

Estimate Notes 2024/2025

Minister Sheila Malcolmson



CONFIDENTIAL

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Program Notes 2024/2025

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Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

2022/23 Annual Service Plan Report

August 2023



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Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction's 2022/23 Annual Service Plan Report compares the Ministry's actual results to the expected results identified in the 2022/23 – 2024/25 Service Plan published in 2022. I am accountable for those results as reported.

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'SM', written over a light grey horizontal line.

Honourable Sheila Malcolmson
Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
August 4, 2023

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Letter from the Minister

As the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, I am pleased to present the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction 2022/23 Annual Service Plan Report, which summarizes our work and key results from April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023.

Our government wants all people in British Columbia, regardless of race, gender or physical ability, to have the opportunity to participate in their community, feel valued, and share in the prosperity of our province.

Reducing poverty is a key government commitment and we have been working hard so that everyone in B.C. can live full and dignified lives. We made it through the pandemic by putting people first and implementing the largest-ever increase to income and disability assistance rates.

We worked to update our Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2022/23 through far-reaching public engagement. Over 10,000 people shared their lived experience of poverty directly with us.

We want people to have the support they need to get by and to have access to nutritious food. So, in March 2023, we strengthened food security initiatives through a historic \$49 million allocation, and we continue to work with community organizations to help families and people challenged to put good food on the table.

In October 2023, government passed an important milestone in its implementation of the [Accessible BC Act](#) by meeting all three requirements in Part 3 of the Act: establishing a [Provincial Accessibility Committee](#), an [Accessibility Plan](#), and a [Feedback Mechanism](#) for people in B.C. to provide input about accessibility in government programs and services.

People across the province continue to benefit from the Accessibility Grants program. In December 2022, twelve B.C. non-profit organizations received provincial grants to support community-based projects that advance accessibility and inclusion.

We all want people to get the supports, services and training they need, in every part of our province, to build better lives. In October 2022, we increased living and financial supports for people receiving training and work experience through WorkBC. By providing funding to help offset transportation or childcare costs, more people were able to get the training they needed to land good jobs.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have continued to have a disproportionate effect on the non-profit sector, so through the Non-Profit Recovery and Resiliency Fund, we strengthened their critical work through a \$60 million year-end funding grant.

Every day, we're working hard to make people's lives better. I am grateful for the hard work of all ministry staff who are helping to build a better, more inclusive and accessible B.C. for all.



Honourable Sheila Malcolmson
Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
August 4, 2023

Purpose of the Annual Service Plan Report

This annual service plan report has been developed to meet the requirements of the [Budget Transparency and Accountability Act](#) (BTAA), which sets out the legislative framework for planning, reporting and accountability for government organizations. Under the BTAA, the Minister is required to report on the actual results of the ministry's performance related to the forecasted targets stated in the service plan for the reported year.

Strategic Direction

The strategic direction set by government in 2020 and the ministry's [2020 Mandate Letter](#) shaped the goals, objectives, performance measures and financial plan outlined in the [Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction 2022/23 – 2024/25 Service Plan](#) and the actual results reported on in this annual report.

Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR) is focused on reducing poverty, creating opportunities and increasing inclusion. The purpose of the ministry is to provide quality services for British Columbians in need, to ensure that everyone can participate fully in their community and to reach their full potential.

SDPR is guided by five pieces of legislation: the [Accessible British Columbia Act](#), the [Employment and Assistance Act](#), the [Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act](#), the [Poverty Reduction Strategy Act](#) and the [Community Living Authority Act](#). The Minister is responsible for [Community Living BC](#) (CLBC) and is supported by the Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development and Non-Profits and the Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility. The ministry's key priorities were named in the minister's 2022 mandate letter:

- Updating the [TogetherBC: BC's Poverty Reduction Strategy](#), to continue reducing the number of people, and in particular children, who are in poverty in B.C.
- Leading work with the Ministry of Finance to continue addressing impacts on low-income people caused by cost-of-living increases related to global inflation.
- Leading work on food security and dignified access to food in partnerships with food producers, grocery stores, food banks, schools, and non-profits, with support from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, including recognizing the impacts of global inflation and extreme weather events on household food security for British Columbians.
- Supporting the work of the Ministry of Housing to better coordinate services to deliver improved outcomes for people living in Vancouver's Downtown East side, in collaboration with the Ministries of Mental Health and Addictions, Health, and Public Safety and Solicitor General, as well as Indigenous Peoples, external partners and others.
- Ensuring the voices of people living with disabilities are heard in all policy development.

- Engaging advocates, communities, and businesses to ensure the new Accessible British Columbia Act is well understood and effective at making B.C. more accessible and inclusive for everyone – including the implementation of accessible service delivery and employment accessibility standards.

Further to the above, two key priorities for the ministry (outside mandate letters) are:

- Leading collaborative engagement through the [Social Services Sector Roundtable](#) to help strengthen the important community social services that people count on every day.
- Through [Community Living BC](#), continuing the work on the [Re-imagining Community Inclusion Initiative](#) and the [Re-imagining Community Inclusion Work Plan](#) to improve services for adults with developmental disabilities and their families.

Operating Environment

The ministry provided income and disability assistance to an average of 224,000 people each month in 2022/23, including 120,000 people with the Persons with Disabilities designation and 45,000 dependent children. In 2023, updated poverty related statistics became available for 2021. It showed that poverty statistics for 2021 worsened compared to 2020 as COVID-related government supports expired. The number of British Columbians living in poverty in 2021 increased by 65,000 to 447,000 according to the Market Basket Measure.¹ This includes 70,000 children living in low-income families and 70,000 seniors. Although BC exceeded its legislated poverty reduction targets, B.C. currently has the second highest poverty rate (tied with Manitoba) and the fourth highest child poverty rate in the country.

The increase in the inflation rate in 2022/23 put pressure on low- and middle-income British Columbians to be able to afford necessities. In 2022/23 average prices increased 7% from 2021/22, but even higher growth rates were seen in food purchased from stores (up 10%) and transportation (up 10.1%). High inflation caused more people to turn to food banks as usage increased by over 25% by late-2022. People on income and disability assistance also turned to the ministry for help as the demand for crisis supplements for food increased by 25% in 2022/23 compared to the previous year.

Demographics and Economy

The income assistance caseload is sensitive to demographics and the state of the labour market. In 2022/23 the income assistance caseload increased by 10.8% as the ending of federal covid benefits resulted in more people requiring provincial assistance.

The disability assistance caseload, made up of people who have a disability designation, has continued to grow as the result of longer life expectancies and growing population. The disability assistance caseload increased by 2.1% in 2022/23 compared to 1.5% in the previous year, the lowest growth rate since 1988/89.

British Columbia's economic recovery continued in 2022/23. The number of people unemployed fell by 23%, decreasing the unemployment rate to 4.5% in 2022/23. A strong labour market was key to supporting employable clients to work.

¹ [Statistics Canada Table 11-10-0135-01 Low-income statistics by age, sex and economic family type.](#)

Report on Performance: Goals, Objectives, and Results

Goal 1: Reduce Poverty in British Columbia

Objective 1.1: Implement the cross-government, province-wide Poverty Reduction Strategy

Reducing poverty is a key government commitment. As the lead on British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy, the ministry has continued its work to ensure that the requirements and targets as set out in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Act are achieved.

Key results

- Engaged with over 10,000 people to inform an update of TogetherBC and the BC Employment and Assistance Program.
- In May 2022, created a [Period Poverty Task Force](#) to provide recommendations to government on a long-term approach to period poverty.
- In March 2023, allocated [\\$49 million - including funding to FoodBanks BC and United Way BC](#) - to advance the ministry's food security mandate, especially focussed on infrastructure to redistribute fresh food.
- Implemented a new [Housing Stability Supplement](#) in March 2023, to help prevent homelessness for approximately 3,200 families in B.C. each year.
- Since 2017, SDPR has increased income and disability assistance rates three times with the latest increase in 2022/23 being \$175 a month.
- Effective August 1, 2023, shelter rates will increase by \$125 per case, the first increase to the shelter rate since 2007.

Summary of progress made in 2022/23

BC has made many positive strides to reduce poverty in BC in 2022/23, some based on activities by other ministries, such as:

- Minimum wage was indexed to inflation, starting in June 2022, and increased to \$16.75 effective June 1, 2023.
- Introducing mandatory paid sick leave
- Increases to the BC Family Benefit, the introduction of the BC Affordability Credit, and an increase to the Climate Action Tax Credit
- Continued investments in childcare, including reductions in childcare fees.

In 2022/23, in anticipation of the need to update the Province's Poverty Reduction Strategy, we launched a process to co-develop an engagement strategy with Indigenous partners, to ensure alignment with the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#). We also

engaged with ministry income and disability assistance clients, service providers, advocates and staff to understand their needs for the forthcoming strategy update.

SDPR continued to make critical investments to help people in poverty meet their basic needs including food, housing, and menstrual products, and worked with government partners to ensure a cross-ministry approach to poverty reduction. \$750,000 was allocated to the United Way BC to support the Period Poverty Task Force, and to [fund pilot projects](#) that would inform the approach and help address the stigma of poverty. The new [Housing Stability Supplement](#), implemented in March 2023, supports people and families on income assistance to keep their housing when there is a death or temporary absence of a family member from the residence. New Welcome Home Kits launched February 2023, provide household items and essential supplies to people and families as they move into more stable housing.

Performance measure(s) and related discussion

Performance Measure ⁴	Baseline 2016 ¹	2021/22 Actual	2023 Target ^{2,3}
1.1a Total Poverty Rate	16.0%	8.8%	12.0%
1.1b Child Poverty Rate	17.4%	7.9%	8.7%

Data source: [Statistics Canada, Table 11-10-0135-01 Low-income statistics by age, sex and economic family type](#).

¹ The baseline has been revised as the most recent federal data released in May 2023 provides low-income statistics for 2021.

² This performance measure was revised in the latest service plan. For more details on forward-looking planning information, including the performance measures and targets for 2023/24 – 2025/26, please see the latest service plan on the [BC Budget website](#).

³ The legislated targets are based on calendar years (not fiscal years) and reflect a 25% reduction for overall poverty and a 50% reduction in child poverty from 2016 data by 2024.

⁴ The lower the percentage is, the better the ministry is doing at meeting/exceeding its target.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act sets out legislated targets for the reduction of both the overall poverty rate (25%) and the poverty rate for children (50%) by 2024. The province uses Statistics Canada’s Market Basket Measure (MBM) as its official poverty measure because it is Canada’s official poverty measure. The federal government has a two-year delay in producing the data since it relies on income tax data.

For these performance measures, the ministry is aiming to reduce the overall and child poverty rates from the 2016 baseline to our legislated target level. As of 2021, the latest poverty data available, B.C. has met both the targets and will continue work to ensure they are met in 2024. The high rate of inflation in 2022 and 2023 put further pressure on poverty rates as prices increased faster than income.

Goal 2: British Columbians in need have services, supports and opportunities that make life better.

Objective 2.1: Deliver reliable, responsive, consistent, accessible, and secure income and disability assistance services.

Delivering modern and consistent service with a focus on reliability, responsiveness and relationship-building remains a key priority. In 2022/23, the ministry continued to expand and improve online self-service options, which increases accessibility of services for clients regardless of their location in British Columbia.

Key results

- In the 2022/23, SDPR improved the quality and responsiveness of income assistance services by considering the diverse needs of clients, such as adding non-binary as a gender option for clients.
- As announced in Budget 2022, the ministry expanded outreach by increasing the number of Community Integration Specialists from 73 to 125 staff, to increase access to in-person services for people at risk or currently experiencing homelessness by connecting them with financial assistance and community resources.
- Implemented three key suggestions from Client Satisfaction Survey during the 2022/23 reporting year.
- Embedded Reconsideration training into core training for all new hires as of the 2022/23 reporting year.

Summary of progress made in 2022/23

The ministry continues to adapt its service delivery approach to increase accessibility and to meet the diverse needs of clients. People can access services at 84 physical locations, including 36 ministry offices and 48 Service BC offices around the province. In addition, the ministry improved the digital self-serve options for clients using My Self Serve (MySS), by allowing clients to resubmit their monthly report if information has changed. The ministry also expanded the number of Community Integration Specialists to better support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The ministry's [2021 Client Satisfaction Survey](#) report was posted in early Fall 2022 and the next Client Satisfaction Survey will be implemented Fall 2023. Implementations during the 2022/23 reporting year included improving customer service skills.

The ministry's simplified phone service survey for all callers who contact the ministry through the toll-free number was completed between January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022. Results show that 67% of respondents indicated they were satisfied with the amount of time it took to get service and 86% indicated they found the ministry worker was respectful.

SDPR improved the quality and responsiveness of ministry services through additional training for new hires on how to complete reconsideration packages.

Performance measure(s) and related discussion

Performance Measure	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Target	2022/23 Actual
2.1 Number of clients using My SelfServe ^{1,2}	113,236	101,000	125,551

Data source: Service Delivery Division, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

¹ PM 2.1 targets for 2023/24 and 2024/25 were stated in the 2022/23 service plan as 105,000 and 106,000, respectively. For forward-looking planning information, including current targets for 2023/24 – 2025/26, please see the latest service plan on the [BC Budget website](#).

² Registered users linked to an active EA case. 2021/2022 as of April 19, 2022 & 2022/2023 as of April 23, 2023

The ministry has exceeded its target for the number of clients using online services. The ministry continued to promote MySS for client easy access when extreme weather events take place throughout the province or other events prevent them from accessing ministry services in-person at a community service office. The ministry has updated the future year targets to reflect this higher usage in 2022/23 and continuing efforts to improve digital self-service options.

Objective 2.2: WorkBC Employment Services clients achieve employment.

Employment helps British Columbians secure income to meet their basic needs, create financial security, and plan for their futures. It also provides people with opportunities for personal growth and building of social connections, while contributing to the economic growth of British Columbia. WorkBC Employment Services play an important role by assisting British Columbians in need to prepare for and find good sustainable jobs.

Key results

- Supported close to 80,000 British Columbians through WorkBC Employment Services, an increase in almost 10,000 people from last year.
- Provided Skills Training and/or Work Experience supports to approximately 7,300 British Columbians.
- Funded 102 community-driven projects focused on increasing employment and work experience opportunities in communities.
- Helped approximately 800 people with disabilities, and/or people who experience significant barriers to employment, gain short-term work experience opportunities through [Work Experience Opportunities Grants](#).

Summary of progress made in 2022/23

In 2022/23, SDPR supported projects that align with the [StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan](#), as well as SDPR's poverty reduction plan. Grant funding was provided in 2022/23 for projects to test new methods of employment service delivery to support vulnerable populations,

employers, Black, Indigenous, and other People of Colour (BIPOC), and Persons with Disabilities.

Campaigns were launched in 2022/23 targeting Persons with Disabilities, Immigrants, and income assistance clients, to raise awareness and knowledge of the suite of services available through the network of WorkBC Centres. In 2022/23, 12,700 people with disabilities, 6,000 Indigenous clients and 21,900 immigrants received support through WorkBC, with over 32,700 supported through their first year of employment.

The ministry introduced an automated WorkBC client survey in March 2022 that collects feedback directly from clients at various points in time while they receive employment services. In 2022/23, WorkBC Employment Services achieved a satisfaction score of 75%. This score sets the baseline for the ministry to continue improving employment services in British Columbia and support an inclusive labour market.

Performance measure(s) and related discussion

Performance Measure	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Target	2022/23 Actual
2.2 The number of clients who achieve employment ^{1,2}	14,400	20,000	15,700

Data source: Employment and Labour Market Services Division, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

¹ This performance measure, reporting on clients receiving WorkBC Employment Services (both self-serve and case managed), was replaced in the latest service plan For more details on forward-looking planning information, including the performance measures and targets for 2023/24 – 2025/26, please see the latest service plan on the [BC Budget website](#).² Employment is defined as a full-time job (30 or more hours/week) or a part-time job (when part-time employment is desired; less than 30 hours/week), or self-employment (business is implemented and considered operational), after WorkBC services and/or supports.

As a result of a unique labour market environment, the target for the number of Work BC clients who achieve employment was not reached in 2022/23. The combination of a high number of job vacancies and a tight labour supply in B.C. resulted in an environment where many recently unemployed people could quickly obtain new positions without any assistance. These circumstances meant that many of the clients seeking Work BC services were those who have been out of the workforce since before the pandemic and needed more time and support to become employment ready. To better help these clients, SDPR expanded access to WorkBC Employment Services to include all clients who require a Wage Subsidy, Skills Enhancement or Personal Counselling for Employment Readiness. This ensures more people can get the help they need to successfully attach to the labour market.

Goal 3: Individuals with disabilities live, work and participate in their communities on an equal basis with all British Columbians

Objective 3.1: Support a comprehensive and integrated system of supports and services for individuals with disabilities.

People with disabilities routinely experience barriers that impede their ability to participate fully in their communities. The types of barriers people with disabilities experience varies greatly depending on the nature of their disability and other intersecting factors. Working in the spirit of “Nothing About Us Without Us”, the ministry continued to advance programs and policies that support people with disabilities in British Columbia to meaningfully participate in their communities.

Key results

- Implemented several elements of the Accessible B.C. Act including:
 - Published the [AccessibleBC Plan: B.C.’s Accessibility Plan for 2022/23 to 2024/25](#);
 - Launched the Accessibility Feedback Tool; and
 - Passed the Accessible B.C. regulation to support public sector organizations to develop accessibility plans, committees and feedback tools.

Summary of progress made in 2022/23

The ministry continued to work to support the full and equal participation of people with disabilities in their communities. The Accessibility Directorate completed work to implement government’s requirements under Part 3 of the [Accessible BC Act](#) to establish a [Provincial Accessibility Committee](#), an [Accessibility Plan](#), and a [Feedback Mechanism](#) for people in B.C. to provide input about accessibility in government programs and services. Also, in December 2022/23 government launched two technical committees to develop accessibility standards in the areas of Service Delivery and Employment Accessibility.

Using a variety of channels including workshops, community events, and advisory committees, the Accessibility Directorate continued to engage with people with disabilities, families, stakeholders and the business community to identify opportunities to improve the social and economic outcomes of people with disabilities.

