.
- We are committed to making our province safer, more equitable and welcoming for all.

FINANCES:

- For FY2024/25 the Ministry will continue to provide Resilience BC and Multiculturalism and Budget 2024 provides \$3.260 million for the Racism Incident Helpline.

BACKGROUND:

- In 2021, Canada experienced a 6% increase in hate crimes motivated by race or ethnicity, following an 83% surge in 2020, with all provinces and territories reporting higher incidents of such crimes.
- The majority (56%) of police-reported hate crimes during this period were non-violent offences, indicating a widespread issue highlighting various forms of discrimination beyond physical violence.

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- There are over 80,000 Muslim-Canadians in the province of BC alone.
- Despite their longstanding presence and despite Islam being the second-largest religion in Canada, Muslims in B.C. and across the country face increasing challenges, including a notable 71% rise in police-reported hate crimes against Muslims in 2021.
- Since the Israel-Hamas conflict began on October 7, 2023, there has been a surge in hate crimes and protests in Vancouver, with the Vancouver Police investigating a 31% increase in hate crime reports from the previous year, including a 62% rise in antisemitic incidents.
- On October 30, 2023, Premier Eby announced a commitment to mandatory Holocaust education for high school students by the 2025-26 school year due to a rise in antisemitism in B.C.
 - This change will include the expansion of Grade 10 social studies curriculum to include more on discriminatory policies and injustices; and
 - The development of this curriculum will involve the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, the Jewish community, and educational partners.
- The B.C. Hate Crimes Unit is a specialized unit dedicated to identifying and prosecuting hate crimes, including those motivated by antisemitism and Islamophobia, thereby enhancing law enforcement's response to such incidents.
- In November 2023, the Province announced initiatives aimed at addressing antisemitism and Islamophobia:
 - The Racist Incident Helpline will go-live in Spring 2024 and aims to document and provide supports to victims of hate such as antisemitism and Islamophobia.
 - The Community Safety and Crime Prevention Grants fund offers up to \$10,000 for community organizations enhancing safety and tackling racism, hate crimes, and cultural intolerance, offering benefits to communities impacted by antisemitism and Islamophobia.
- Government-funded Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Programs, including the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network, provide communities with resources, support, and education to combat antisemitism and Islamophobia.

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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 20, 2024

Racist Incident Helpline

KEY MESSAGES:

- In the last few years, there has been a significant increase in hate crimes and racist incidents being reported to police throughout B.C.
- It's even more distressing that many racially motivated crimes go unreported to police, and these incidents can have long-lasting impact on people's well-being.
- In November 2023, the Premier and the Attorney General announced a racist incident helpline will be launched in Spring 2024.
- The helpline will be a trauma-informed, multilingual service, providing a culturally safe platform for witnesses or victims of hate to report an incident, and receive referrals to community support programs, including counselling.
- The helpline will be:
 - open from 8 am to 6 pm;
 - accessible via phone;
 - a multilingual service;
 - toll-free;
 - a culturally safe platform for racialized people;
 - delivered by an agency that is not police or law-enforcement related;
 - a place where witnesses or victims of racism can report and validate their experience;
 - a place to receive emotional support.
- The establishment of this helpline directly addresses recommendation 5 from the BC Office of the Human Rights Commissioner's March 2023 report "From Hate to Hope".
- The helpline will lower barriers for people to report a racist incident and make it easier for individuals reporting the incident to access community level supports for the harms they may have experienced.
- The anonymized data collected from the helpline will be used to support anti-racism programs, services and initiatives in B.C.
- The helpline is an important part of our work to build a safer and more inclusive province for everyone.

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FINANCES:

- Budget 2024 Provides \$3.226 million for the Racist Incident Helpline.

STATISTICS:

- In 2021, Canada experienced a 6% increase in hate crimes motivated by race or ethnicity, following an 83% surge in 2020, with all provinces and territories reporting higher incidents of such crimes.
- The majority (56%) of police-reported hate crimes were non-violent offences, indicating a widespread issue of various forms of discrimination beyond physical violence.