Performance measure(s) and related discussion

Performance Measure	2020/21 Baseline	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Target	2022/23 Actual
3.1 Total amount of earnings exemptions reported by Persons with Disabilities cases ¹	\$129 million	\$156 million	\$180 million	\$178 million

Data source: Research Branch, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

¹ This performance measure was revised in the latest service plan. For more details on forward-looking planning information, including the performance measures and targets for 2023/24 – 2025/26, please see the latest service plan on the [BC Budget website](#).

This performance measure tracks how much a person with disabilities can earn before there is an impact on the level of support received from the ministry. The total amount of earnings exempted in 2022/23 by Persons with Disabilities cases reached \$178 million, just under the \$180 million target. The 2022/23 target was not achieved as the amount of earnings reported by Persons with Disabilities was lower than expected in last quarter of 2022/23, because of lower-than-expected employment growth from January to March 2023. Higher interest rates and a slowdown in global economies impacted employment growth in B.C. and across Canada.

Financial Report

Financial Summary

	Estimated (\$000)	Other Authoriz- ations ¹ (\$000)	Total Estimated (\$000)	Actual (\$000)	Variance (\$000)
Operating Expenses					
Income Assistance	3,079,080	204,691	3,283,771	3,288,705	4,934
Employment ²	29,169	0,000	29,169	24,168	-5,001
Community Living Services	1,333,102	29,077	1,362,179	1,362,179	0,000
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	1,849	0,000	1,849	1,440	-409
Executive and Support Services	12,833	0,000	12,833	13,309	476
Sub-total	4,456,033	233,768	4,689,801	4,689,801	0,000
Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual ³	0,000	0,000	0,000	-1,437	-1,437
Total	4,456,033	233,768	4,689,801	4,688,364	-1,437
Ministry Capital Expenditures					
Executive and Support Services ⁴	1,822	0,000	1,822	0,000	-1,822
Total	1,822	0,000	1,822	0,000	-1,822

¹ "Other Authorizations" include Supplementary Estimates, Statutory Appropriations and Contingencies. Amounts in this column are not related to the "estimated amount" under sections 5(1) and 6(1) of the Balanced Budget and Ministerial Accountability Act for ministerial accountability for operating expenses under the Act.

² Reflects WorkBC costs, net of recoveries from the federal government. Total spend in 2022/23 was \$432 million, which included \$24 million in provincial spending and \$408 million recovered from the federal government.

³ The Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual of \$1,437 million is a reversal of accruals in the previous year.

⁴ No vehicles were replaced in 2022/23. Capital budget to support WorkBC was re-profiled to future years.

Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations

As of August 31, 2023, the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction is responsible and accountable for the following organizations:

Community Living BC

Community Living British Columbia (CLBC) is a Crown agency that provides supports and services to meet the disability-related needs of two groups of eligible people and their families in British Columbia:

- Adults with a diagnosis of developmental disability. Criteria include age of onset, intellectual functioning, and adaptive behavior; and
- Adults who have a diagnosis of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder or autism spectrum disorder (also known as pervasive developmental disorder) and significant limitations in adaptive functioning.

Employment and Assistance Tribunal

The Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal is an administrative tribunal established under the authority of the Employment and Assistance Act to provide clients with an efficient and transparent appeal process that is independent from the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. The Tribunal hears appeals on decisions made by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction to refuse, reduce or discontinue certain benefits or supplements. The Tribunal also hears appeals on decisions made by the Ministry of Children and Family Development to refuse, reduce or discontinue a subsidy under the Child Care Subsidy Act.

Appendix B: Progress on Mandate Letter Priorities

The following is a summary of progress made on priorities as stated in Minister Nicholas Simons' [2020 Mandate Letter](#).

2020 Mandate Letter Priority	Status as of March 31, 2023
<p>Continue to be responsive to the challenges presented by COVID-19 and work with your cabinet colleagues to support an inclusive economic recovery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ending of federal supports in September 2021 saw the income assistance caseload increase in October 2021 and each of the next six months before levelling off, while the disability assistance caseload was not impacted. • The strong economy in 2021/22 and 2022/23, combined with the loosening of COVID-19 restrictions, meant that the total amount of income earned and exempted increased by \$27 million in 2021/22 and a further \$22 million in 2022/23 compared to 2020/21. The \$178 million exempted in 2022/23 exceeded the pre-pandemic amount of \$149 million. • To help more people get back to work after pandemic labour market disruptions, the ministry expanded access to WorkBC Employment Services in March 2023 to allow all clients who require a Wage Subsidy, Skills Enhancement or Personal Counselling for Employment Readiness, equal access to services and supports enabling them to successfully attach to the labour market.
<p>Build on our government's Poverty Reduction Plan, TogetherBC, and the recommendations of the Expert Panel on Basic Income to determine the best approach and path forward to reducing poverty long-term and providing opportunities for jobs and skills training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TogetherBC included five foundational elements and 6 areas of focus. SDPR tabled the 2021 Annual Report on progress towards legislated targets October 2022.
<p>Continue to work with people across the province to develop and introduce comprehensive accessibility legislation in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Accessible B.C. Act achieved Royal Assent in June 2021. Since the Act passed, government has made significant

2020 Mandate Letter Priority	Status as of March 31, 2023
<p>Spring 2021 to open doors to opportunity and participation.</p>	<p>progress in implementation including launching the establishment of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the Provincial Accessibility Committee; ▪ AccessibleBC: B.C.'s Accessibility Plan for 2022/23 to 2024/25; and ▪ the Accessibility Feedback Tool. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also, the Accessible B.C. Regulation came into effect September 1, 2022, this requires over 750 public sector organizations to establish their own accessibility committee; accessibility plan, and feedback mechanism to collect concerns about accessibility.
<p>With support from the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, lead work to increase food security for people in need by expanding government support to food banks and developing program partnerships with food producers, grocery stores and not-for-profits to develop discounted food market, food recovery and food redistribution programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the Cross Government Food Security Steering Committee, SDPR, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the Ministry of Health, completed a robust partner engagement on gaps and opportunities to a sustainable food system in B.C. This informed work in 2022/23 that resulted in a historic \$49 million allocation in food security by SDPR to support community food security projects, including Food Banks BC and United Way BC.
<p>Build on the work of so many around the province to make B.C. a global leader in the fight to end period poverty by creating a multi-sectoral Period Poverty Task Force to develop a comprehensive, long-term response to period poverty in B.C</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2022/23, SDPR provided \$750,000 to the United Way BC to support a new Period Poverty Task Force. This Task Force will develop recommendations to government on a sustainable approach to period poverty by March 2024. As part of this funding, \$210,000 was awarded to 10 organizations to trial new and innovative ways to address period poverty, including stigma.
<p>Continue work on the Re-imagining Community Inclusion Initiative to improve services for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress on the Re-Imagining Community Inclusion 2022/23 – 2024/25 Work Plan is underway across all four priority areas: developing flexible housing options, more

2020 Mandate Letter Priority	Status as of March 31, 2023
	<p>and better employment opportunities, improving access to health and mental health services, and services for Indigenous Peoples are self-determined.</p>
<p>Support the work of the Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including those living in encampments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing Community Integration Services to provide in-person services to people at risk of, or currently experiencing homelessness within a community, by connecting them with financial assistance and community resources. This includes collaborating with local community partners in providing ministry supports and system navigation services for people who are living in an encampment.
<p>Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility: Engage with advocates, communities and businesses to ensure the new accessibility legislation is effective and well-understood.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility has met with numerous advocates, self advocates, and organizations to provide information on the Accessible B.C. Act. • The Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility is the co-chair of the Provincial Accessibility Committee which works to improve accessibility for people with disabilities and supports the implementation of the Act.
<p>Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility: Work with the Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing to ensure the next iteration of the BC Building Code includes changes that will make new buildings more accessible for all people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In February and March 2023, the Building and Safety Standards Branch completed engagement with interested parties to share the proposed approach to advance accessibility in the next BC Building Code for feedback, prior to finalization for public review in late Spring 2023. • An engagement summary report and a plain language summary of the proposed accessibility changes has been produced in compliance with government accessibility standards and translated to support public review participants.

2020 Mandate Letter Priority	Status as of March 31, 2023
<p>Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development and Non-Profits:</p> <p>Work to ensure charitable organizations and the non-profit sector are engaged and supported through the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government announced \$30 million in funding to the Vancouver Foundation to create the Non-Profit Recovery and Resiliency Fund to support non-profits that were disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Vancouver Foundation provided an additional \$4 million in 2022/23, \$5 million in multi-year funding was distributed to 23 Indigenous led organizations through the New Relationship Trust. Vancouver Foundation developed a new trust-based approach to granting, calling for applications before October 2022. Multi-year grants are expected to be disbursed in early 2023/24.
<p>Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development and Non-Profits:</p> <p>Support charitable organizations and the non-profit sector by acting as the advocate and key point of contact within government.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In late 2022/23, the Parliamentary Secretary met with hundreds of non-profits to better understand cross cutting policy issues facing non-profits. Some key concerns include a reduction in volunteerism, capacity challenges for organizations coming through the pandemic.

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

2024/25 – 2026/27 Service Plan

February 2024



For more information on the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction contact:

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Published by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction 2024/25 – 2026/27 Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared.

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'SM', written over a horizontal line.

Honourable Sheila Malcolmson
Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
February 22, 2024

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Strategic Direction

In 2023/24, the Government of British Columbia will continue our work to make life better for people in B.C., improve the services we all rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations. Government will focus on building a secure, clean, and fair economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – whether in a rural area, in a city, or in an Indigenous community. B.C. will continue working toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in an inclusive and sustainable province. The policies, programs and projects developed over the course of this service plan period will focus on results that people can see and feel in four key areas: attainable and affordable housing, strengthened health care, safer communities, and a secure, clean and fair economy that can withstand global economic headwinds.

This 2024/25 service plan outlines how the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction will support the government’s priorities and selected items identified in the [December 2022 Minister’s Mandate Letter](#).

Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR) focuses on reducing poverty, creating opportunities and increasing inclusion. The purpose of the ministry is to provide quality services for British Columbians in need, to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate fully in their community and to reach their full potential.

SDPR is guided by five pieces of legislation: the [Accessible British Columbia Act](#), the [Employment and Assistance Act](#), the [Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act](#), the [Poverty Reduction Strategy Act](#) and the [Community Living Authority Act](#). The Minister is responsible for [Community Living BC](#) (CLBC) and is supported by the Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development and Non-Profits and the Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility. The ministry’s key priorities include:

- Updating the [TogetherBC: BC’s Poverty Reduction Strategy](#) by March 2024, to continue reducing the number of people, and in particular children, who are in poverty in B.C.;
- Leading work with the Ministry of Finance to continue addressing impacts on low-income people caused by cost-of-living increases related to global inflation;
- Continuing to lead work on food security and dignified access to food in partnerships with food producers, grocery stores, food banks, schools, and non-profits, with support from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food;
- Supporting the work of the Ministry of Housing to better coordinate services to deliver improved outcomes for people living in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, in collaboration with the Ministries of Mental Health and Addictions, Health, and Public Safety and Solicitor General, as well as Indigenous Peoples, external partners and others;
- Ensuring the voices of people living with disabilities are heard in all policy development; and,

- Continuing work to engage advocates, communities, and businesses to ensure the new *Accessible British Columbia Act* is well understood and effective at making B.C. more accessible and inclusive for everyone – including the implementation of accessible service delivery and employment accessibility standards.

Further to the above, two key priorities for the ministry (outside mandate letters) are:

- Leading collaborative engagement through the [Social Services Sector Roundtable](#) to help strengthen the important community social services that people count on every day; and,
- Through [Community Living BC](#), continue working on the [Re-imagining Community Inclusion Initiative](#) and the [Re-imagining Community Inclusion Work Plan](#) to improve services for adults with developmental disabilities and their families.

Operating Environment

The ministry continues to review and adjust its programs and supports to better serve people in BC who are challenged by:

- Barriers to employment;
- Poverty;
- Affordability and food security; and,
- Accessibility.

The ministry provides income and disability assistance to an average of 235,000 people each month, including 124,000 people with the Persons with Disabilities designation and 48,000 dependent children. Caseloads are expected to increase over the next few years as the result of a slowing economy.

The ministry provided employment services through WorkBC to about 82,000 people in 2022/23, serving about 24% per cent more people than in the previous year. The demand for employment services has been increasing, primarily driven by an increase in the numbers of immigrants seeking services. SDPR remains committed to ensuring employment services provide supports to those facing more complex barriers to employment, to better serve those who are under-represented in the labour market.

In 2023, updated poverty related statistics became available for 2021. Although the government is still meeting its poverty reduction targets, the 2021 data showed that poverty worsened compared to 2020, as federal COVID-related government supports ended.¹ The number of British Columbians living in poverty in 2021 increased by 65,000 to 447,000 according to the Market Basket Measure (MBM).² This includes 70,000 children living in low-income families and 70,000 seniors. This dynamic has been a focal point for the ministry's work to renew the province's Poverty Reduction Strategy for March 2024. To

¹ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/230502/dq230502a-eng.pdf?st=KaW3Hsy4>

² [Low income statistics by age, sex and economic family type \(statcan.gc.ca\)](#)

date SDPR has heard from over 10,000 people across the province, over 70% with lived experience of poverty, to continue to shape government programs and services that reduce poverty and remove barriers for those most in need of support.

The increase in the global inflation rate that started in 2022/23 has put great pressure on low- and middle-income British Columbians. Food and rent costs continue to rise at a much higher rate than the average for all goods and services. This has forced many more people to rely on food banks and crisis supplements. Interest rate increases to control inflation have created additional affordability problems for homeowners and other borrowers, and this is predicted to continue into at least 2024.

While high inflation rates worsen inequality and poverty, initiatives to help improve affordability across BC include: creating the [BC Affordability Credit](#), increasing the [BC Family Benefit](#) and [income assistance shelter rates](#), providing over \$50 million to support [food access programs](#), \$15 million for the [First Nations Wellbeing Fund](#), and \$60 million for the [Stronger Community Services Fund](#) to support non-profit organizations working on poverty and social inclusion.

Demographics and Economy

The income assistance caseload is sensitive to demographics and the state of the labour market. In 2022/23 the income assistance caseload increased by 10.8% as the ending of federal COVID benefits resulted in more people requiring provincial assistance.

The disability assistance caseload, made up of people who have a disability designation, has continued to grow as the result of longer life expectancies and growing population. The disability assistance caseload increased by 2.1% in 2022/23 compared to 1.5% in the previous year, which was the lowest growth rate since 1988/89.

British Columbia's economic recovery continued in 2022/23. The number of people unemployed fell by 23%, decreasing the unemployment rate to 4.5% in 2022/23. A strong labour market was key to supporting employable clients to work. While the labour market has been strong in 2023, a slowing economy and rising unemployment could put pressure on both the caseload and poverty.

Despite the strong labour market, there are still people seeking employment supports. However, those seeking services have more significant barriers to employment. 76% of employment clients currently underrepresented in the labour market, including Immigrants, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, require additional time spent working with an employment counsellor and more intensive supports to prepare them for employment.

The ministry's work to continue to meet poverty reduction targets will be supported by its ongoing focus on providing accessible services and supports for people struggling with affordability, food security, risks of homelessness or homelessness, and removing barriers to employment for people underrepresented in the labour market.

Performance Planning

Goal 1: Reduce Poverty in British Columbia

The ministry is responsible for the *Poverty Reduction Strategy Act*, which sets out legislated targets and actions to reduce poverty in British Columbia.

Objective 1.1: Implement the cross-government, province-wide Poverty-Reduction Strategy

As the lead on British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy, the ministry works across government to ensure that the requirements and targets as set out in the *Poverty Reduction Strategy Act* are achieved.

Key Strategies

- Update TogetherBC, the comprehensive, cross-government Poverty Reduction Strategy, by 2024 to continue to meet BC's poverty reduction targets and address other pressing issues such as the depth of poverty, the cycle of poverty, food security and inflation.
- Build on results from the broad public engagement that took place in 2023 with over 10,000 British Columbians, including 70% with lived or living experience of poverty, to inform an update to [TogetherBC](#). This includes ongoing engagement and co-development with Indigenous partners to meet the spirit and intent of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.
- Continue to lead government's work, in partnership with other ministries and external partners, to address food security for people in need and support a long-term, sustainable approach to food insecurity in BC.
- Review the BC Employment and Assistance legislation to improve access and outcomes and reduce barriers to community and labour market participation.
- Continue to support the multi-sectoral Period Poverty Task Force; the task force is to submit recommendations by March 2024.

Discussion

The ending of COVID supports, high inflation, and a slowing economy in 2023 and 2024 increase the need for the ministry to continue to work on poverty reduction. The current poverty reduction strategy must be reviewed and updated in 2024, including future targets. As part of the review, the ministry is working with other ministries, consulting with the Minister's Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee, and engaging people across British Columbia to learn

their experiences with poverty. A broad public and targeted engagement to update the poverty reduction strategy was undertaken in 2023 with over 10,000 British Columbians, including over 70% with lived and living experience of poverty. The engagement findings are also informing a review of the legislative framework governing British Columbia’s income and disability assistance program. This review intends to examine the barriers faced by recipients of assistance, including from a GBA+ and reconciliation perspective. Consultation and partnership with Indigenous partners will be ongoing as the strategy is developed and implemented.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure[s]	2020 Actual	2021 Actuals	2022-2024 Target
[1a] Change in Total Poverty Rate from 2016 ¹	-52.5%	-45.0%	-25.0%
[1b] Change in Child Poverty Rate from 2016	-71.3%	-54.6%	-50.0%

Data source: Statistics Canada Table 11-10-0135-01 Low-income statistics by age, sex and economic family type.

¹ As a result of a delay in the reporting of poverty statistics and the time it takes for investments to impact poverty rates, there are no interim targets.

Discussion

The *Poverty Reduction Strategy Act* sets out legislated targets for the reduction of both the overall poverty rate (25%) and the poverty rate for children (50%) by 2024. The targets were set to be ambitious but also achievable and would result in significant improvements in the lives of low-income British Columbians.

The Province uses Statistics Canada’s Market Basket Measure (MBM)³ as its official poverty measure. The MBM is also Canada’s official poverty measure. There is a two-year delay in producing the data since it relies on income tax data provided by the federal government.

Goal 2: British Columbians in need have services, supports and opportunities that make life better

The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction focuses on providing a system of supports to British Columbians in need, to help them achieve their social and economic independence and secure a better future.

Objective 2.1: Deliver reliable, responsive, consistent, accessible and secure income and disability assistance services

Delivering modern and consistent service with a focus on reliability, responsiveness and

³ [Low income statistics by age, sex and economic family type \(statcan.gc.ca\)](https://www150.commerce.gc.ca/low-income)

relationship-building remains a key priority. The ministry continues to expand and improve online and electronic self-service options, which increases accessibility of services for clients regardless of their location in British Columbia.

Key Strategies

- Maintain community presence through expanded outreach by Community Integration Specialists, working collaboratively with community partners, and expanding the use of mobile service delivery options.
- Continue to promote and improve service options that support accessibility for clients during climate events such as wildfires and floods, including Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) payments, digital self-service, and telephone reporting options.
- Regularly monitor client feedback and satisfaction to help improve services.
- Ensure administrative fairness through the provision of an effective and efficient reconsideration and appeal system.

Discussion

The ministry's income and disability assistance services are designed to help people build a solid connection with communities and the labour market. In turn, these services support people to secure their future, establish self-sufficiency in support of their families and help them contribute to their communities. By providing temporary help to those who can work and longer-term aid to those who have a more difficult time working, or who cannot work through disability or other barriers, the ministry ensures the needs of British Columbians are being addressed.

The ministry continues to adapt its service delivery approach to increase accessibility and to meet the diverse needs of clients. People can access in-person services at 84 physical locations, including 36 ministry offices and 48 Service BC offices around the province. Telephone-based services give clients automated telephone reporting options as well as direct live support from a ministry worker. For those who prefer to access ministry services through self-service options, the ministry continues to enhance the My Self-Serve portal and the self serve options through the toll-free number. Also, the option for Electronic Fund Transfer payments provides opportunity for clients to continue to receive the support they need during extreme weather events and wildfires.

Community Integration Services provide in-person outreach and in-reach services to people who are at risk of, or experiencing homelessness, connecting them with financial assistance and community supports. This includes partnerships with community organizations including Friendship Centers throughout the Province to provide support to people outside of a traditional government office setting and expanding the number of vehicles outfitted with the equipment and technology needed to deliver mobile services.

Objective 2.2: Job seekers have access to high quality services and supports they need to find and keep meaningful employment

High quality employment services and supports are needed, so B.C. is ready to meet the future demands of a skilled workforce and fill millions⁴ of jobs over the next decade. These services support Indigenous people, women, people of colour, people with disabilities and other underrepresented people participate in the labour market and help fill labour market needs.

Key Strategies

- Work with our service delivery partners to provide a high-quality, responsive, and consistent service experience to the people and communities in B.C.
- Increase equity of opportunities by offering low barrier employment services to people facing complex barriers to employment.
- Adapt programs and services to respond to the changing labour market environment and in anticipation of future labour market needs.
- Lead the coordination and collaboration with community-led organizations, businesses, and employers to create equitable opportunities for participation in B.C.'s economy.

Discussion

This objective aims to meet the future needs of a shifting labour market and ensure everyone in British Columbia has the opportunity to benefit from the job openings and expected strong labour demand. The ministry will focus on providing high quality services to job seekers in British Columbia, supporting an inclusive labour market and meeting the increasing demand for skilled workers.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2022/23 Baseline	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target
[2a] Percent of clients using My Self-Serve	54%	55%	58%	60%	55%
[2b] Percent of clients receiving payments via Electronic Fund Transfer	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%
[2c] Percent of callers that reported the ministry worker was respectful (via a voluntary phone survey)	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%

Data source: Client Phone Survey collected by the Service Delivery Division, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

⁴ [British Columbia Labour Market Outlook 2021-2023 Outlook](#)

Discussion

The ministry promotes the use of My Self Serve⁵ as a convenient, online option for people in British Columbia to access income and disability assistance. Continued promotion of this option is expected to result in a steady state of client usage. The percentage of clients receiving payments via Electronic Fund Transfer is a new measure, reflecting that this payment option offers greater accessibility to clients, especially during extreme weather and wildfire events. The ministry receives feedback via survey from people who chose to access ministry services via telephone. A performance measure has been added to track whether the ministry’s approach to staff training continues to result in clients reporting high levels of respectful treatment.

Performance Measure	2022/23 Baseline	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target
[2d] WorkBC Client Satisfaction Score ¹	75	75	76	76	77

Data source: Employment and Labour Market Services Division, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, WorkBC Employment Services Client Intake Survey, In-Progress Survey and Exit Survey.

¹ WorkBC Client Satisfaction Score represents the overall client satisfaction with WorkBC services. Scores range from 0 to 100, with higher scores being considered better. The score represents the number of clients responding "satisfied" or "very satisfied" out of all survey respondents.

Discussion

To monitor progress towards Goal 2, the ministry introduced automated surveys in March 2022 to receive feedback directly from WorkBC on their experience and their overall satisfaction with the services received. The ministry analyzes survey responses to identify themes which drive program policies and operational improvements. The ministry has experienced small changes in satisfaction scores since its implementation but expects to see increased satisfaction as program improvements are established over time.

Goal 3: Persons with disabilities live, work and participate in their communities on an equal basis with all British Columbians

Persons with disabilities account for the majority of people served by the ministry and are a growing proportion of the total population. The ministry will continue to support people with disabilities by reducing barriers and promoting equal participation in the economy and society.

Objective 3.1: Support a comprehensive and integrated system of supports and services for persons with disabilities

Persons with disabilities experience barriers that impede their ability to participate fully in their communities. The types of barriers persons with disabilities experience varies greatly

⁵ My Self Serve (MySS) provides online access to income and disability assistance for residents of British Columbia

depending on the nature of their disability and other intersecting factors. Working in the spirit of “nothing about us without us”, the ministry will continue to advance programs and policies that support persons with disabilities in British Columbia to meaningfully participate in their communities.

Key Strategies

- Provide adults with disabilities access to responsive services that support them in participating as full citizens and in achieving improved outcomes.
- Continue to work with persons with disabilities and their families, community stakeholders, public organizations, and the business community to develop solutions and strategies that improve the lives of persons with disabilities and identify barriers and solutions to improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities.
- Support the [Re-Imagining Community Inclusion \(RCI\) Steering Committee](#) to implement the [work plan](#) in response to the [10-Year Re-imagining Community Inclusion Roadmap](#), to help improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities.
- Continue to support the transition process for youth with support needs when entering adulthood, to ensure they can access the ministry’s disability assistance program and the adult community living services offered through Community Living BC.
- Support the continued implementation of the *Accessible British Columbia Act* with the goal to address barriers that hinder the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities, including through the development of new accessibility standards for B.C.

Discussion

The ministry works across government and with external partners to improve the lives of persons with disabilities. The [Accessibility Directorate's](#) ongoing work to reduce barriers will improve inclusion and employment opportunities. The current priorities of the Accessibility Directorate are to create a culture of accessibility and inclusion, increase access to information and improve communications, improve accessibility of government buildings and transportation systems, increase employment in the B.C. public service, and improve the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.

Guided by the principle of “nothing about us, without us,” the ministry continues to work with families, the disability community, and the business community to improve the social and economic outcomes of persons with disabilities. For example, the ministry works with its Provincial Accessibility Committee and two Technical Committees to develop standards in the areas of accessible service delivery and employment accessibility. These accessibility standards will remove and prevent barriers that restrict persons with disabilities from equally participating in their community. The Presidents Group, a network of prominent business

leaders, provides advice on best practices to make workplaces more accessible and inclusive and to improve employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Performance Measure	2022/23 Baseline	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target
[3a] Total amount of earnings exemptions reported by Persons with Disabilities cases	\$180 million	\$185 million	\$195 million	\$210 million	\$225 million

Data source: Research, Innovation and Policy Division, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Discussion

Employment is important for persons with disabilities, as it increases social inclusion and provides necessary income. The ministry’s earnings exemptions allow persons with disabilities to keep more of their earnings. The amount of earned income exempted is an important measure of the success of the ministry’s strategies to increase employment. It reflects not only the state of the economy but also the ministry’s work to make the province more accessible and to increase employment rates for persons with disabilities.

An economic slowdown in 2024 may impact the employment and earnings of persons with disabilities, as they often work in sectors that are most impacted by an economic downturn. The continued work on making the province more accessible for persons with disabilities, as well as efforts by employment service providers, will help offset unemployment risks from an economic downturn and further improve employment and social inclusion outcomes over the next few years.

Financial Summary

(\$000s)	2023/24 Restated Estimates¹	2024/25 Estimates	2025/26 Plan	2026/27 Plan
Operating Expenses				
Income Assistance	3,289,354	3,502,169	3,525,256	3,525,256
Employment	30,273	30,897	30,897	30,897
Community Living Services	1,410,433	1,626,906	1,669,397	1,669,397
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	1,915	1,945	1,945	1,945
Executive and Support Services	13,356	14,055	14,055	14,055
Total	4,745,331	5,175,972	5,241,550	5,241,550
Capital Expenditures				
Executive and Support Services	1,854	2,124	1,854	1,854
Total	1,854	2,124	1,854	1,854

¹ For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2023/24 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2024/25 Estimates.

* Further information on program funding and vote recoveries is available in the [Estimates and Supplement to the Estimates](#).

Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations

As of February 22, 2024, the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction is responsible and accountable for the following organizations:

Community Living BC

Community Living British Columbia (CLBC) is a Crown agency that provides supports and services to meet the disability-related needs of two groups of eligible individuals and their families in British Columbia:

- Adults with a diagnosis of developmental disability. Criteria include age of onset, intellectual functioning, and adaptive behavior; and
- Adults who have a diagnosis of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder or autism spectrum disorder (also known as pervasive developmental disorder) and significant limitations in adaptive functioning.

Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal

The Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal is an administrative tribunal established under the authority of the *Employment and Assistance Act* to provide clients with an efficient and transparent appeal process that is independent from the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. The Tribunal hears appeals on decisions made by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction to refuse, reduce or discontinue certain benefits or supplements. The Tribunal also hears appeals on decisions made by the Ministry of Children and Family Development to refuse, reduce or discontinue a subsidy under the *Child Care Subsidy Act*.

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION
(\$000)

VOTE 43 Ministry Operations

Description	Total 2023/24 Operating Expenses	50	51	52	54	Total Salaries and Benefits	55	57	59	60	63	65	67	68	69
Income Assistance	3,289,354	135,127	—	34,322	—	169,449	—	961	1,648	3,026	33,941	3,591	—	—	—
Income Assistance - Program Management	187,690	133,446	—	33,895	—	167,341	—	961	1,648	3,026	33,941	3,581	—	—	—
Temporary Assistance	627,388	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Disability Assistance	2,002,899	1,681	—	427	—	2,108	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Supplementary Assistance	471,377	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10	—	—	—
Employment	30,273	16,377	—	4,160	—	20,537	—	75	30	25	259	217	—	—	—
Employment Programs	30,272	1,378	—	350	—	1,728	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Labour Market Development Agreement	1	14,999	—	3,810	—	18,809	—	75	30	25	259	217	—	—	—
Community Living Services	1,410,433	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	1,915	865	23	219	—	1,107	519	22	—	150	12	130	—	5	—
Executive and Support Services	13,356	8,142	110	2,105	92	10,449	233	198	2	60	302	780	—	—	—
Minister's Office	908	579	—	184	92	855	—	52	—	—	10	24	—	—	—
Corporate Services	12,448	7,563	110	1,921	—	9,594	233	146	2	60	292	756	—	—	—
Total	4,745,331	160,511	133	40,806	92	201,542	752	1,256	1,680	3,261	34,514	4,718	—	5	—

70	72	73	75	Total Operating Costs	77	79	80	Total Govt Transfers	81	83	85	Total Other Expenses	86	88	Total Internal Recoveries	89	90	Total External Recoveries	Total 2024/25 Operating Expenses
312	—	13,615	68	57,162	4,504	3,161,099	156,511	3,322,114	—	—	4,240	4,240	—	(29,882)	(29,882)	—	(20,914)	(20,914)	3,502,169
312	—	13,615	68	57,152	—	—	35	35	—	—	100	100	—	(29,880)	(29,880)	—	(150)	(150)	194,598
—	—	—	—	—	—	702,762	—	702,762	—	—	1,101	1,101	—	(1)	(1)	—	(550)	(550)	703,312
—	—	—	—	—	—	2,114,440	—	2,114,440	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	(13,014)	(13,014)	2,103,535
—	—	—	—	10	4,504	343,897	156,476	504,877	—	—	3,038	3,038	—	(1)	(1)	—	(7,200)	(7,200)	500,724
48	—	18	1,758	2,430	—	—	290,334	290,334	—	—	14,867	14,867	—	(1,204)	(1,204)	—	(296,067)	(296,067)	30,897
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	29,168	29,168	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	30,896
48	—	18	1,758	2,430	—	—	261,166	261,166	—	—	14,867	14,867	—	(1,204)	(1,204)	—	(296,067)	(296,067)	1
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,626,906	1,626,906	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	(1)	(1)	1,626,906
—	—	—	—	838	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	(1)	(1)	—	—	—	1,945
200	—	200	200	2,175	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,472	1,472	—	(1)	(1)	—	(40)	(40)	14,055
—	—	—	—	86	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	941
200	—	200	200	2,089	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,472	1,472	—	(1)	(1)	—	(40)	(40)	13,114
560	—	13,833	2,026	62,605	4,504	3,161,099	2,073,751	5,239,354	—	—	20,581	20,581	—	(31,088)	(31,088)	—	(317,022)	(317,022)	5,175,972

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION

The mission of the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction is to make a difference in the lives of British Columbians trying to overcome social and economic barriers by believing in their ability to realize their full potential and make meaningful contributions to their community, and by providing access to services to help them achieve their goals.

MINISTRY SUMMARY

(\$000)

	Estimates 2023/24 ¹	Estimates 2024/25
VOTED APPROPRIATION		
Vote 43 — Ministry Operations.....	4,745,331	5,175,972
OPERATING EXPENSES	<u>4,745,331</u>	<u>5,175,972</u>
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES ²	1,854	2,124
LOANS, INVESTMENTS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS ³	—	—
REVENUE COLLECTED FOR, AND TRANSFERRED TO, OTHER ENTITIES ⁴	—	—

NOTES

¹ For comparative purposes, figures shown for the 2023/24 operating expenses; capital expenditures; loans, investments and other requirements; and revenue collected for, and transferred to, other entities are restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2024/25 Estimates. A reconciliation of restated operating expenses and capital expenditures is presented in Schedule A.

² A listing of estimated capital expenditures by ministry is presented in Schedule C.

³ A summary of loans, investments and other requirements by ministry is presented in Schedule D.

⁴ A summary of revenue collected for, and transferred to, other entities by ministry is presented in Schedule E.

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION

SUMMARY BY CORE BUSINESS

(\$000)

	2023/24	2024/25 ESTIMATES		
	Net	Gross	External Recoveries	Net
OPERATING EXPENSES				
Core Business				
Income Assistance.....	3,289,354	3,523,083	(20,914)	3,502,169
Employment.....	30,273	326,964	(296,067)	30,897
Community Living Services.....	1,410,433	1,626,907	(1)	1,626,906
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal.....	1,915	1,945	—	1,945
Executive and Support Services.....	13,356	14,095	(40)	14,055
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	4,745,331	5,492,994	(317,022)	5,175,972
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES				
	Capital Expenditures	Capital Expenditures	Receipts and P3 Liabilities	Net
Core Business				
Executive and Support Services.....	1,854	2,124	—	2,124
TOTAL	1,854	2,124	—	2,124

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION

VOTE DESCRIPTIONS

(\$000)

Estimates
2023/24

Estimates
2024/25

VOTE 43 — MINISTRY OPERATIONS

This vote provides for the programs, operations, and other activities described in the voted appropriations under the following core businesses: Income Assistance, Employment, Community Living Services, Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal, and Executive and Support Services.

INCOME ASSISTANCE

Voted Appropriations

Income Assistance - Program Management.....	187,690	194,598
Temporary Assistance.....	627,388	703,312
Disability Assistance.....	2,002,899	2,103,535
Supplementary Assistance.....	471,377	500,724
	<u>3,289,354</u>	<u>3,502,169</u>

Voted Appropriations Description: This sub-vote provides for assistance, in the form of income assistance, disability assistance, hardship assistance, and health and other supplements for family units eligible in accordance with the *Employment and Assistance Act* or the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*. This sub-vote also provides for supports that are not provided under the *Employment and Assistance Act* or the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act* but are consistent with or promote the intent or purpose of these Acts. In addition, this sub-vote provides for support services and direct operating costs. Costs may be recovered from the BC Bus Pass Program user fees, assignments authorized by the *Employment and Assistance Act* and the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*, and from repayable assistance and overpayments of assistance described within this sub-vote. Costs may also be recovered from ministries, other levels of government, and parties external to government for activities described within this sub-vote.

EMPLOYMENT

Voted Appropriations

Employment Programs.....	30,272	30,896
Labour Market Development Agreement.....	1	1
	<u>30,273</u>	<u>30,897</u>

Voted Appropriations Description: This sub-vote provides for the operation and administration of programs to assist eligible individuals to find sustainable employment. This sub-vote also provides for the operations and administration of employment-related programs to support individuals with multiple barriers and disabilities. In addition, this sub-vote supports organizations that provide employment services to unemployed persons and provides for developing and implementing strategies for dealing with labour force adjustments and meeting human resource requirements. Costs may be recovered from ministries, other levels of government, and parties external to government under cost-sharing agreements for activities described within this sub-vote.

COMMUNITY LIVING SERVICES

Voted Appropriation

Community Living Services.....	1,410,433	1,626,906
	<u>1,410,433</u>	<u>1,626,906</u>

Voted Appropriation Description: This sub-vote provides for general support and advice to the minister regarding Adult Community Living Services and includes transfer payments to Community Living British Columbia for the governance, management, operations, and delivery of services and support to adults with developmental disabilities. Payments for the provision of these services are in accordance with the *Community Living Authority Act*. Costs may be recovered from other levels of government under cost-sharing agreements for activities described within this sub-vote.