BACKGROUND:

- The former Attorney General announced on April 30, 2021, that the helpline would be created in B.C. in response to the recent increase in racist activities.
- The Helpline is intended to be a low-barrier, multilingual service, that is not delivered by police, for B.C. to report racist incidents and receive community support for harms they may have experienced.
- On March 7, 2023, the BC Office of the Human Rights Commissioner recommended the government create, fund and support a community-led, province-wide system for reporting hate incidents.
- On November 15, 2023, the Premier and the AG announced that the Province will roll out the racist incident helpline in Spring 2024.
- In November 2023, Government announced funding to support the development of a racist incident helpline.
 - FY 23/24: \$0.700M was approved to develop the helpline.
 - FY 24/25: \$2.326M was approved to provide community supports for the racist incident helpline and \$0.900M for operational costs.
- The Province is collaborating with United Way/BC211, a long-standing service provider of helplines such as VictimLink, to develop and deliver the racist incident helpline.
- Helpline services include multi-lingual services, extensive referral, counselling and a community support system to create a safe space for reporting racist incidents. It will use anonymized data from the helpline to inform resource allocation to fight racism.
- With the escalation of violence in the Middle East and increased reports of Islamophobia and antisemitism, community members are asking for a central helpline to report hate.

Contact: Haiqa Cheema, ADM, Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism	Mobile: <small>Personal Security</small>
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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 20, 2024

Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network

KEY MESSAGES:

- All British Columbians have the right to feel safe in their communities. However, since the pandemic, there has been a significant increase in the reporting of hate-related crimes.
- Government is working to address systemic racism through the implementation of the Anti-Racism Data Act and the development of broader anti-racism legislation, but we know that to dismantle systemic racism in B.C. we also need to work directly with communities.
- The Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network offers a strategic and coordinated response to racism and hate in B.C. with community-led anti-racism and anti-hate work at local and regional levels.
- The Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network has a centralized "hub" that anchors the program and provides support to 35 "spoke organizations" to lead anti-racism and anti-hate work at local and regional levels to deliver service in 40 communities.
- Spoke organizations are the key community contacts for the Province in the event of an alleged/confirmed incident of hate, offering multilingual information and videos on what to do if a person is the victim or witness of a hate incident.

FINANCES:

- The annual program budget for Resilience BC is \$540,000:
 - \$240,000 for the hub;
 - \$300,000 for community spokes and
 - 2FTEs directly supporting the program and 40 communities serviced by the program.

STATISTICS:

- In 2020, B.C. reported the second largest jump in hate crimes nationally at +198 (behind Ontario). When adjusted for population size, B.C. reported the largest jump (Statistics Canada).
- 2021 national police data shows another 26% increase in reported hate crimes from 2020, and a two-year jump of 72% from 2019 (Statistics Canada).
- In March 2023, the BC Office of the Human Rights Commissioner's (BCOHRC) report "From Hate to Hope" noted over half of respondents (56%) felt the increase in hate incidents was due to a normalization of hate incidents online and elsewhere.

Confidential

- The BCOHRC’s report identified that respondents were most likely to report that the hate incident was motivated by race, ethnicity or ancestry (60%), followed by political beliefs (20%), religious or spiritual beliefs (19%) or cultural markers or traditions (19%).

BACKGROUND:

- Resilience BC was announced on November 20, 2019, during Multiculturalism Week, as the successor to the Organizing Against Racism and Hate (OARH) program that ran for ten years (2009-2019).
- The Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS) was renewed to continued delivering services for the fourth year as the hub for the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network.
- Thirty-five organizations deliver spoke services in 40 communities in rural and urban communities across the province since August 2020.
- In May 2021, the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network launched a new website with resources, multilingual information for victims and bystanders of hate incidents, and videos available in 13 languages including Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Korean, Tagalog, Punjabi and Hindi. The videos were made in partnership with the Vancouver Asian Film Festival (VAFF).
- In 2020/21, the Ministry invested an additional \$972,500 in Resilience BC in one-time initiatives as part of the Anti-Racism Restart and Recovery Initiatives under StrongerBC:
 - \$300,000 for Community Convenors to address anti-Asian, anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism and faith-based hate.
 - \$300,000 for a front-line training project with Ending Violence Association of BC (EVA BC) to create a first responder online training module.
 - Resilience BC has been back to its base budget since 2021/22.
- Resilience BC was identified under Schedule 5 of the Partnership Agreement for the Conservation of Southern Mountain Caribou (2020) to support the Cariboo Recovery Anti-Racism Project.
 - \$100,000 was provided via Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNR) – now Ministry of Water, Land, Resources Stewardship (WLRS) – to provide supports.
 - Simon Fraser University’s Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue was contracted to work with ministry staff, federal partners and the Saúlteu and West Moberly First Nations to conduct the review and develop the report.

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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 17, 2024

International Decade for the People of African Descent (IDPAD)/Anti- Black Racism Strategy

KEY MESSAGES:

- The Province greatly values the history, contributions and accomplishments of Black communities in B.C, and recognizes that Black British Columbians continue to face disproportionate barriers as a result of systemic racism and discrimination.
- In December 2022, the Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives was mandated to work with community partners to create an anti-Black racism strategy in recognition of the International Decade for the People of African Descent (IDPAD).
- Government is taking steps to better understand experiences of Black British Columbians and meaningfully recognize IDPAD.
- An anti-Black Racism strategy will be developed, in collaboration with community partners, after the introduction of broader anti-racism legislation in Spring 2024.

STATISTICS:

- A Statistics Canada report in 2020 showed that the number of police-reported hate crimes targeting race or ethnicity almost doubled, with more crimes targeting the Black population at +318 incidents – making the Black population the most targeted group overall for 2020. These numbers represent the prevalence of anti-Black racism in Canada.
- The 2021 population census recorded 61,760 Black people in B.C., representing 1.2% of the provincial population and 4.3% of the Black population in Canada. The Black population continues to grow in B.C. Between 1996 and 2016, the population almost doubled in size (Statistics Canada, 2019).

BACKGROUND:

- In 2021, the Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives hosted a series of 10 community meetings with experts, leaders and advocates from Black communities and ministers on themes ranging from education, justice and community safety, health, arts and culture, employment, migration and housing.
 - Members of Black communities in B.C. provided recommendations to address long-standing and emerging issues of systemic racism.

Confidential

- In 2021, the African Art and Cultural Community Contributor Society (AACCCS) received a \$0.100 million grant from the Province as the Resilience BC Community Convener on anti-Black racism.
 - In February 2022, AACCCS released its *Black in BC Report* that identifies the needs of Black British Columbians. The Province is reviewing the findings and recommendations from this report to inform further action.
- As of December 2022, the Parliamentary Secretary is mandated to work with community partners to create an anti-Black racism strategy in recognition of the IDPAD.
 - After enactment of the broader anti-racism legislation in Spring 2024, the Ministry will work with community to create and implement an anti-Black racism strategy.
- The Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network has a centralized "hub" that anchors the program and provides support to 35 "spoke" organizations who provide service to 40 communities, which lead anti-racism and anti-hate work at local and regional levels.
 - At least five spoke agencies are focused on directly addressing anti-Black racism in both urban and rural communities including Kelowna, Ridge Meadows, Cowichan Valley, New Westminster and Vancouver.
- The Ministry has taken steps to recognize and celebrate Black histories and excellence in B.C. by proclaiming August 1, 2021, as Emancipation Day for the first time in B.C.'s history, to mark the date on which slavery was abolished across Canada in 1834; proclaiming Black Excellence Day on January 14, 2022; and has been celebrating Black History Month for several years.