EMPLOYMENT AND ASSISTANCE APPEAL TRIBUNAL

Voted Appropriation

Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal.....	1,915	1,945
	<u>1,915</u>	<u>1,945</u>

Voted Appropriation Description: This sub-vote provides for the operation and administration of the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal, which provides for an independent and impartial appeal of the ministry's reconsideration decisions. The Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal is a single-level, community-based appeal system established under the *Employment and Assistance Act*. Ministry clients that are dissatisfied with the outcome of the ministry's reconsideration decisions may appeal to the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal. Costs may be recovered from ministries for activities described within this sub-vote.

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION

VOTE DESCRIPTIONS

(\$000)

	Estimates 2023/24	Estimates 2024/25
EXECUTIVE AND SUPPORT SERVICES		
Voted Appropriations		
Minister's Office.....	908	941
Corporate Services.....	12,448	13,114
	<u>13,356</u>	<u>14,055</u>
 Voted Appropriations Description: This sub-vote provides for the office of the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, for executive direction of the ministry and administrative services for the operating programs of the ministry, and for the Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility and the Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development and Non-Profits. This includes strategic and business planning, financial administration and budget management, strategic human resource management, asset and risk management, and facilities. This sub-vote provides for strategic planning, research, and development of accessibility legislation and associated initiatives, an Accessibility Directorate, and poverty reduction initiatives. This sub-vote also provides for corporate and community-based service delivery, including services provided by ministries and agencies on behalf of the ministry. Costs may be recovered from ministries, other levels of government, and parties external to government for activities described within this sub-vote.		
VOTE 43 — MINISTRY OPERATIONS	4,745,331	5,175,972

MINISTRY GROUP ACCOUNT CLASSIFICATION SUMMARY

GROUP ACCOUNT CLASSIFICATION

Salaries and Benefits	191,095	201,542
Operating Costs	64,726	62,605
Government Transfers	4,816,887	5,239,354
Other Expenses	20,581	20,581
Internal Recoveries	(31,088)	(31,088)
External Recoveries	(316,870)	(317,022)
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES.....	<u>4,745,331</u>	<u>5,175,972</u>



December 7, 2022

Honourable Sheila Malcolmson
Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Malcolmson:

Thank you for agreeing to serve as Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. 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

- **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.

Our government has taken a systematic approach to reducing poverty in our province, and we're seeing positive results. Having a plan and implementing it – while allowing time to reassess our work – is the best way to attack poverty, create new opportunities, and increase inclusion.

Poverty makes people sick, alienated, and vulnerable – the exact opposite of what we want for every British Columbian. By working to reduce and eliminate poverty in B.C., we can ensure our province is healthy, inclusive and strong – ready to take on any challenges.

To reduce poverty, we are creating opportunities for people to move from government support programs and back into the workforce. Our province can't waste any human potential; we need everyone working to the full extent of their skills and talents. Sometimes people are blocked from work by barriers that relate to disabilities not being accommodated. Sometimes it's racism. Sometimes it's just that nobody gave that person a fair chance to prove themselves.

Whatever the reason, working with communities, businesses, and government partners to identify, remove, and prevent these barriers will support people and can change lives forever while making our province stronger.

For those unable to work, ensuring that they can live full and dignified lives is the right thing to do, and it's what we would expect for any loved one we knew that was struggling and needed a hand. Whether it's housing, food, or social supports, we will continue to work to ensure every British Columbian has the opportunity to participate in their community, feel valued, and share in the prosperity of our province.

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

- Being responsive to the challenges presented by COVID-19 with supports for vulnerable people.
- Continuing to build on our Government's Poverty Reduction Plan, including the largest-ever permanent increase to income assistance and disability assistance rates and the first-ever increase to the senior's supplement.
- Putting in place comprehensive accessibility legislation in Spring 2021 to open doors to opportunity and participation.
- Establishing a multi-sectoral Period Poverty Task Force to respond to period poverty in B.C.

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:

- Update the Poverty Reduction Strategy by March 2024, to continue reducing the number of people, and in particular children, who are experiencing poverty in our province.
- Lead work with support from the Minister of Finance to continue addressing impacts on low-income people caused by cost-of-living increases related to global inflation.
- Given rising costs of food, continue to lead work on food security and dignified access to food in partnership with food producers, grocery stores, food banks, schools, and not-for-profits, with support from the Minister of Agriculture and Food and the Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development and Non-Profits.
- Support the work of the Minister of Housing to better coordinate services to deliver improved outcomes for people living in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, in collaboration with the Ministers of Mental Health and Addictions, Health, and Public Safety and Solicitor General, as well as Indigenous Peoples, external partners, and others.

To assist you in meeting the commitments we have made to British Columbians, you are assigned a Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility and a Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development and Non-Profits. You will work closely together and ensure your Parliamentary Secretaries 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.

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", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

David Eby, KC
Premier

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Minister's Office budget

Date Last Revised: January 24, 2024

Key Points:

- The Minister's Office budget for 2024/25 is \$941,000, a \$33,000 increase from \$908,000 in 2022/23.
- The budget for the Minister's office provides for 7 staff: a Chief of Staff, two ministerial advisors, an executive assistant, an administrative coordinator, a senior administrative assistant, and an administrative assistant. They support the Minister and two Parliamentary Secretaries.
- This government has an ambitious budgetary and legislative agenda aimed at improving affordability, services, and a sustainable economy, and this requires Ministers (and Parliamentary Secretaries) to have the appropriate assistance to ensure that the information flow with the public service is clear and timely.

Budget/Financial Context:

(\$ millions)	2023/24 Budget	2024/25 Budget	Change
Salaries/benefits	0.730	0.763	0.033
Legislative salaries/indemnities	0.092	0.092	-
Travel	0.052	0.052	-
Other Operating	0.034	0.034	-
TOTAL	0.908	0.941	0.033

Data Source: FASB

Background:

\$33,000 increase to Minister's Office budget is an increase to salaries, approved under the Shared Recovery Mandate agreement 2022.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Ministry Budget - CLBC

Date Last Revised: February 5, 2024

Key Points:

- SDPR is the primary funder of Community Living BC (CLBC), the Crown agency responsible for the delivery of community living services and supports to adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities.
- The CLBC sub-vote budget for 2024/25 is \$1.6 billion, a year-over-year increase of \$216.5 million and an incremental increase of \$190.9 million from base Budget 2023.

Key Data:

- As of March 31, 2023, 23,752 adults were eligible for CLBC services through its Developmental Disability (DD) stream, and 3,063 adults were eligible for services through the Personalized Supports Initiative (PSI).
- The annual rate of caseload growth is estimated at 4.3% in 2023/24, bringing the total at end of the year to 27,973. CLBC forecasts growth of 4.2% in 2024/25.

Budget/Financial Context:

CLBC – Cumulative sub-vote Changes 2024/25 to 2026/27

Prior Year Budget updated				
(\$ millions)	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	TOTAL
Caseload	25.0	67.5	67.5	\$160.0
Shared Recovery Mandate	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.8
Total - Prior Year Budgets	25.6	68.1	68.1	161.8
Budget 2024 updates				
(\$ millions)	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	TOTAL
Caseload	35.0	35.0	35.0	105.0
Shared Recovery Mandate	144.8	144.8	144.8	434.4
CSS Wage Mandate	11.1	11.1	11.1	33.3
Total - Budget 2024	190.9	190.9	190.9	572.7
CLBC Total Updates	216.5	259.0	259.0	734.5
CLBC sub-vote 2024	1,626.9	1,669.4	1,669.4	

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Background:

Caseload	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24 Forecast	5 Year Growth (From 2018/19 to 2023/24)
Total	23,389	24,520	25,698	26,815	27,973	5,749
Developmental Disabilities Stream	21,160	22,010	22,908	23,752	24,615	4,336
Personalized Supports Initiative Stream	2,229	2,510	2,790	3,063	3,358	1,413
% of total caseload increases from previous fiscal	5.2%	4.8%	4.8%	4.3%	4.3%	25.9%

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Ministry Budget and FTE Overview

Date Last Revised: February 2, 2024

Key Points:

- SDPR provides British Columbians in need with a system of supports through income assistance, disability assistance and supplementary assistance, as well as support to get back into the workforce through employment programs.
- The Ministry budget for 2024/25 is \$5.2 billion, an incremental increase of \$314.5 million from Budget 2023 and a year over year increase of \$430.6 million from 2023/24.
- The Minister of SDPR is responsible and accountable for Community Living BC, the Advocate for Service Quality, and the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal.

Budget/Financial Context:

Budget 2024 Fiscal Plan					
(\$ millions)	2023/24 Budget	Change	2024/25 Budget	2025/26 Plan	2026/27 Plan
Income Assistance	3,289.4	212.8	3,502.2	3,525.3	3,525.3
Temporary Assistance	627.4	75.9	703.3	692.9	692.9
Disability Assistance	2,002.9	100.6	2,103.5	2,130.7	2,130.7
Supplementary Assistance	471.4	29.3	500.7	507.0	507.0
Program Management	187.7	6.9	194.6	194.6	194.6
Employment	30.3	0.6	30.9	30.9	30.9
Community Living Services	1,410.4	216.5	1,626.9	1,669.4	1,669.4
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal (EAAT)	1.9	0.0	1.9	1.9	1.9
Executive and Support Services	13.4	0.7	14.1	14.1	14.1
Total	4,745.3	430.6	5,176.0	5,241.6	5,241.6

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Background:

- Budget 2024 provides new incremental funding of \$943.4 million over the three-year fiscal plan. This increase includes \$314.5 million in incremental funding for 2024/25.
 - \$405.0 million over three years to address caseload pressures;
 - \$477.9 million over three years to address salary increases for BCGEU employees and management (Shared Recovery Mandate), and CLBC service providers and staff; and
 - \$60.5 million over three years to increase Mental Health and Substance Use per diems.

Ministry Staffing:

Division	January 1, 2023		January 1, 2024	
	Headcount ¹	FTEs ²	Headcount ¹	FTEs ²
Deputy Minister and Minister Office	14	12	19	18
Corporate Services	112	106	122	107
Research, Innovation & Policy	64	62	70	68
Service Delivery ³	1,696	1,610	1,830	1,712
Advocate for Service Quality	4	3	3	3
Accessibility	14	13	14	12
Employment Assistance Appeals Tribunal	11	10	11	10
Employment and Labour Market Services	187	180	184	184
Information Services Division	187	178	193	190
Total	2,289	2,174	2,454	2,304

¹ Headcount = number of people

² FTE = 35 hours/week (note: these numbers are point in time, last pay period December – not an annual average)

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Ministry Budget Income Assistance

Date Last Revised: February 2, 2024

Key Points:

- The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR) provides income assistance and other supports to British Columbians in need.
- SDPR is also the primary funder of Community Living BC (CLBC), the Crown agency responsible for the delivery of community living services and supports to adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities.
- The Income Assistance sub-vote budget for 2024/25 is \$3.5 billion, a year-over-year increase of \$213 million and an incremental increase of \$123 million from Budget 2023.

Budget/Financial Context:

Income Assistance - Budget 2024 Fiscal Plan					
(\$ millions)	2023/24 Budget	Change	2024/25 Budget	2025/26 Plan	2026/27 Plan
Temporary (Income) Assistance	627.4	75.9	703.3	692.9	692.9
Disability Assistance	2,002.9	100.6	2,103.5	2,130.7	2,130.7
Supplementary Assistance	471.4	29.3	500.7	507.0	507.0
Program Management	187.7	6.9	194.6	194.6	194.6
Income Assistance	3,289.4	212.8	3,502.2	3,525.3	3,525.3

Income Assistance - Budget 2024 Incremental Change				
(\$ millions)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	TOTAL
Temporary (Income) Assistance	90.0	90.0	90.0	270.0
Disability Assistance	7.0	7.0	7.0	21.1
Supplementary Assistance	19.9	19.9	19.9	59.8
Program Management	5.9	5.9	5.9	17.7
Total	122.8	122.8	122.8	368.5

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Background:

- In Budget 2024, SDPR received \$300 million under Income Assistance over three years to address caseload pressures.
- SDPR received \$8 million over three years for Cost-of-Living wage increases resulting from the Shared Recovery Mandate (SRM). This funding was provided under Contingencies in 2023/24 as decisions were finalized after Budget 2023 was tabled.
- Finally, Budget 2024 includes \$60.5 million over three years for increase to user fees paid by SDPR for Ministry clients residing in Mental Health and Substance Abuse Care facilities.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Shared Recovery Mandate

Date Last Revised: February 6, 2024

Key Points:

- Government's three-year wage commitment under the Sustainable Services Negotiating Mandate (SSNM) ended March 31, 2022. The new Shared Recovery Mandate (SRM) for 2022/23 to 2024/25 was ratified by the BC General Employees Union (BCGEU) in October 2022.
- The Shared Recovery Mandate (SRM) applies to all public sector employers with unionized employees whose collective agreements expired on or after December 31, 2021.
- Negotiations focused on providing a fair and reasonable offer to public-sector workers that includes significant inflation protection, while ensuring that government has the resources to continue to invest in building a stronger province for everyone.
- The agreement reached with the BCGEU covering Public Service/Ministry employees came into effect on April 1, 2022 and expires on March 31, 2025. The agreement includes the terms and conditions of employment such as wages, benefits, leave and more.
- Under SRM, the Community Social Services Employers' Association (CSSEA) and Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC) negotiated a series of wage and benefit increases covering the period of April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2025.

Key Data:

- BCGEU represents SDPR and CLBC unionized staff.
- CSSEA is the accredited bargaining agent for approximately 200 employers in the social services sector.
- HEABC is the accredited bargaining agent for more than 211 publicly funded health care employers in British Columbia.
- Up to \$339 million is earmarked for compensation increases, and \$36 million for targeted funded adjustments for recognizing the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, augmenting vehicle reimbursement and wage comparability adjustments for paraprofessional staff.
- As of 2023, the community social services sector employs over 53,000 people across the province – with women representing more than 75% of this workforce.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Background:

- Nearly all (99% of forecast funded increases) of CLBC's SRM contract adjustments for union service providers pertain to CSSEA members.
- The agreements over the three-year period provide to unionized community social services employees General Wage Increases, Low Wage Redress, and potential Cost of Living Adjustments in 2023/24 and 2024/25 Additional funding to address shared key priorities includes:
 - incremental costs associated with the new five-day paid sick leave provisions,
 - incremental costs associated with recognizing the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation (September 30),
 - funding to support two-days paid Indigenous Cultural Leave for Indigenous employees, and
 - funding to support incremental costs of raising mileage reimbursement rates to Canada Revenue Agency approved rates.
- Low Wage Redress is targeted funding to help address wage disparity with similar unionized positions in the health sector.
- Government has committed to fund the three-year collective agreements ratified by members of the bargaining units.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: WorkBC Estimates Note

Date Last Revised: February 5, 2024

Key Points:

- The Ministry receives both provincial and federal funding to support all British Columbians in getting back to work as quickly as possible through WorkBC.
- Federal funding is adjusted annually based on methodology established by Canada to allocate funds among provinces and territories.
- In 2024/25 the Ministry is budgeting \$306.5 million to support employment programming for the citizens of BC. The Ministry will receive:
 - \$275.6 million from the federal government under LMDA; and
 - \$30.9 million in provincial funding.
- There is uncertainty around continuation of the LMDA top-ups introduced in the Federal Budget 2017. The top ups are set to expire on March 31, 2024, which amounted to \$46.5M in FY 2023/24. B.C. has expressed to the Federal government the importance of continuing the top ups to avoid a decline in funding that could negatively impact service delivery.

Key Data:

- Since 2019/20, the WorkBC Employment Services program has served on average about 80,000 clients a year.
- In 2023/24, the number of clients being served has increased, and is expected to exceed 92,000 clients.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Budget/Financial Context:

Employment Programs Budget Summary

Millions Funding Source:	2022/23 Actuals	2023/24 Budget	2024/25 Plan ²	2025/26 Plan ²	2026/27 Plan ²
Provincial	\$29.2	\$30.3	\$30.9	\$30.9	\$30.9
LMDA	\$387.7	\$321.9	\$275.6	\$275.7	\$275.7
LMDA- Admin	\$20.6	\$20.5	\$20.5	\$20.5	\$20.5
Total	\$437.5	\$372.7	\$327.0	\$327.1	\$327.1
% change budget:	17.26%	-14.81%	-12.27%	0.04%	0.00%

¹ Budget 2022/23 includes an additional \$67.8M due to LMDA carry forward from FY2021/22.

² Base funding only in 2024/25 and 2025/26 as federal government's Budget 2017 top up will expire as well as no prior year carry forward.

Background:

- The majority of the WorkBC program is funded federally through the LMDA and split into 2 categories:
 1. 2024/25 direct services to client funding (\$275.6M); and
 2. 2024/25 administrative funding (\$20.5M).
- On March 28, 2022, ESDC served notice to terminate the LMDA in its present form as of March 31, 2024, as required by the Federal Court of Appeal (FCA) decision of January 28, 2022 related to the complaints filed by the Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique (FFCB) alleging that the federal government did not meet their obligations to the Francophone linguistic minority when they entered into and implemented the LMDA.
- Provincial funding is prioritized towards serving unemployed BC Employment and Assistance clients and client inclusion groups.
- Additionally, clients with a disability who are working more than 20 hours a week or students with a disability who are leaving school in BC and are ready to transition from school to work, are provided the services and supports primarily through the provincial component of the WorkBC Employment Services contract. Provincial funding also provides for WorkBC Assistive Technology Services.
- SDPR and PSFS are engaged through the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM) to modernize training and employment supports which will form the foundation for new labour market transfer agreements, including the LMDA.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: CLBC Budget and Programs (FTEs)

Date Last Revised: January 30, 2024

Key Points:

Advice/Recommendations

Accomplishments:

- In 2022/23, CLBC provided new or enhanced services and supports to 4,298 individuals, which is an increase of 14% compared to 3,754 individuals in 2021/22. As of December 31, 2023, 2,925 people and their families/support networks have received new or enhanced services and supports in fiscal 2023/24.

Key Data:

Number of People CLBC serves

Caseload	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24 Forecast	5 Year Growth (From 2018/19 to 2023/24)
Total	23,389	24,520	25,698	26,815	27,973	5,749

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Developmental Disabilities Stream	21,160	22,010	22,908	23,752	24,615	4,336
Personalized Supports Initiative Stream	2,229	2,510	2,790	3,063	3,358	1,413
% of total caseload increases from previous fiscal	5.2%	4.8%	4.8%	4.3%	4.3%	25.9%

Budget/Financial Context:

Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information

Background:

- As of March 31, 2023, 23,752 adults were eligible for CLBC services through its Developmental Disability (DD) stream, and 3,063 adults were eligible for services through the Personalized Supports Initiative (PSI). The annual rate of caseload growth was 4.3% in 2022/23, bringing the total at end of the year to 26,815. The annual rate of caseload growth is estimated at 4.3% in 2023/24, bringing the total at end of the year to 27,973 ((24,615 with DD and 3,358 eligible for PSI) - approximately 25.9% growth over the past five years. CLBC forecasts growth of 4.2% in 2024/25.
- As of March 31, 2023, CLBC has a total employee compliment of 776, comprised of BCGEU and BCNU members and excluded staff.
- CLBC has fully complied with government requirements for executive salaries (Appendix 2).

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

APPENDIX 1 - BUDGET

CLBC – Operating Revenue and Expenditures 2022/23 to 2024/25

<i>All figures in millions</i>	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Budget
Operating Contributions			
Government Transfers	\$1,419.3	\$1,537.9	\$1,626.9
Restricted Contributions – Operating ¹	\$0.4	\$0.0	\$0.0
Restricted Contributions – Capital ²	\$(4.2)	\$(4.1)	\$(8.2)
Net Operating Contributions	\$1,415.5	\$1,533.8	\$1,618.7
Other Revenue ³	\$39.2	\$46.8	\$42.8
Total Revenues	\$1,454.7	\$1,580.6	\$1,661.5
Supports and Services			
Developmental Disabilities Program (DD)	\$1,318.0	\$1,422.2	\$1,498.6
Personalized Supports Initiatives (PSI)	\$46.4	\$52.9	\$56.6
Provincial Services (including PAC)	\$5.8	\$4.1	\$1.0
Regional Operations and Administration	\$79.9	\$96.4	\$99.3
Amortization of Tangible Capital Assets	\$4.6	\$5.0	\$6.0
Total Expenditures	\$1,454.7	\$1,580.6	\$1,661.5

Note 1: Restricted operating funding is recognized in the year the related expenditures are incurred.

Note 2: Funding restricted for capital expenditures is amortized over the life of the related tangible capital assets.

Note 3: Other revenue includes cost-share agreements with Health Authorities, other income, and amortization of deferred capital contributions.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

CLBC – Cumulative Budget Changes 2024/25 to 2026/27

Prior Year Budgets				
(\$ millions)	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	TOTAL
Caseload	\$25.0	\$67.5	\$67.5	\$160.0
Shared Recovery Mandate	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.8
Total - Prior Year Budgets	25.6	68.1	68.1	161.8
Budget 2024				
(\$ millions)	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	TOTAL
Caseload	35.0	35.0	35.0	105.0
Shared Recovery Mandate	144.8	144.8	144.8	434.4
CSS Wage Mandate	11.1	11.1	11.1	33.3
Total - Budget 2024	190.9	190.9	190.9	572.7
CLBC Total	\$216.5	\$259.0	\$259.0	\$734.5

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

APPENDIX 2 - EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION REPORTING (AS OF MARCH 31, 2023)

Bargaining had not concluded until July 2023, therefore Executive had not yet received their April 2022 retroactive increases by Mar 31/23.

Summary Compensation Table

Name and Position	Salary	Holdback/Bonus/ Incentive Plan Compensation	Benefits	Pension	All Other Compensation (expanded below)	2022/2023 Total Compensation	Previous Two Years Totals Total Compensation	
							2021/2022	2020/2021
Ross Chilton, Chief Executive Officer	\$ 214,288	-	\$ 13,523	\$ 21,107	\$ 6,830	\$ 255,748	\$ 250,270	\$ 246,973
Henry (Chai Cheong) Chen, VP Finance & Chief Financial Officer	\$ 193,879	-	\$ 11,094	\$ 19,097	\$ 1,724	\$ 225,794	\$ 227,502	\$ 225,213
Sara Miller, VP, Information Technology and Project Services	\$ 159,953	-	\$ 12,802	\$ 15,763	\$ 1,564	\$ 190,082	\$ 151,010	\$ 190,609
Ian R Scott, VP, Information Technology and Project Services (Acting)	\$ 25,522	-	\$ 2,005	\$ 2,514	\$ 26,408	\$ 56,449	\$ 175,623	
John Stinson, VP, Service Delivery and Innovation	\$ 190,806	-	\$ 11,310	\$ 18,794	\$ 575	\$ 221,485	\$ 221,737	\$ 181,468
Jack Styan, VP, Strategic Initiatives	\$ 156,725	-	\$ 9,907	\$ 15,437	\$ 1,724	\$ 183,793	\$ 183,574	\$ 183,357

Summary Other Compensation Table

Name and Position	All Other Compensation	Severance	Vacation Payout	Paid Leave	Vehicle / Transportation Allowance	Perquisites / Other Allowances	Other
Ross Chilton, Chief Executive Officer	\$ 6,830	-	-	-	\$ 6,830	-	-
Henry (Chai Cheong) Chen, VP Finance & Chief Financial Officer	\$ 1,724	-	-	-	-	-	\$ 1,724
Sara Miller, VP, Information Technology and Project Services	\$ 1,564	-	\$ 1,564	-	-	-	-
Ian R Scott, VP, Information Technology and Project Services (Acting)	\$ 26,408	-	\$ 26,408	-	-	-	-
John Stinson, VP, Service Delivery and Innovation	\$ 575	-	-	-	-	-	\$ 575
Jack Styan, VP, Strategic Initiatives	\$ 1,724	-	-	-	-	-	\$ 1,724

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Notes

Ross Chilton, Chief Executive Officer	<p>General Note: Employee received a monthly vehicle allowance in the amount of \$580.00 effective April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023. CLBC and BCGEU are yet to ratify the Collective Agreement as of March 31, 2023; hence CLBC executives have not received increases for the performance year 2021-2022. There will be a significant increase in next year's disclosure after increases for 2022 and 2023 are implemented.</p>
Henry (Chai Cheong) Chen, VP Finance & Chief Financial Officer	<p>General Note: CLBC and BCGEU are yet to ratify the Collective Agreement as of March 31, 2023; hence CLBC executives have not received increases for the performance year 2021-2022. There will be a significant increase in next year's disclosure after increases for 2022 and 2023 are implemented.</p> <p>Other Note: 'Other' compensation includes parking expenses</p>
Sara Miller, VP, Information Technology and Project Services	<p>General Note: CLBC and BCGEU are yet to ratify the Collective Agreement as of March 31, 2023; hence CLBC executives have not received increases for the performance year 2021-2022. There will be a significant increase in next year's disclosure after increases for 2022 and 2023 are implemented. Employee was on a leave during part of the reporting period.</p>
Ian R Scott, VP, Information Technology and Project Services (Acting)	<p>General Note: Effective April 1 through May 27, 2022, the employee was on a temporary appointment as VP, Information Technology and Workplace Solutions. Of the actual base salary earned during the reporting period, \$24,525.22 relates to his VP, Information Technology and Workplace Solutions (acting) position.</p>
John Stinson, VP, Service Delivery and Innovation	<p>General Note: CLBC and BCGEU are yet to ratify the Collective Agreement as of March 31, 2023; hence CLBC executives have not received increases for the performance year 2021-2022. There will be a significant increase in next year's disclosure after increases for 2022 and 2023 are implemented. Actual base salary earned during the reporting period includes employee's acting pay relates to Acting CEO position from December 19, 2022 to December 30, 2022.</p> <p>Other Note: 'Other' compensation includes parking expenses.</p>
Jack Styan, VP, Strategic Initiatives	<p>General Note: CLBC and BCGEU are yet to ratify the Collective Agreement as of March 31, 2023; hence CLBC executives have not received increases for the performance year 2021-2022. There will be a significant increase in next year's disclosure after increases for 2022 and 2023 are implemented.</p> <p>Other Note: 'Other' compensation includes parking expenses.</p>

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Home Sharing Program

Date Last Revised: March 7, 2024

Key Points:

- CLBC's Home Sharing program is person-centered with a focus on community inclusion delivered through contracted service providers.
- CLBC compensates home sharing providers based on established home sharing rates. Last year these rates were increased through the \$125 shelter rate increase.
- In December 2023, CLBC introduced a Property Support Program to provide fully funded insurance to home sharing providers for damages that may be caused by a supported individual.

Accomplishments:

- CLBC funds the Home Sharing Society BC to:
 - Raise public awareness about home sharing and its benefits.
 - Attract people to the work and build interest from potential home sharing providers.
 - Provide a comprehensive review of wellness services and present recommendations to CLBC.
 - Complete research to better define the skills, knowledge, training, and support systems that would enable home sharing providers to serve individuals with complex needs.
- Following the 2023-24 budget, which raised the shelter rate for individuals receiving PWD, CLBC supported the increase be passed on to home sharing providers to help address inflationary cost of living increases.
- Pre-2023/24 work to support the Home Sharing program:
 - Budget 2022 provided CLBC with an increase to base funding of \$1.9 million on an annualized ongoing basis to address the recommendations by OAG and enhance the services and sustainability of CLBC's home sharing program.
 - \$1.5 million to support enhanced monitoring and hire 12 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) to create capacity to operationalize the improvements.
 - \$0.4 million to form and maintain a supportive association for home sharing providers.
 - In 2019, funding for the home sharing program increased by \$18.3 million. This helped to raise home sharing rates twice over two years commencing in April 2020.
 - CLBC paid out approximately \$16 million in emergency funding to support home sharing providers in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Key Data:

Type of Housing and Support Resources	Number Served 2016/17	Number Served 2017/18	Number Served 2018/19	Number Served 2019/20	Number Served 2020/21	Number Served 2021/22	Number Served 2022/2023	Number Served as of 2023/2024 (Q3)
Shared Living	4,045	4,117	4,166	4,222	4,279	4,265	4,276	4,332

Average per person/year home support services - 2022/2023

Type	Average Annual Cost/ Per Person
Shared Living/Home Sharing	\$43,000

Budget/Financial Context:

- \$397,600/annual - Home Sharing Support Society of BC
- \$59,000/annual - Home Sharing Program – training, home survey
- \$43,000/annual – average home sharing cost per individual

Background:

- CLBC’s Home Sharing services provide housing and support for over 4,300 people across BC.
- CLBC has completed and/or met the Office of the Auditor General Recommendations including:
 - The creation of new Standards for the Coordination of Home Sharing,
 - Updates and education on the Standards,
 - Improvements to our Monitoring Framework,
 - Review and update of home sharing policies,
 - Creation of a new data system for tracking monitoring activities; and
 - Moving direct home share providers to oversight by contracted service providers.
- CLBC continues to work towards the recommendation to ensure staff complete on-site visits, follow-up, and critical incident response, consistent with its policy requirements.
- 2024 BC budget shows CLBC increasing home sharing rates in recognition of costs associated with home sharing providers registering with WorkSafe BC for Personal Optional Protection (POP) coverage (coverage effective July 1, 2024). This ensures home sharing providers can receive coverage if they are injured as a result of providing home sharing support. Rate increases are effective as of April 1, 2024.
- WorkSafeBC premium amounts are based on compensation for a portion of lost income after a workplace injury with increased compensation varying on a supported individual’s disability related needs.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Re-Imagining Community Inclusion

Date Last Revised: February 6, 2024

Key Points:

- The Re-Imagining Community Inclusion (RCI) Report was released on May 31, 2019 following extensive consultation about what the future should look like for supports and services for people with developmental disabilities.
- Following the RCI report, a Steering Committee was established to set goals and priorities for the implementation of a ten-year vision through a coordinated, inclusive, and collaborative process.
- The Steering Committee prioritized four areas for the 2022/23-2024/25 RCI Work Plan (Appendix 1) implementation:
 - Developing flexible housing options;
 - Developing more and better employment opportunities;
 - Working with partners to improve access to health and mental health services; and
 - Developing self-defined and self-determined services for Indigenous Peoples.
- Notable progress has been made on the RCI Work Plan outlined below.

Accomplishments:

Focus Area #1: Develop Flexible Housing Options

- Established a 7-person Housing Department within CLBC to support housing engagement, planning, and coordination.
- Participated in ministerial and advisory committees on housing and complex needs.
- Provided grants to organizations, such as the Social Planning and Research Council of B.C. (SPARC BC), Inclusion BC, and the Aboriginal Housing Management Association for housing accessibility and affordability assessments.
- Supported the establishment of the Home Sharing Support Society BC with three years of operational funding.

Advice/Recommendations

- Introduced the Home Sharing Home Insurance Program in December 2023 to provide no-cost comprehensive insurance coverage to home sharing providers.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Focus Area #2: More and Better Employment Opportunities

- Provided funding to Inclusion BC for a three-year awareness campaign promoting the value of work from an early age and to create videos challenging misconceptions around employment for people with disabilities.
- Launched L.I.F.E. (Learning, Inclusion, Friendship, and Employment) Services across BC and completed procurement for L.I.F.E. Services Phase II in targeted communities.
- Provided funding to the BC Employment Network (BCEN) to deliver supported employment training over three years. More than 220 service provider staff have completed training in the first two years.
- Provided funding to the Indigenous Community and Leadership Development Group to develop culturally safe employment curriculum.

Focus Area #3: Work with Partners to Improve Access to Health and Mental Health Services

- The multi-partner Community Health Advisory Team (CHAT), including representatives of people with lived experiences, service providers, health authorities, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, was established to discuss and collaborate on issues related to access to health and mental health services.
- CLBC hosted the first in-person Health Leadership Collaborative with representatives from Health, Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Corrections and Community Living partners to discuss: current health needs of people CLBC support, accessibility to health and mental health services, and creating ongoing collaborations.
- Amended the Collaborative Care Guidelines to support better cooperation between CLBC and health authorities.

Focus Area #4: Services for Indigenous People are Self-Determined

- Provided funding to Indigenous organizations to advance cultural safety.
- Raising awareness of cultural safety principles, in alignment with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, through videos and training.
- Developed cultural safety definitions, language guidelines, and policies within CLBC.
- Amendments to the *Community Living Authority Act* now requires an Indigenous representative on the Board of Directors and formalized the Board's Indigenous Advisory Committee.
- Historic signing of CLBC's Board Commitment Statement to Advancing Reconciliation.
- Signing of the historic Secwépemc Child & Family Services Partnership MOU agreement to establish government to government relationship for the delivery of CLBC services to Nation members and Urban Indigenous in Kamloops.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Budget/Financial Context:

- There is no dedicated funding in SDPR or CLBC's budgets for the RCI Initiative.
- On August 13, 2020, Treasury Board approved a \$10 million grant to support CLBC contracted employment services to assist CLBC eligible individuals to return to the workforce (\$9.7 million) and to increase their digital literacy (\$0.3 million).

Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information

- Since 2020/21, CLBC invested approximately \$1.63 million in grants focusing on improving services for Indigenous People and increasing cultural safety.

Re-imagining Community Inclusion – Work Plan 2022/23 – 2024/25 (Summary View)

People with diverse abilities thrive fully and equally with everyone.

- GUIDING PRINCIPLES**
- ✦ *Exemplify human rights*
 - ✦ *Relationship & trust building with Indigenous Peoples*
 - ✦ *Focus on the Person*

- ✦ *Respect the lived experience of People and Families*
- ✦ *Support quality of life*
- ✦ *Engage Community*

GOALS	Focus Area 1 Milestone 1.1(d) – Develop flexible housing options	Focus Area 2 Milestone 2.2 – People have more & better employment opportunities	Focus Area 3 Milestone 3.2 (b, c) – Improve access to health and mental health services	Focus Area 4 Services for Indigenous Peoples are self-defined and self-determined
STRATEGIES	<p>Ensure governments, Indigenous communities and developers are informed of the need for inclusive housing in their communities</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Work with partners to determine resources to support non-Indigenous housing and housing supports to be culturally safe</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Work with partners to research and evaluate portable rent supplements</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Increase the range of housing support options CLBC funds within existing budgets, including culturally safe options</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Encourage local Municipalities to include inclusive housing in their housing plans</p>	<p>Engage in activities that change attitudes about people working from an early age</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Ensure employment support is available for anyone</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Increase culturally safe employment support for Indigenous people</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Support employment services to have well-trained staff (including services delivered through Individualized Funding options)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Leverage existing opportunities that support youth to work</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Engage in activities that influence employers</p>	<p>Work with partners to:</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Establish inter-ministry table(s) for equitable, culturally safe, accessible health and mental health care for people, including Indigenous people.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Update and support service alignment with “Thriving in Community: Delegating Health Care tasks in the Community Living Sector”</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Update Guidelines For Collaborative Service Delivery For Adults With Developmental Disabilities (2010)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Support the needs of aging people</p> <p>-----</p> <p>CLBC will work with the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction to review the health supplement programs to inform discussions on how to better meet the needs of people eligible for CLBC services.</p>	<p>Explore relationships with Indigenous Partners; work in partnership on priority areas</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Collaboratively develop space recognition strategy and cultural safety & humility declaration at CLBC</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Develop Indigenous procurement focus at CLBC</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Develop training for CLBC staff & partners to work effectively with Indigenous Peoples</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Explore what Indigenous community inclusion means with Indigenous Peoples & promote across Nations, communities, providers</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Prioritize connections work - especially for people without natural supports</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Develop “Indigenous Lens” across CLBC systems</p>

Focus Area 5
The community living sector has strong capacity for research, innovation and continuous improvement

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Impact of MCFD Changes

Date Last Revised: January 29, 2024

Key Points:

- CLBC and MCFD are working closely together to improve the experience of youth (and their families) with support needs. This group includes those formerly in care as these youth transition to receiving CLBC funded supports.
- After extensive consultations with CLBC, MCFD has started its pilot of Family Connection Centres through four contracted agencies called Family Connection Centres in the North and the South Interior:
 - ARC Programs Ltd. In Central Okanagan/Kelowna
 - North Coast Community Services Society in Haida Gwaii/Prince Rupert
 - Terrace Child Development Centre Society in Terrace/Kitimat
 - Northwest Child Development Centre Society in Bulkley Valley/Stikine
- The pilot uses a needs-based approach that is family centred. This is a switch from MCFD's current 'diagnosis-based' system wherein children suspected of having disabilities and support needs will no longer need a diagnosis to access services.
- As part of this pilot project, planning with youth and their families will start as early as age 14.
- Separately MCFD and CLBC are working together to ensure that CLBC-eligible former youth in care have access to new benefits available up to age 25 under MCFD's Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment (SAJE) program, such as housing, mental health services, and skill development and cultural connection supports.