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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 20, 2024

Japanese Canadian Recognition

KEY MESSAGES:

- Our government recognizes the significant harm caused to Japanese Canadians as a result of government actions before, during and after the Second World War.
- That is why, to honour the Japanese Canadian community, we have committed to providing lasting recognition of the traumatic internment of more than 22,000 Japanese Canadians during World War II.
- Since 2019, we have been working with Japanese Canadian communities on a path forward that honours survivors and acknowledges these injustices.
- As a result of engagement with the community, through the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC), we are supporting the Japanese Canadian Legacies Society (JCLS) and their community partners with a \$100 million funding package to deliver new initiatives and community programs.
- The Province is working in collaboration with the JCLS to support these important initiatives during the coming months and years.

STATISTICS:

- During World War II, approximately 22,000 Japanese Canadians were forcibly removed from coastal B.C. and interned in the Interior.
- In 1942, the coastal population of Japanese Canadians was nearly 22,000 people, 70% of whom had been born and raised in Canada.
- The forced uprooting, dispossession and permanent displacement of approximately 2.6% of the B.C. population tore apart families, communities, identities, livelihoods and deep connections to place.
- Per Statistics Canada, B.C. had the highest population of Japanese Canadians at 1.1% (54,640) in 2021.

BACKGROUND:

- In December 2022, the Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives was mandated by the Premier. to "work with the Japanese Canadian Legacies Society to deliver the Province's redress initiatives that honour the legacy of Japanese Canadians in B.C."

Confidential

- NAJC submitted several proposals to the Province in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 outlining the level of recognition they are seeking. In the most recent submission, the JCLS are asking for funding and support for the following initiatives:
 - **Health and Wellness** – implement health and wellness programs for internment-era survivors, and support intergenerational trauma counselling.
 - **Heritage, Community and Education** – preservation and access to Japanese Canadian history and heritage, as well as the development of teaching materials and updating curriculum for Japanese Canadian history in B.C. schools.
 - **Monument** – to commemorate and remember.
 - **Community** – create recreational and cultural space.
- In May 2022, the Province announced a \$100 million redress package to provide lasting recognition of historical wrongs committed by the Province against Japanese Canadians during the Second World War.
- Ministry staff has delivered \$62 million in funding to the JCLS to support new programs and is currently assessing options for the remaining initiatives, including a monument and community space.
- Ministry of AG and CITZ staff will administer the remaining \$38 million in funding, which includes funding to build and maintain a monument and funding to the JCLS to support the community fund initiatives.
- This investment builds on the \$2 million of funding the Province provided to the Nikkei Seniors Health Care and Housing Society in May 2021 for health and wellness supports for Japanese Canadian internment-era survivors.

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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 20, 2024

Sons of Freedom Doukhobor Apology and Recognition

KEY MESSAGES:

- We acknowledge that too many people in B.C. have suffered injustices due to government policies that have negatively impacted their lives.
- Among these groups is the Sons of Freedom Doukhobor, who were systematically targeted by the B.C. government in the early 1900s through government policies that changed their community and continue to impact them even today.
- In 2019, the Province consulted with the Doukhobor community to assess the impact of those actions and develop appropriate government actions.
- In February 2024, on behalf of the Province, I extended a heartfelt apology and acknowledgement to the Sons of Freedom Doukhobor community for their suffering.
- On February 27, 2024, the Premier formally delivered the apology in the Legislative Assembly.
- We have created a \$10 million recognition package.
- Though we know this does not erase the trauma, we hope it can provide the necessary support to help the survivors heal.
- We are dedicated to ensuring that such wrongdoings never happen here again.

FINANCES:

- The Ministry provided \$10 million including \$5.000 million in 2024/25 to address the impacts of past wrongs and help ensure this never happens again in this province.
- This \$10 Million includes the following initiatives:
 - **\$5 million to create a Sons of Freedom Doukhobor Legacy Fund** – to foster healing and recovery among the Doukhobors and support reconciliation between Doukhobor groups, their families, and neighbours.
 - **\$1.25 million for research and archival services** – to initiate community-based research, raise awareness, document and archive the history of Doukhobors in B.C.
 - **\$3.75 million for Health and Wellness Fund** – to promote intergenerational wellness and enhance the overall well-being/quality of life of Doukhobor survivors and their families.

Confidential

- The Province will work with the Doukhobor Community and Selkirk College's Mir Centre for Peace to initiate and manage these initiatives.