Key Data:

- As of December 31, 2023, CLBC's total caseload was 27,720 of which 932 are transitioning youths in the first nine months of this fiscal year.
- The transitioning youth in CLBC's caseload is in line with the accepted prevalence rate of young people with developmental disabilities in the general population and reflects increased awareness of CLBC's services in school systems and in communities.
- 2023 Statistics Canada data show the prevalence rate for developmental disabilities is 1.5% for the Canadian population.

Accomplishments:

- MCFD and CLBC completed an *Interim Operating Agreement for the Family Connection Centre Pilot Areas: The Planning for Youth Referrals*. An addendum to this 2015 MCFD/ICFSA (Indigenous Children and Family Service Agency) and CLBC Services for

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Transitioning Youth Operating Agreement, is being phased in and took effect in the South Interior (Okanagan) in December 2023 and in the North in January 2024.

- This Interim Operating Agreement aligns with the Cross Ministry Transition Planning Protocol for Youth with Support Needs and the provincial youth transitions program SAJE for former youth-in-care.

Budget/Financial Context:

- There are no budget or financial implications for CLBC while piloting MCFD's new Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN) service approach.

Background:

- In October 2021, MCFD announced plans for the transformation of CYSN services. The new service delivery approach is intended to:
 - improve both services and service accessibility,
 - be family-centered,
 - shift to a 'needs based' approach from the current 'diagnosis-based' system,
 - maintain stability through the change.
- As part of this pilot, MCFD and CLBC are creating a longer-term plan with youth transitioning to adult services by starting the conversation as early as age 14. Starting this process sooner, it's hoped that youth and their families will begin to look towards, and plan for, an adult service landscape shortly after they turn 16.
- During the pilot period, CLBC, MCFD, and ICFSAs will monitor the transitions and identify lessons learned through the MCFD and CLBC Liaison Committee's Early Implementation Learning and Issues Management Working Group.
 - A review of the main Operating Agreement will be conducted following the pilot period. Future revisions will be based on documented learnings from this group.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Housing

Date Last Revised: January 31, 2024

Key Points:

- CLBC funds supports for individuals in staffed living, home sharing, and supported (independent) living.
- CLBC has developed a dedicated 7-person housing team to support engagement, planning, and coordination with BC Housing, non-profit and cooperative housing providers, Aboriginal Housing Management Association, service providers, and other partners (developers and consultants). This team promotes accessible, inclusive, and affordable housing for people CLBC supports.

Advice/Recommendations

- Every year, demand for supported (independent) living grows at a faster rate than any other CLBC service with a housing component.

Accomplishments:

- In November 2023, CLBC sponsored and participated in BC's Housing Central conference. This event was to raise awareness regarding the benefits of providing inclusive, intentional housing for people CLBC serves.
- To improve access to affordable housing, CLBC has created:
 - Partnership agreements with non-profit housing associations;
 - Preferential referral options such as five dedicated units in Victoria's Meares Street Development; and
 - Formal letters of support for housing in development.
- CLBC is actively working with municipalities to create more housing opportunities by helping advance incentives, accessibility requirements, affordable housing grants, and BC Housing partnerships.
- CLBC is reviewing the recommendations of grant-funded research by the Aboriginal Housing Management Housing Association. The recommendations are to improve housing services for Indigenous people and to advance the delivery of culturally safe housing services by non-Indigenous housing providers.
- CLBC designed and is implementing a data gathering and analysis process to improve forecasting of future housing requirements. This will inform local governments, housing developers, and non-profit providers on the housing needs of people CLBC supports.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

- Grosvener House, a low barrier transitional housing partnership between CLBC, Lookout Housing and Health Society and Fraser Regions Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association has supported seven people over two years. This partnership has a strong focus on Indigenous culture and has achieved successful transitions to longer term housing.
- In August 2023, CLBC amended the Individual Contributions to Home Support policy to ensure that increases made by the BC government to disability assistance for shelter costs (\$125 per month) flowed through to home sharing providers.

Key Data:

- As of December 31, 2023, CLBC provides housing or housing support to 9,817 people.
- While the annual increase in people accessing housing services slowed during the pandemic, FY 2023/2024 is projected to return to pre-pandemic levels (see Appendix 1 CLBC Funded Housing and Resources, Table 1).
- There are currently 5,000 people eligible for CLBC who will be looking for subsidized housing over the next five years. Most people are currently living with family, while some are supported in a home sharing setting and are unable to move to more independent living due to the lack of affordable housing.

Budget/Financial Context:

- In the fiscal year ended March 31, 2023, CLBC funded (Appendix 1, Table 2):
 - Over \$592 million for staffed homes,
 - Over \$177 million for home sharing, and
 - \$79 million for supported (independent) living.
- In the fiscal year ended March 31, 2023, the fiscal average per person annual costs by type of home support services are:
 - Staffed Homes: \$211,000
 - Home sharing: \$42,000
 - Supported (independent) living: \$33,000
- CLBC provides \$397,600 yearly to support the Home Sharing Support Society of BC to:
 - Raise public awareness about home sharing,
 - Attract the interest of potential home sharing providers,
 - Provide a comprehensive review of individual and family wellness services (formerly “respite”) and present recommendations to CLBC; and
- Grant funding to the Home Sharing Support Society of BC for \$500,000 over two years to complete research to better define the skills, knowledge, training, and support systems that would enable home sharing providers to serve individuals with Complex Needs.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Background:

- The *Community Living Authority Act* gives CLBC the mandate to provide funding for disability-related needs, including home supports.
- Current CLBC support models with a housing component include:
 - Staffed Living - provide staff support to a small number of residents who have significant medical or behavioural support needs.
 - Home sharing - a shared living arrangement between an individual and service provider wherein either individual or service provider controls the home through ownership, lease, or rental.
 - Supported (Independent) Living – the individual lives in their own home and receives support with activities of daily living.
- Affordability is the primary barrier that individuals face when trying to access housing.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Appendix 1: CLBC-Funded Housing and Support Resources

Table 1: People Served in Housing and Support Resources

Type of Housing and Support Resources	Number Served 2016/17	Number Served 2017/18	Number Served 2018/19	Number Served 2019/20	Number Served 2020/21	Number Served 2021/22	Number Served 2022/2023	Number Served 2023/2024 as of Dec 2023
Staffed Living	2,622	2,660	2,660	2,690	2,694	2,769	2,822	2,855
Home Sharing	4,045	4,117	4,166	4,222	4,279	4,265	4,230	4,332
Independent Living	1,536	1,775	1,963	2,109	2,276	2,396	2,536	2,630
Total	8,203	8,552	8,789	9,021	9,249	9,430	9,588	9,817

Table 2: CLBC Housing Service Costs

	ACTUALS (in \$millions)			
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24 as at Dec 31, 2023
Home Supports				
Staffed Living	\$ 461.24	\$ 508.53	\$ 592.59	\$ 537.82
Home Sharing	\$ 187.27	\$ 175.31	\$ 177.36	\$ 141.16
Independent Living	\$ 64.45	\$ 74.15	\$ 78.71	\$ 81.81
Total Home Supports	\$ 712.96	\$ 757.99	\$ 848.66	\$ 760.79
Supports to Participate in Community				
Home-Based	\$ 99.35	\$ 109.57	\$ 113.49	\$ 120.64

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Service Provider Funding, Recruitment and Retention

Date Last Revised: January 31, 2024

Key Points:

- People who work in the community social services sector provide valuable services for some of B.C.'s most vulnerable citizens.
- CLBC meets and consults regularly with sector groups like the BC CEO Network, the Federation of Community Social Services of BC, and the Provincial Association of Residential and Community Agencies. These meetings are helping to understand service provider issues, impacts of recruitment and retention challenges and consider potential solutions.
- CLBC does not set the wages that its service providers pay to their staff. Rather, unionized service provider staffing wages are established by a collective agreement negotiated between the Community Social Services Employer's Association (CSSEA) and the Community Social Services Bargaining Association (CSSBA). Non-union service providers establish the wage rates for their staff but cannot exceed unionized rates.
- The issue of recruitment and retention for workers in the community living sector is something CLBC continues to discuss with the sector, including through the Social Services Sector Roundtable.

Accomplishments:

- In response to service provider feedback regarding inflationary administrative cost pressures, CLBC provided \$3 million of additional funding on a one-time-only basis in January 2024 to eligible service providers. A total of 244 service providers benefited from this one-time funding.
- In 2022/23, CLBC provided a \$0.5 million funding grant to the BC CEO Network to restart a marketing campaign to increase awareness of career opportunities in the community living sector and to support service providers in recruiting skilled and dedicated staff.
- In 2021/22 and 2022/23, CLBC provided a total of \$0.25 million to the Family Support Institute to improve the Support Worker Central portal that assists individuals and families who use individualized funding to recruit support workers.

Key Data:

- In 2022/23, CLBC funded services through:
 - 124 unionized agencies with a total contract value of \$937 million. Of these agencies, 24 are hybrid agencies (with both union and non-union employees) with a total contract value of \$239 million; and
 - 264 non-unionized agencies with a total contract value of \$233 million.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Budget/Financial Context:

- Under the Shared Recovery Mandate (SRM), both unions and non-unions receive the same percentage increases for wages over its three-year term from April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2025.

Background:

- Staffing challenges have been a longstanding concern in the community living sector. The pandemic exacerbated the issue in several ways:
 - Concerns over safety of frontline work.
 - Special pandemic support funding may have made it harder to recruit.
 - Recent provincial investments in health care training programs pulls workers away from the social services sector.
- The BC CEO Network represents over 100 executive leaders and their organizations from the social services sector. The Network represents private and non-profit, large and small, as well as unionized, hybrid and non-unionized agencies from across the province.
- The CSSEA and the CSSBA reached a three-year agreement (April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2025) on March 28, 2023, under B.C.'s Shared Recovery Mandate, which will provide general wage increases to members of the bargaining units, as well as additional funding to address issues of mutual concern.
- On February 7, 2023, the SDPR Deputy Minister informed the sector that the province is providing the same percentage compensation funding lift to non-union and hybrid (partially unionized) agencies.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Social Services Sector Roundtable (SSSRT)

Date Last Revised: January 31, 2024

Key Points:

- The collaborative approach of the SSSRT has resulted in numerous accomplishments since its formation in 2019.
- The SSSRT continues to find ways of evolving communication, collaboration, and action to support working together across the social sector.
- There is always more to do together, including in the areas of poverty reduction, Indigenous service delivery opportunities, food security and support for non-profit organizations.

Accomplishments:

Appendix 1 includes accomplishments achieved since the establishment of the SSSRT.

Key accomplishments include:

- \$13.7 million in grants for recruitment and retention projects for sector training, occupational health and safety, IT and virtual services and research;
- \$17.35 million for reconciliation, including the Community Pathways to Reconciliation initiative, the new Indigenous MBA program, and sponsorships for Indigenous youth to attend Gathering Our Voices Conferences over five years;
- In addition to these funded programs, the SSSRT provided support and information on many topics important to the sector, especially during the pandemic.

Key Data:

- Data is based on the 2023 Compensation and Employee Turnover Report published by the Community Social Services Employers' Association (not specifically identified in Ministries' Budgets).
- Social services sector agencies in British Columbia received \$4.05 billion of funding from all sources in 2023.
- \$2.79 billion (69%) was provided by the B.C. government and \$1.255 billion (31%) was provided from sources other than the provincial government.
- In 2023 53,485 employees worked in the sector, including 33,978 full-time employees.
- 76.7% of employees are female, 22.25% male and 1.05% gender diverse.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Budget/Financial Context:

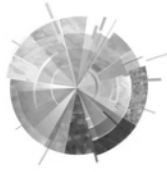
- There is no dedicated funding to support the SSSRT; however, various sources of funding have been provided to support the sector since its inception (Appendix 1).

Background:

- In May 2019, the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction established the SSSRT, including representatives from across the sector to discuss and work collaboratively on issues faced by the sector.
- The purpose of the SSSRT is to provide a forum for Ministers and senior executives in government and community social services sector representatives to:
 - maintain good relations through on-going communications;
 - discuss matters of importance within the sector; and
 - address issues in a coordinated and collaborative way.

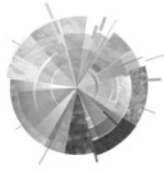
SSSRT short to medium term goals include:

- Implementing a Reconciliation Framework for the social services sector, led by the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres;
 - Contracting and procurement practices review, led by the Ministry of Children and Family Development;
 - Developing a compensation plan, led by the Public Sector Employers' Council Secretariat;
 - Implementing initiatives to support occupational health and safety, training and research across the sector;
 - Developing and implementing a training plan for the social services sector; and
 - Addressing recruitment and retention challenges faced by the sector.
- The SSSRT members include representatives from: the Aboriginal Housing Management Association, the BC CEO Network, the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, Board Voice, BC Non-Profit Housing Association, BC General Employees' Union, Canadian Union of Public Employees, Community Social Services Employers' Association, Ending Violence Association of BC, the Federation of Community Social Services of BC, the Provincial Association of Residential and Community Agencies, Community Living BC, BC Housing, the Public Sector Employers' Council Secretariat, and the Ministries of Children and Family Development, Housing, Municipal Affairs (Immigration), Public Safety and Solicitor General, and Social Development and Poverty Reduction.



APPENDIX 1 - Social Services Sector Roundtable – Accomplishments (*as of March, 2024*)

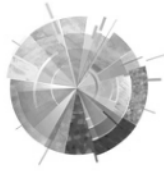
GOVERNANCE & RESOURCES	
Timing	Outcome
MAY 2019	Social Services Sector Roundtable Formation SSSRT formally established.
JUNE 2019	Recruitment and Retention Working Group Established the Recruitment and Retention Action Plan.
OCTOBER 2019	Terms of Reference Established purpose, objectives, membership, key principles, and roles and responsibilities for the SSSRT. Routinely reviewed and updated.
NOVEMBER 2019	Social Services Sector Forum Engaged with the broader sector to share the work of the SSSRT and explore collaborative engagement opportunities.
NOVEMBER 2019	Sector Profile Identified the complexity, funding, demographics, and characteristics of the Social Services Sector.
SPRING 2020	Reference Group Established and chaired by the Federation to share information from the SSSRT and to gather input from the broader sector.
JUNE 2020	Year in Review Captured the work of the SSSRT since being established and through the first phase of COVID-19.
JULY 2020	Guiding Charter Established in response to calls for a strategic vision for the sector and includes SSSRT vision, mission statement, purpose, goals, objectives, priorities, and approach to establishing working groups on key projects and issues (e.g. Truth and Reconciliation). Updated May 2021.
FEBRUARY 2021	Contracting and Procurement Sub-Committee Established a sub-committee to maintain good relations through ongoing communications, discuss matters of importance in relation to Contracting and Procurement to address any issues in a coordinated and collaborative way.
MAY 2021	Compensation Plan Advisory Committee Established a committee to provide guidance and advice to the Compensation Plan Project Team on the development of the Social Services Sector Compensation Plan (SSSCP).



APPENDIX 1 - Social Services Sector Roundtable – Accomplishments (as of March, 2024)

FUNDING: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION - COMPENSATION				
Timing	Amount	Recipient	Purpose	Status
FISCAL 2020/21	\$24.7 million	Non-Union Agencies	Recruitment and Retention Funding Funding to increase non-union employee compensation.	Fully spent
FISCAL 2021/22	\$36.358 million	Non-Union Agencies	Recruitment and Retention Funding Funding to increase non-union employee compensation.	Fully spent
FISCAL 2021/22	\$0.4 million	Public Sector Employers' Council / Community Social Services Employers Association	Sector Compensation Plan Funding to develop a sector compensation plan.	Fully spent ¹
FISCAL 2022/23	\$155.036 million	Public Sector Employers' Council / Community Social Services Employers Association	Recruitment and Retention Funding Funding to increase union, non-union and management compensation and targeted funded adjustments, with data reporting requirements.	Fully spent
FISCAL 2023/24	\$149.143 million	Public Sector Employers' Council / Community Social Services Employers Association	Recruitment and Retention Funding Funding to increase union, non-union and management compensation and targeted funded adjustments, with data reporting requirements.	Fully spent
FISCAL 2024/25	\$70.747 million	Public Sector Employers' Council / Community Social Services Employers Association	Recruitment and Retention Funding Funding to increase union, non-union and management compensation and targeted funded adjustments, with data reporting requirements.	In progress

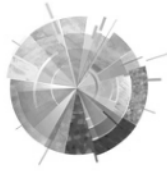
¹ work continues on the sector compensation plan via CSSEA.



APPENDIX 1 - Social Services Sector Roundtable – Accomplishments (as of March, 2024)

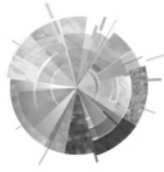
RECRUITMENT & RETENTION GRANTS: TRAINING, OH&S, IT and RESEARCH – \$13.7 Million				
Timing	Amount	Recipient	Purpose	Status
FISCALS 2020/21 - 2022/23	\$0.4 ² million	BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres	Training Funding to strengthen capacity and train skilled workers in Indigenous organizations.	Fully spent
FISCALS 2020/21 - 2022/23	\$3 million	Federation of Community Social Services of BC	Training Funding for foundational knowledge and key skills across the sector.	Fully spent
FISCALS 2020/21 - 2022/23	\$1.4 million	Federation of Community Social Services of BC / OHS Council	Occupational Health & Safety Funding to provide increased support to the Community Social Services Health and Safety Council to work on initiatives to improve workplace health and safety.	Fully spent
FISCALS 2020/21 - 2022/23	\$1.075 million	BC CEO Network	Training Funding for contracted Home Share providers, coordinators, supervisors and Microboards.	Fully spent
FISCALS 2020/21 - 2022/23 Extended Sept 2023	\$0.6 million	Police Victim Services BC / Ending Violence Association of BC	Training Funding for specialized training for employees working in victim services and anti-violence programming.	Full spent

² Total was \$3.0M, \$2.6M transferred in December 2022 to the Community Pathways to Reconciliation project.



APPENDIX 1 - Social Services Sector Roundtable – Accomplishments (as of March, 2024)

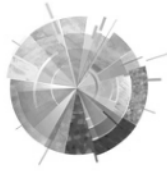
RECRUITMENT & RETENTION GRANTS: TRAINING, OH&S, IT and RESEARCH – \$13.7 Million				
Timing	Amount	Recipient	Purpose	Status
FISCALS 2020/21 - 2022/23	\$0.6 million	BC Non-Profit Housing Association	Training Funding to develop and deliver training for community housing service provider employees.	Fully spent
FISCALS 2020/21 2021/22	\$0.125 million	Vela Canada	Training Funding to update and enhance the Support Worker Central web-based platform.	Fully spent
FISCALS 2020/21 - 2022/23 Extended March 2024	\$0.2 million	Board Voice Society of BC	Training Funding to provide regional training to board members of non-profit Social Care Agencies.	Fully spent
FISCAL 2020/21	\$0.25 million	Federation of Community Social Services of BC	Research Funding from the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training’s Labour Market Partnerships – Develop Sector Labour Market Report.	Fully spent
FISCALS 2021/22 - 2023/24	\$0.45 million	Federation of Community Social Services of BC	Training Funding from the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training’s Labour Market Partnerships to develop a plan for sector training.	Fully Spent Report March 2024



APPENDIX 1 - Social Services Sector Roundtable – Accomplishments (as of March, 2024)

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION GRANTS: TRAINING, OH&S, IT and RESEARCH – \$13.7 Million				
Timing	Amount	Recipient	Purpose	Status
FISCAL 2022/23	\$1.5 million	Federation of Community Social Services of BC	Information Technology and Virtual Services Funding for IT services, software, equipment for virtual services and innovation.	Fully spent
FISCALS 2022/23 – 2023/24	\$1.5 million	Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia Society (SPARC)	Research SPARC BC will oversee and conduct up to five separate research projects designed to address data gaps about the complexity of the community social services sector.	Fully Spent Report March 2024
RECONCILIATION - \$17.35 Million in Grants				
Timing	Amount	Recipient	Purpose	Status
FISCALS 2022/23 – 2026/27	\$7 million ³	BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres	Community Pathways to Reconciliation BCAAFC will oversee the development of a reconciliation framework for the social services sector, including the development and implementation of a new Indigenous MBA program.	In progress
FISCALS 2023/24 – 2028/29	\$10.35 million	BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres	Gathering our voices conferences / sponsorships Expand access to education and training opportunities for indigenous youth in B.C.	In progress

³ Total project funding is \$9.6M, includes \$7M 2022 grant plus \$2.6M transferred in December 2022 from 2020 BCAAFC training grant.



APPENDIX 1 - Social Services Sector Roundtable – Accomplishments (*as of March, 2024*)

OTHER PROJECTS AND PRIORITIES	
Timing	Outcome
MAY 2019	COVID-19 Updates and Support Deputy Provincial Health Officer attended SSSRT and provided direct updates and advice throughout the pandemic.
MAY 2019	COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Supplies Coordinated access to PPE and supplies during the pandemic.
EARLY 2021	Policing Concerns Provide regular updates on police review.
SEPTEMBER 2021	Criminal Record Check Delays Provided updates and solutions to SSSRT issues.
DECEMBER 2021	COVID-19 Liability Representative from the Ministry of Attorney General provided update on COVID-19 regulations.
2021/2023	Lobbyist Transparency Act Provided advice / information on implications for sector agencies and SSSRT.
2022/2023	MCFD Social Work Oversight Engagement Project

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Year-End Grants (2022/23)

Date Last Revised: February 4, 2024

Key Points:

- At year-end 2022/23 the ministry was provided approval to fund one-time grants to support the achievement of key mandate items.
- In March 2023, 34 grants totaling \$175.842 million were made by SDPR to organizations across the province.
- The funds provided at the end of 2022/23 will continue to sustain organizations in managing their programs for 2024/25 and beyond.

Background:

- At the end of fiscal 2022/23, SDPR was provided approval to fund one-time grants to support the achievement of key ministry mandate items including Food Security, Poverty Reduction, Accessibility, support for the Downtown East Side, and Reconciliation.
- 20 of the 34 grants provided in 2022/23 supplied funding to support programs for over 1 year.
- A listing of all grants, including the term, is provided in Appendix A.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Appendix A: 2022/23 Year-End Grants

Theme	Recipient	Term (Years)	Grant Amount (\$ millions)
DTES	DTES Distribution HUB Overdose Prevention Society	1	\$ 0.021
Non-Profits	Vancouver Foundation	3	\$ 60.000
Reconciliation	First Nations Summit: First Nations Well-being Fund	3	\$ 15.000
<small>Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information</small>			
DTES	MakeWay Charitable Society: Binnars' Project	1	\$ 0.025
Accessibility	Disability Alliance B.C.: TaxAid program	3	\$ 1.437
Food Security	Critical Food Security Infrastructure LIFT BC: Various food security organizations	1	\$ 0.806
DTES	WISH Drop-In Centre Society: Supporting sustainable growth (DTES)	1	\$ 0.054

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Theme	Recipient	Term (Years)	Grant Amount (\$ millions)
Poverty Reduction	BabyGoRound Helping Families Society: Critical Gear Funding	3	\$ 0.150
Poverty Reduction	Downtown Chilliwach Business Improvement Association: Street Clean Teams Program	1	\$ 0.125
Poverty Reduction	Langley Meals on Wheels: Elevator accessibility infrastructure upgrades	1	\$ 0.350
Accessibility	The Canadian National Institute for the Blind: Linkage to Wavefront, IDHH requests	3	\$ 0.370
Food Security	Loaves & Fishes Community Food Bank	3	\$ 7.000
Food Security	Food Banks BC: Critical food security infrastructure	3	\$ 15.000
Food Security	United Way British Columbia: Food Security - Inflation response and long-term provincial capacity building	5	\$ 7.500
Food Security	Cloverdale Community Kitchen	1	\$ 0.044

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Theme	Recipient	Term (Years)	Grant Amount (\$ millions)
Food Security	United Way British Columbia: Critical Food Security Infrastructure	1	\$ 14.000
Food Security	Britannia Community Services Centre Society: Common Interest: resilience and food Security for vulnerable households in East Vancouver	1	\$ 0.080
Food Security	Fateh Care Charity: Mobile Food Bank Program	1	\$ 0.070
Accessibility	Island Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre (IDHHC): Linkage to CNIB, Wavefront requests	1	\$ 0.845
Accessibility	Social Planning and Research Council of BC: Local Government Accessibility Grant	2 - 3	\$ 5.000
Accessibility	The Board of Education of School District 39 (Vancouver): Communication Assistance for Youth and Adults (CAYA) program	5	\$ 17.915
DTES	The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre Association: Expanding Programs and Services for Women made Vulnerable in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside	1	\$ 0.600
Accessibility	Vancouver Foundation: Access RDSP	3	\$ 2.700

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Theme	Recipient	Term (Years)	Grant Amount (\$ millions)
Accessibility	BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS) and Inclusion BC Society: Accessibility Events (\$100K each)	4	\$ 0.200
Accessibility	British Columbia Paraplegic Foundation: BC Spinal Cord Injury Network	4	\$ 2.000
Food Security	Immigrant Link Centre Society	3	\$ 0.300
Food Security	Support Network for Indigenous Women and Women of Colour (SNIWWOC)	3	\$ 0.300
Non-Profits	Vantage Point Strategies Society	1	\$ 0.650
Reconciliation	BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC): Gathering Our Voices (GOV) Legacy Fund	5	\$ 10.350
Accessibility	BCANDS: Disability Case Management / Navigator Program	5	\$ 0.825
Accessibility	Disability Alliance B.C. Society	5	\$ 0.825
Accessibility	Rick Hansen Foundation	2	\$ 5.000
Food Security	The Victoria Foundation	1	\$ 1.300

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Service Delivery – Budget and FTE Overview

Date Last Revised: February 2, 2024

Key Points:

- Employment and Assistance Services are delivered through the Service Delivery Division (SDD), which is organized into six branches.
- The division’s salaries and benefits budget supports an average of 1,665 full-time equivalent (FTEs).
- In addition to income and disability assistance payments, staff provide a broad range of supports including crisis supplements to help with food, shelter, clothing, security deposits to help with securing housing, and health supplements to address health needs such as medical equipment or medical transportation.
- Other specialized services provided may include the administration of indigent burials for eligible citizens of B.C. and providing support to clients participating in substance use treatment.
- In addition, the Ministry provides after-hours access for urgent needs, outreach services in communities by Community Integration Specialists, and contracts with Third Party Administrators to provide services to clients.

Key Data:

FTE Overview - Service Delivery Division (Dec 30, 2023)

Branch	FTE
Community Integration Services	182
Community Integration Specialists	153
Other	29
Community Services <i>(including in-person offices, and Profiling)</i>	550
Client Service Workers	152
Employment Assistance Workers	312
Other	86
Virtual Services <i>(including Contact Centre; Intake; Health Assistance and Specialized Services; and Specialized Intake)</i>	643
Client Service Workers	45
Employment Assistance Workers	462

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Branch	FTE
Other	136
Operations Support	110
Prevention and Loss Management Services	166
Strategic Services	59
ADMs Office	3
Total Service Delivery Division	1,712*

Data Source: Operations Support Branch, SDD (Corporate Data Warehouse FTE Cube, Dec 16 – 30, 2023)

FTE Definition: Data from Time and Leave determined by the actual hours worked by all staff and divided by seventy (70) for a full-time equivalent (FTE) position.

* **NOTE:** While 1,712 is more than the annual FTE budget of 1,665, SDD is within budget YTD. Newly hired staff are at a lower cost allowing the division to hire additional FTEs while remaining within budget.

Accomplishments:

- N/A

Budget/Financial Context:

Service Delivery Division Program Management Budget 2017/18 to 2023/24				
Fiscal Year	Salaries and Benefits	Operating Costs	Total	% Change
2023/24	\$139,951,000	\$10,100,100	\$150,051,100	12.4%
2022/23	\$123,426,000	\$9,063,000	\$132,489,000*	10.7%
2021/22	\$111,855,000	\$7,879,000	\$119,734,000	5.4%

Data Source: Operations Support, SDD

Source: Corporate Data Warehouse; Annual Budget Amounts, SDD. % change reflects variance from the prior year.

*Includes \$12,508,000 for Community Integration Services Branch

Background:

- Most frontline workers are Client Service Workers and Employment Assistance Workers.
- To support individuals who are at risk of or currently experiencing homelessness, Community Integration Specialists work in communities throughout the province.
- As part of the services provided, Ministry staff work collaboratively with local agencies and community partners, to refer clients to resources such as housing, mental health, substance use services, childcare, and domestic violence counselling.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Service Delivery – Community Services

Date Last Revised: January 29, 2024

Key Points:

- The Ministry has 84 locations around the province that offer in-person client services including 36 Ministry offices and 48 Service B.C. locations.
- Integrating Ministry services with Service B.C. locations has made it easier for clients to access in-person service while maintaining anonymity in the community.
- Ministry services provided in 47 of the 48 Service B.C. locations mirror the services provided in Social Development Poverty Reduction (SDPR) offices.
- All in-person offices have a Queue Management System (QMS) which collects service delivery information, such as service volumes and service durations, that assists the Ministry in understanding the service experience for individuals accessing in-person services.
- Feedback from clients indicates an interest in having various service options to access Ministry services.

Key Data:

- The average number of visits per month between January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2023, was 55,044, and the average wait duration per visit was 7 minutes and 45 seconds.
- As of January 2024, 160,438 or 85% of people were registered to receive their payments by direct deposit.

Accomplishments:

- N/A

Budget/Financial Context:

- For questions regarding the overall costs of Service B.C. offices to provide SDPR services, please refer to the Ministry of Citizens' Services who hold the budget for Service B.C. offices.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Background:

- The Ministry has 36 office locations and 48 Service B.C. offices located around the province that offer access to Ministry services during regular business hours. The partnership with 47 of the 48 Service B.C. locations provides a comparable level of service to that of a Ministry office, while maintaining anonymity in the community.
- The one (1) Service B.C. office in Kaslo provides limited access to Ministry services that includes information on SDPR programs and services, access to a computer, My Self Serve, internet, SDPR Contact Centre direct line phone, and the ability to distribute a food/sundries voucher or payment from this location.
- Ministry offices offer in-person services Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, with a closure between 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm (excluding statutory holidays).
- In-person services are provided at Service B.C. offices Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, excluding statutory holidays.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Service Delivery - Contact Centre

Date Last Revised: February 7, 2024

Key Points:

- The Ministry operates a Provincial Call Centre that provides a toll-free number to access Ministry services that include the following features:
 - Notification of wait time and the next cheque issue date;
 - Callback option;
 - Ability to speak directly with a Ministry worker to provide case-specific information and request Ministry services;
 - 24/7 self-serve option to access client case information and submit a monthly report; and
 - Ability to complete a service satisfaction survey.
- The Ministry's Service Standard is to answer 80 per cent of calls in 10 minutes or less.
- The Ministry's Daily Contact Centre reports are posted publicly monthly and identify how the ministry is meeting the Service Standard.
- The Ministry uses various strategies to support meeting the Ministry service standard, such as ongoing recruitment of staff resources and temporarily reassigning staff during high call volume and wait times.

Key Data:

- The Ministry operates a Provincial Contact Centre that receives an average of 120,400 calls each month from individuals using the 1-866-866-0800 call line. This translates into about 1.4 million calls every year.
- In 2023, the average speed of answer was 23 minutes and 40 seconds, meeting the Ministry Service Standard 26% of the time.
- 12,747 surveys were completed between January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023, and showed the following results:
 - I was satisfied with the amount of time it took to get service.
 - 75% - Yes 25% - No
 - Overall, I found the Ministry worker was respectful.
 - 88% - Yes 12% - No

Data Source: Operations Support - Analytics and Business Intelligence

Accomplishments:

- N/A

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Budget/Financial Context:

- N/A

Background:

- The Ministry continues to focus on service standards. There are natural peaks and valleys associated with wait times that happen throughout the year, such as:
 - High call volumes during cheque issue week, resulting in longer wait times.
 - Longer wait times during peak staff vacation periods.
 - Longer wait times and increased call volume when changes to legislation happen and during the B.C. Bus Pass renewal period (November through January)
- Abandonment rates vary between 6% - 9% monthly. Some reasons people may abandon a call include:
 - Hearing the notification of call wait times and the client chooses to hang up and call back another time or try another way to access services from the Ministry (e.g., My Self Serve);
 - Personal circumstances that may arise while on hold.
- The Ministry has a dedicated Advocate Client Enquiries (ACE) call back line for advocates and the Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) to discuss multiple client cases. All requests are managed within a 24-hour turnaround which has resulted in improved service outcomes for clients and advocates.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Homelessness - Community Integration Services

Date Last Revised: February 13, 2024

Key Points:

- Community Integration Services works directly with individuals who are homeless, precariously housed or at risk of experiencing homelessness, or through community partners, to connect them with financial assistance and community supports.
- Services provided by Community Integration Specialists include:
 - Expediated intakes
 - Shelter and health requests
 - Case management
 - Homeless outreach
 - Coordinate housing inspections
 - Referrals/inquiries from community partners
 - Coordination of services
- Budget 2022 announced that the number of Community Integration Specialists would increase from 73 to approximately 190 positions. The budget for Community Integration Services has been further increased to allow up to 200 positions across B.C.
- As of December 31, 2023, the Ministry has 165 Community Integration Specialists. Positions have been allocated among 11 teams across B.C., based on homelessness data by census areas, Complex Care Housing sites, partnerships with Friendship Centres, as well as ministry client data of individuals with no fixed address (including encampments).
- SDPR is also working to expand partnerships with Friendship Centres across B.C. to enable Community Integration Specialists to be embedded within Friendship Centres.

Accomplishments:

- Increasing (by more than double) the number of Community Integration Specialists available across the province to provide service.
- Successful distribution of Encampment Fire Suppression equipment in partnership with BC Housing and the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General.
- Successful attachment to Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative (ReVOII), Homeless Encampment Action Response Teams (HEART), Homeless Encampment Action Response Temporary Housing Program (HEARTH), Coordinated Access and Assessment (CAA) tables across the province.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Budget/Financial Context:

Fiscal Year	Salary and Benefit Budget Amount	Community Integration Specialists FTEs Budget
2021/2022	\$6.2M*	73
2022/2023	\$17.9M*	191
2023/2024	\$22.5M*	200

* Budget amount inclusive of salary and benefit costs only.

Background:

- In 2019, the Ministry implemented Community Integration Services to provide services to individuals at risk, precariously housed, or currently experiencing homelessness, by connecting them with financial assistance and community resources. They generally work out in the community or encampments, as opposed to ministry offices.
- Services are provided by Community Integration Specialists through four types of operating models:
 - Community Hub: Central location for community partners to provide wrap-around supports.
 - Direct Services: Community Integration Specialists take a case management approach to supporting a client's connection to financial support and services.
 - Specific Focus on areas of need: Supporting people to meet specific housing, mental health and addictions, and women's services needs.
 - Remote Hub: Provides virtual individualized support in small or remote communities.
- As of December 2023, there are 11 current partnerships with Friendship Centres across B.C., and 13 Community Integration Specialist staff working out of these Centres. Additional negotiations are underway to support further partnerships.
- The Ministry will be expanding the vehicle fleet to support outreach efforts in communities and encampments across B.C.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Intake and Eligibility

Date Last Revised: January 29, 2024

Key Points:

- There are 3 main service options available to individuals to apply for assistance:
 - Online – self-directed from any computer or mobile device;
 - Online – staff supported in an office;
 - Staff Assisted – staff complete the application with the applicant in an office, over the phone or in person with support from a Community Integration Specialist.
- The Ministry has specialized processes to assist in streamlining income assistance applications for youth transitioning from in-care, underage Persons with Disability applicants, correctional facilities, alcohol and drug facilities, and hospitals.
- The Ministry's Service Standard is to contact the applicant within 5 business days of submitting an application, at least 80 per cent of the time, except as follows:
 - If fleeing abuse within 1 business day, or
 - If there is an immediate need for food, shelter or urgent medical attention within 1 business day.
- Ministry applications are triaged and processed in the order they are received.