STATISTICS:

- In 1899, approximately 7,500 Doukhobors sought refuge in Canada, fleeing persecution in Russia due to their non-conformist religious beliefs and communal lifestyle.
- In the early 1900s, approximately 600 Sons of Freedom members were convicted of public nudity and sentenced to three years on Piers Island, off Vancouver Island.
- By September 1953, authorities arrested 148 Sons of Freedom Doukhobor adults for nudity and placed their 104 children in New Denver, a former sanatorium and internment camp.

BACKGROUND:

- Between 1953 and 1959, the Sons of Freedom Doukhobor community faced grave injustices, including the forced removal of children from their homes to the New Denver institution.
- This caused enduring trauma and integration difficulties for survivors and their descendants.
- Since the 1990s, the community has sought provincial acknowledgment of these historical injustices and assistance in recovery and enhancing their quality of life.
- In April 1999, the Ombudsperson's Public Report No. 38, which emphasized that these children were innocent victims caught in complex conflicts, provided five recommendations for government to address:
 - Acknowledge government wrongdoing.
 - Provide a comprehensive explanation as to why these children were apprehended.
 - Issue a clear and unconditional public apology in the Legislative Assembly and state the government's commitment to redress the damage caused.
 - Engage consultations with the affected individuals to determine the appropriate form of compensation and support.
 - Push for thoroughly examining the RCMP's role and recommend appropriate actions.
- In March 2002, the Ombudsperson produced Public Report No. 43 indicating that only one recommendation was fully acted on, with the other four partially implemented or unaddressed.

Confidential

- In October 2004, the then Attorney General expressed regret in the legislative assembly.
- On February 1 and 2, 2024, the AG together with Minister Katrine Conroy and MLAs Brittny Anderson and Roly Russell formally apologized to the Sons of Freedom Doukhobor communities in Castlegar and Grand Forks.
- Selkirk College will manage and administer the funds with the Sons of Freedom Doukhobor community.

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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 20, 2024

Chinese Canadian Museum

KEY MESSAGES:

- The Chinese Canadian Museum (CCM) is a first-of-its-kind museum in Canada that recognizes past and present contributions of Chinese Canadians to British Columbia and Canada.
- Since 2018, the Province has committed and invested over \$48.5 million to establish the CCM, to address historical wrongs and counter racism.
- The CCM officially opened in its permanent location in the historic Wing Sang Building on July 1, 2023, in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Chinese Immigration Act (also known as the Chinese Exclusion Act).
- As of December 18, 2023, the CCM has welcomed more than 12,000 visitors.
- Ongoing instances of racism towards the Chinese Canadian community and anti-Asian sentiments reinforce the need for this museum.

STATISTICS:

- The 2021 Census confirms more than 1.7 million Chinese people reside in Canada, with most concentrated in the provinces of British Columbia (517,805) and Ontario (821,835).

BACKGROUND:

- Establishing the CCM has been a Provincial commitment since 2018, and the December 2022 Minister's mandate letter reaffirms this ongoing commitment by directing the Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport (TACS) and the Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives to "work in consultation with affected communities to advance emerging museum programs and proposals including the Chinese Canadian Museum, a South Asian museum, and a provincial Filipino cultural centre".
- On March 13, 2020, the CCMSBC was incorporated as a non-profit to advance development and operations.
- CCMSBC has a 16-member board to govern the museum, including one appointee from the Province and one appointee from the City of Vancouver.
- In October 2023, the CCM was awarded a Governors Award from the National Trust for Canada for their efforts in recognizing Chinese History in BC.
- The Province has invested more than \$48.5 million to advance this commitment. The provincial funding breaks down as follows:
 - In 2019, the Province supported a \$1 million grant to the City of Vancouver for initial planning and support in advancing the CCM mandate commitment.

Confidential

- In 2020, an \$8 million endowment to assist with future operating costs was provided, in addition to \$2 million in planning and development funding to establish the Chinese Canadian Museum Society of B.C. (CCMSBC).
- On February 11, 2022, the Province announced \$25.5 million for the purchase of the historic Wing Sang Building in Vancouver Chinatown and \$2 million for initial operational support of the society.
- On April 12, 2023, the Province announced \$9 million to support renovations and operating costs for the grand opening of the museum on July 1, 2023.
- On April 26, 2023, the Province provided \$1 million in funding through the Destination Development Fund for accessibility renovations and a new feature exhibit.
- Since incorporation in March 2020, the CCMSBC has successfully realized significant milestones in the establishment of the museum, including:
 - Developing the thematic plan of the museum. Producing a catalogue for the exhibit A Seat at the Table: Chinese Immigration and British Columbia.
 - Launching temporary exhibitions in partnership with the Victoria Chinatown Museum Society at CCM's Fan Tan Alley, Victoria, location including First Steps: Chinese Canadian Journeys in Victoria and Gold Mountain Dream! (February 2022) and The Magic of Tony Eng (December 2023).
 - Acquiring the historic Wing Sang Building as the museum's permanent location in February 2022.
 - Receiving a \$7.8 million donation toward the purchase price of the building from philanthropist and former Wing Sang Building owner Bob Rennie.
 - Receiving federal charitable status designation for CCMSBC in April 2022.
 - Hiring inaugural Director and CEO Dr. Melissa Karmen Lee in October 2022.
 - A \$1.1 million gift in October 2022 from CCMSBC Board Chair Grace Wong, her husband Richard K. Wong and family. Other significant donations include \$1 million from the Lam Family and \$2.8 million from former senator Viviane Poy.
 - \$5.19 million in federal funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada (PacifiCan) in May 2023.
 - \$334,500 from the City of Vancouver to support operational funding for the next three years and \$250,000 from the Infrastructure Grants: Chinatown Cultural Partnership program toward renovations of the Wing Sang Building in May 2023

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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

South Asian Museum

Last updated: February 20, 2024

KEY MESSAGES:

- Canadians of South Asian heritage have made many important contributions to B.C.'s history, culture and success.
- Our government continues to build partnerships with communities of South Asian heritage in B.C. to address historical injustices and to celebrate their contributions to our province.
- The Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport is leading the initiative of creating a South Asian museum in partnership with the Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives.
- Communities of South Asian heritages have expressed a need for a museum that brings together artifacts, documents and stories significant to them.
- We are committed to creating this first-of-its-kind museum and we will continue to work closely with communities in B.C. of South Asian heritage to make this museum a reality.
- We are pleased public engagement for this mandate commitment is advancing, with the launch of a provincial website that invites input from all British Columbians.

STATISTICS:

- In 2021, Statistics Canada confirmed South Asians constitute 7.1% of Canada's total population, with Ontario (1,515,295) and British Columbia (437,970) as the provinces with the largest South Asian populations.
- Canadians of South Asian heritage are now the largest visible minority group in Canada, and the second largest in B.C., with the population expected to grow over the next two decades.

BACKGROUND:

- The genesis of this commitment comes from the Punjabi Canadian Legacy Project (2014-2018) and the South Asian Canadian Legacy Project (2020-2022) led by the South Asian Studies Institute and supported through \$1.14 million in funding from the Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism branch, now with the Ministry of the Attorney General.

¹ The terms "South Asian" or "South Asian Canadian", are based on the previous Legacy Project and an academic term used to describe a geographic region. The terms function as a placeholder only, as it is recognized this terminology can be both unifying and divisive within the communities it is meant to encompass. The engagement process will invite a conversation among community members on the use of these terms.

Confidential

- The December 2022 Minister’s mandate letter directs the Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture, and Sports (TACS) with the support of the Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives to “*work in consultation with affected communities to advance emerging museum programs and proposals, including the Chinese Canadian Museum, a South Asian Museum, and a provincial Filipino cultural centre*”.
- This commitment has evolved from the 2020 mandate letter, which directed the Minister of TACS to “*start work to create a first-of-its-kind museum to document the history, art and contributions of South Asian people in B.C.*”
- A Ministerial Advisory (the Advisory) was appointed in Fall 2023 and comprises 18 individuals who have professional, lived and community engagement experience.
- During the first phase of work from October to December 2023, the Advisory made recommendations regarding the design of a province-wide, community-led engagement process that will shape the vision for the new museum.
- In the second phase that runs from January to June 2024, the focus will shift to the implementation of key engagement activities and may include community-led conversations and online surveys, as well as a *What We Heard Report*.
- TACS has conducted a range of awareness and engagement activities this year, including:
 - On April 13, 2023, Minister Popham hosted leaders from South Asian communities at Simon Fraser University’s Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue to raise awareness about the project and collect preliminary feedback on how to engage communities.
 - On June 17, 2023, TACS staff attended the 5X Block Party, a free music and art festival in Surrey, to raise awareness in the community about the South Asian Canadian museum commitment.
 - On October 5, November 16 and December 11, 2023, Advisory meetings were held to support the design of the engagement process.
 - On November 21, 2023, the South Asian Canadian museum engagement website was launched.

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2024/25 ESTIMATES NOTE

Last updated: February 20, 2024

Provincial Filipino Cultural Centre

KEY MESSAGES:

- The contributions of the Filipino community in B.C. are an important part of our province's history, culture and success.
- Filipino Canadians are the fourth largest visible minority group in Canada and the third largest in B.C. The population is expected to more than double by 2041.
- My colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives, and B.C.'s Filipino communities have been publicly calling for a provincial Filipino cultural centre since 2009.
- In December 2022, the Province committed to working in consultation with affected communities to advance emerging museum programs and proposals, including a provincial Filipino cultural centre.
- The Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport is leading this work, with support of the Parliamentary Secretary.

BACKGROUND:

- The December 2022 Minister's mandate letter directs the Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture, and Sports (TACS) to *"work in consultation with affected communities to advance emerging museum programs and proposals including the Chinese Canadian Museum, a South Asian Museum, and a provincial Filipino cultural centre"* with support from the PS Elmore, who has a corresponding mandate commitment.
- PS Elmore is the first MLA in B.C. of Filipino heritage and has been an advocate for the Filipino Canadian community in Vancouver and their calls for a Filipino cultural centre since her initial election in 2009.
- In December 2022, the Mabuhay House Society (MHS) submitted information about their organization and vision for a centre.
- That information included a report called *"Keeping the Roots Alive"* developed by the National Pilipino Canadian Cultural Centre (NPC3) and the UBC School of Community and Regional Planning, who consulted with 57 representatives from the Filipino Canadian community in Vancouver.
- In April 2023, Mabuhay House Society received \$250,000 in one-time funding from the Province to support planning and public engagement regarding the development of a provincial cultural centre.

Confidential

- There is very strong interest and enthusiasm within the community for the advancement of this mandate commitment, and partner Ministry TACS has received significant correspondence regarding the commitment including:
 - An open letter on March 6, 2023, to Premier Eby requesting the centre be built in Vancouver, signed by the Tulayan Filipino Diaspora Society, Filco-operative One Housing Society.
 - Letter sent on March 27, 2023, reiterating the position set out in the public letter and included a petition with 800 names urging the Province to act on establishing a Filipino Cultural Centre in Vancouver.
 - January 7, 2024, MHS sent an email and “Statement of Unity for a Filipino Cultural Centre & the Mabuhay House Society” to the office of Premier Eby that included 70 signatures from Filipino community groups in support of MHS’ leadership on the cultural centre project.
- Minister of TACS Lana Popham, hosted two community stakeholder roundtable meetings on August 10 and September 28, 2023, to reaffirm the mandate commitment and foster relationship building.
- There are many Filipino nonprofit societies and groups in B.C., with a vested interest in this mandate commitment. Some organizations have conducted independent engagement initiatives not funded by or associated with the Province, such as a study conducted by NPC3, a survey conducted by Filipino BC, town hall events and petitions.
- Next steps will include public and community engagement, planned, and implemented in partnership and with support from the Filipino community.

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