Key Data:

- The Ministry aims to approve and pay applicants as soon as possible. Turnaround time can vary depending on the time an applicant may take to provide the Ministry information required for a decision.

Type of Application	Average Days to First Contact 2023	Average Days to First Payment 2023
General	1	15
Expediated	1	9
Fleeing Abuse	1	5

(Data source: Operations Support – Analytics and Business Intelligence)

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

	2021		2022		2023	
MySS – Staff Supported	358	1%	452	1%	540	1%
MySS – Client-Initiated (self-directed)	28,775	76%	35,822	76%	37,339	71%
MySS – Staff Assisted	8,868	23%	10,844	23%	14,852	28%

(Data source: Operations Support – Analytics and Business Intelligence)

Accomplishments:

- N/A

Budget/Financial Context:

- N/A

Background:

- Additional supports are available to applicants that include access to professionally trained language and American Sign Language interpreters or the applicant's interpreter of choice.
- Applicants returning to the Ministry within six months can have their eligibility determined, at the Ministry's discretion, with the monthly report form, rather than completing a full application.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Refugee Supports

Date Last Revised: February 15, 2024

Key Points:

- The Province has seen a significant increase in refugee claimants and other displaced persons, which began in 2022 with the arrival of Ukrainians under the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) visitor's visa program, and expanded in 2023 when approximately 140 refugees were transferred from Ontario/Quebec to B.C. as asylum seekers.
- Internal federal forecasts indicate continued growth in refugee claims in 2024. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs estimates an additional 8,000 humanitarian arrivals in quarter one of 2024.
- The Ministry continues to see an increase in applications from individuals who are arriving from Gaza, Sudan, Venezuela, Colombia, Haiti, and Ukraine seeking Ministry financial assistance. These clients have additional complexities which increase the need for case interpretation to gather information to determine eligibility.
- The Ministry provides services to support refugees including:
 - Access to a range of WorkBC employment services and supports including employment counselling, job search support, workshops, skills training, wage subsidy, interpretation, counselling, and financial supports;
 - Access to apply for Ministry financial assistance;
 - One-on-one support to refugees who are having difficulty navigating the Ministry's service channels, including working in partnership with other ministries and community organizations by providing information regarding financial assistance, the application process, and any additional financial support that might be available.
- The Ministry continues to work in partnership with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to support individuals who arrive under the various humanitarian processes to apply for Ministry financial assistance, and WorkBC services.
- This includes exploring expanded WorkBC eligibility for Gaza and other asylum seekers.

Key Data:

- As of December 31, 2023, a total of 20,377 individuals from Ukraine have arrived in B.C.
- The Ministry has provided financial assistance to 2354 individuals through the Ministry financial assistance application process.
- To date, the Ministry has supported the application process for Ministry financial assistance to approximately 140 refugees transferred from Ontario/Quebec to B.C.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

- B.C. has also received a record number of refugee claims in 2023 - approximately 7,800, comparatively, in 2022 B.C received approximately 4,000.
- The B.C. Employment and Assistance (BCEA) Caseload data shows an increase in Refugee Claimant Income Assistance Cases, increasing approximately 72%. Please see Appendix A for more information.

Accomplishments:

- In March 2023, the Ministry extended WorkBC eligibility for the full suite of employment services to refugee claimants while they await processing of their claim by the Immigration and Refugee Board.
- In the FY 2023/24, as of December 31, the Ministry has supported 8,474 refugees and displaced Ukrainian peoples through WorkBC Employment Services designed to help them find quality, sustainable employment.
- 66% percent of refugees and displaced Ukrainian peoples accessing WorkBC service achieved employment.

Budget/Financial Context:

- A total of \$5.8M in WorkBC financial supports was provided to 3,292 refugees and other displaced Ukrainian peoples.

Background:

- Under the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET), the Ministry of Municipal Affairs led B.C.'s coordination of services for refugees. The following supports were made available through the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR):
 - The one-time payment from the federal government of \$3,000 for each adult and \$1,200 for each child, upon entry into Canada specifically for individuals arriving under CUAET.
 - Hardship assistance (available between July 1, 2022) and Income Assistance/Disability Assistance (available from July 1, 2023 onward).
 - Employment services and supports from WorkBC.
- The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR)'s role is to provide employment services through WorkBC and income/disability supports to eligible individuals, including specific outreach services to support applicants who are refugees to apply for and receive services.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Appendix A

BCEA caseload data shows for Refugee Claimant Income Assistance Cases:

BCEA Cases who are Refugee Claimants (monthly averages)

	Refugee Claimant Cases	% Change
2015	479	4.7%
2016	646	34.8%
2017	887	37.4%
2018	1,045	17.8%
2019	1,316	25.9%
2020	1,645	25.0%
2021	1,565	-4.9%
2022	1,985	26.8%
2023*	3,264	72.0%

*RIPD Data - January to October 2023. Percentage change calculated over same period in 2022.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: *Accessible BC Act* Implementation

Date Last Revised: February 13, 2024

Key Points:

- The Province is in the third year of implementing the Accessible BC Act.
- The Act establishes a framework for government to work in partnership with people with disabilities and the broader community to identify, remove and prevent barriers to the full and equal participation of people living with disabilities.
- We have followed through on key commitments made when the Act passed including the establishment of a new Provincial Accessibility Committee, the creation of AccessibleBC: government's 3 year accessibility plan, and the creation of an accessibility feedback tool. We have also extended these requirements to more than 750 public sector organizations through Regulation (see Appendix 1 for implementation timelines).
- We know there is still much more to be done. Accessibility Directorate staff are working with Ministries across government to identify progress and go-forward priorities for accessibility across Ministries. Additionally, the Provincial Accessibility Committee has nearly completed draft recommendations on accessibility standards in the areas of employment and service delivery and aims to initiate public consultation in the coming months.

Accomplishments:

- Government has fully complied with the requirements of Part 3 of the Act (accessibility committee, plan and feedback tool).
- Ministries across government are engaged advancing accessibility priorities through the Accessible BC Plan.
- In 2023/24, SDPR invested \$20M to help advance accessibility and inclusion priorities in communities (see Accessibility Investments Estimates Note).

Key Data:

- PAC met four times in 2023 and will meet a total of 8 times as of April 2024 in efforts to develop initial accessibility standards recommendations.
- The Directorate will facilitate approximately 50 pre-engagement sessions with key partners between January and May 2024 to create awareness on proposed accessibility standards and upcoming public engagement.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

- The Directorate has received a total of 201 submissions through the Accessibility Feedback Tool in its first full year of implementation (October 2022 through to December 31, 2023).

Budget/Financial:

- The Accessibility Directorate supports government's implementation of the Accessible British Columbia Act (Act) and has 13.5 FTEs with an annual budget of approximately \$1.486 million (not including grants of up to \$500,000 to partners).

Background:

- The Accessible B.C. Act builds upon the model developed in other provinces and complements the Federal *Accessible Canada Act*
- To date, implementation of the Act has focused on Part 2 (promoting accessibility and reporting), Part 3 (ensuring organizations are accessible) and Part 4 (development of accessibility standards) of the Act.
- Future work on implementation of the Act will include ongoing work to develop Accessibility Standards under Part 4 and supporting a balanced approach to implementing Part 5 (Compliance and Enforcement).

Accessible BC Act Implementation Timeline



Ministry of
Social Development
and Poverty Reduction

	Year 1			Year 5				Year 10			
Culture Change	Awareness, collaboration and capacity building initiatives with stakeholders and the public										
Requirements for the B.C. Government	Build tool to provide feedback to government										
	Develop Government's accessibility plan	Government accessibility plan released			Second Government accessibility plan released			Third Government accessibility plan released			
	Develop regulations prescribing organizations										
	Establish the Provincial Accessibility Committee										
Monitoring and Evaluation		Government Annual Report released every year			First Independent Review		Government Annual Report released every year		Second Independent Review		
		Compliance and Enforcement									
Standards Development		Develop First Standard	Implementation - (Phased approach)								
		Develop Second Standard									
			Develop Third Standard	Implementation - (Phased approach)							
			Develop Fourth Standard								
				Develop Fifth Standard	Implementation - (Phased approach)						
				Develop Sixth Standard							
				Develop Seventh Standard	Implementation - (Phased approach)						
				Develop Eighth Standard							

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Accessibility Investments

Date Last Revised: February 13, 2024

Key Points:

- We all want everyone to have the opportunity to enjoy full and equitable participation in our communities.
- We're working to remove barriers for people with disabilities. We couldn't do this work without our partners in the disability community and in organizations who serve people with disabilities.
- We work with these partners to fund a range of accessibility projects throughout the province.

Key Data:

Name of Organization	Funding in 2023/24 (\$M)	Project Name - Description
Spinal Cord Injury BC, BC Wheelchair Sports, BC Wheelchair Basketball, Disability Foundation, Neil Squire Society	\$2,000,000	BC Spinal Cord Injury Network – serves 18,343 clients throughout the province through direct services and working with Indigenous communities to co-create culturally safe & relevant Indigenous programs.
BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS)	\$825,000	Navigator Program – assist clients to access services and supports related to poverty, racism and violence; housing; employment; adaptive technologies; transition planning; & various assistance programs (federal/provincial).
BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society	\$100,000	Wellness Gathering – brings together Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders & disability related service providers to break down barriers in the lives of Indigenous people with disabilities.
CNIB Deaf Blind Community Services	\$370,000	Deafblind Intervenor Program & Service Analysis – Deafblind intervenor services and to develop a report that analyzes & addresses the needs of the Deafblind community.
Disability Alliance BC (DABC)	\$500,000	Accessibility Projects – supports community accessibility initiatives as part of AccessAbility Week.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Name of Organization	Funding in 2023/24 (\$M)	Project Name - Description
DABC, MOSAIC	\$825,000	Newcomers – Build capacity and develop mentorship opportunities between organizations to support accessibility for Newcomers.
DABC, Together Against Poverty Society, Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society, Active Support Against Poverty Society	\$1,437,000	Tax Aid – Provides free support filing income taxes and accessing tax credits and benefits for people with disabilities.
Inclusion BC	\$100,000	Everybody Belongs! – Annual learning event on intellectual disability, human rights and inclusion.
Island Deaf and Hard of Hearing	\$845,000	Sound of Change – provides low-cost refurbished hearing aids, community services and audiological assessments.
Rick Hansen Foundation	\$5,000,000	BC Accessibility Grants –provides local governments and Indigenous communities with A Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) rating for three sites, support for accessibility upgrades to the rated sites and accessibility awareness training.
SPARC BC	\$10,000	AccessAbilityWeek – provides support to local government or community-based disability organization to celebrate AccessAbility Week.
SPARC BC	\$5,000,000	Local Community Accessibility Grants – supports local governments to identify, remove and prevent barriers in their communities.
Vancouver Foundation, BCANDS, DABC, Plan Institute	\$2,700,000	Access RDSP – offers a suite of supports, services and resources to assist individuals at every stage of applying for an RDSP.
Total	\$19,712,000	

Budget/Financial Context:

- In 2023/24 SDPR provided more than \$19.7 million to over 17 non-profit organizations for accessibility related projects.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Accessibility Standards Development

Date Last Revised: February 13, 2024

Key Points:

- Under the authority of Part 4 of the *Accessible British Columbia Act*, the Provincial Accessibility Committee is developing two accessibility standards to address barriers to employment and the receipt of goods and services for persons with disabilities in BC.
- The employment accessibility and service delivery technical committees began work in January 2023 and April 2023 respectively.
- The Provincial Accessibility Committee (PAC) aims to have a draft standard ready for public consultation in April 2024 and to initiate public consultation in late May.
- After making any revisions, PAC will recommend standards to the Minister, at which point, those standards may be considered for regulation, in part or in whole.
- Accessibility standards in other areas will be developed in later phases of implementation.

Accomplishments:

Standards Development

- Beginning in January 2024, the Provincial Accessibility Committee adopted an accelerated monthly meeting schedule with a goal to accelerate the development of draft standards.
- As of February 1, 2024 the Provincial Accessibility Committee was on track to meet its deadlines.
- The aim of the Accessibility Service Delivery Standard is to ensure that events, activities, advice and the process of buying goods are provided in accessible ways that ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities.
- The aim of the Employment Accessibility Standard is to ensure that barriers throughout the employment lifecycle (hiring, training, retention, etc.) are identified, removed, and prevented. Supporting employers to develop inclusive work environments.

Pre-engagement and planned engagement

- The Accessibility Directorate, in consultation with the Provincial Accessibility Committee, has created an engagement plan providing a framework for undertaking province-wide public consultations prioritizing the development of the Accessible Service Delivery and Employment Accessibility standards.
- Prior to launching formal public consultations on standards development, the Accessibility Directorate is overseeing over 50 pre-consultation sessions with key government partners and a limited number of external partners between January and May 2024.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

- Formal public consultation will begin once accessibility standards development is complete, and will occur from May-July 2024.
- The consultation will be province-wide, with regional representation and a wide range of perspectives across sectors to ensure input from as many British Columbians as possible.
- The approach for formal public engagement will include: virtual consultation sessions, community-led regional in-person forums, direct submissions, a feedback website, cross-government engagement, an informational video, and targeted in-person consultations.

Key Data:

	Provincial Accessibility Committee	Service Delivery Technical Committee	Employment Accessibility Technical Committee
Chair	Parliamentary Secretary Susie Chant & Spring Hawes	Christopher T. Sutton	Christine Buchanan
Appointed	December 3, 2021	December 1, 2022	December 1, 2022
First Meeting	January 21, 2022	January 11, 2023	April 5, 2023
Meetings Jan 2023 – Apr 2024	8	15	13
Members	11	14	15
Recruitment process	Public expression of interest	Public expression of interest	Public expression of interest
Committee Composition	Deaf community members, people with visible and invisible disabilities, other varied lived experiences and intersectional identity factors (IBPOC and 2SLGBTQ+).	Deaf community members, neurodivergent people, people with visible and invisible disabilities, other varied lived experiences and intersectional identity factors (IBPOC and 2SLGBTQ+).	Deaf community members, people with visible and invisible disabilities, other varied lived experiences, and intersectional identity factors (IBPOC, age, gender).
Sectors represented	Small businesses, non-profit, unions, Technology, Law, Academia, Disability Advocacy.	Small businesses, transportation, education, health services, services for people with disabilities, and communication.	Non-profit, unions, entrepreneurs, employment services, service sector, consultants and industry.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Budget/Financial Context:

The ministry has retained BC Statistics to undertake economic impact modeling for the standards being developed.

Background:

Other Jurisdictions

- Ontario and Manitoba both have standards on accessible employment and service delivery in place.
- Nova Scotia is currently working on the development of standards on accessible employment and service delivery.
- Federally, Accessibility Standards Canada has indicated 15 areas where work on accessibility standards will take place including employment, and customer service.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility

Date Last Revised: February 8, 2024

Key Points:

- The Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility was established as a new role to the B.C. Provincial Government in 2020.
- The role supports the implementation of the *Accessible BC Act* (the Act), through engagement with advocates, communities, and businesses to ensure the Act is well understood and effective at making B.C. more accessible and inclusive for everyone.
- The role also supports cross ministry work to advance key accessibility priorities including:
 - Work with Ministry of Citizen Services (CITZ) to prioritize the end-user experience of digital tools and services and ensure they are accessible to all British Columbians.
 - Support the Ministry of Education and Child Care (ECC) in the development of K-12 inclusive education policies and services for Children and Youth with disabilities.
 - Work with Ministry of Housing (HOUS) to ensure that the next iteration of the B.C. Building Code includes changes that will make new buildings more accessible for all people.
- The Parliamentary Secretary co-chairs the Provincial Accessibility Committee (PAC). PAC supports the implementation of the Act by prioritizing, developing, and recommending accessibility standards and providing advice to government on matters related to accessibility and inclusion.

Accomplishments: (For a detailed list of accomplishment please refer to Appendix 1)

- The Parliamentary Secretary continue to work with Accessibility Directorate to advance implementation of the Act, including:
 - Support in the development of initial draft recommendations for accessible service delivery standards and accessible employment standards which will be brought to public consultation in May 2024.
 - Support in the development of Accessibility Annual Report, quarterly Accessibility Feedback Tool report, and a review of progress on the implementation of Governments Accessibility Plan.
 - Representing the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR) during AccessAbility week and other occasions in which the province celebrates the contributions of people with disabilities such as Disability Employment Month, RDSP Awareness Month, Indigenous Disability Awareness Month, and International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

- The Parliamentary Secretary worked with HOUS to propose the following updates to BC Building Code requirements, which delivers on government's mandate to make new buildings more accessible for all people:
 - To improve the accessibility of commercial and public buildings and their common spaces for customers and staff. These changes will come into effect in March 2024.
 - For adaptable dwellings, more housing units can be easily, and cost effectively renovated to meet peoples' specific and evolving needs. These changes take effect in March 2025.
- The Parliamentary Secretary continue to support the work of ECC in developing K-12 inclusive education policies and services including:
 - ECC and the BC Council of Administrators for Inclusive Supports in Education (BC CAISE) efforts to provide communications and supports to school districts to meet the requirements of the Accessible BC Regulation.
 - Implementation of Individual Education Plan (IEP) and a universal model of support for provincial assessments to ensure students with disabilities and diverse abilities in K-12 schools have access to the same supports used in the classroom setting.
- With support from the Parliamentary Secretary CITZ launched:
 - A simplified guide to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) for government workers and contractors in B.C. The guide demonstrates how to meet accessibility standards for websites, encouraging staff to make government websites are user friendly and accessible to all.
 - A new look and feel for gov.bc.ca in early 2024 which will enable better mobile browsing, updated accessibility features and more. The new gov.bc.ca web page templates meet WCAG level AA.
 - A video series providing plain language training for government staff, aimed at improving clear and straightforward communication.
 - Continuous accessibility audits to ensure that ministries prioritize accessibility in their digital initiatives.

Specific questions regarding the above cross-Ministry initiatives can be directed to the lead Ministry.

Key Data:

- The Parliamentary Secretary is leading 15 of 40 pre-engagement sessions with key partners and stakeholders on the development of accessible service delivery and employment standards.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

- In 2023, CITZ delivered 11 live training sessions on Digital Accessibility to ministry staff across government with individual sessions attracting an average of several hundred attendees.
- Almost 500 government employees have finished the Plain Language Training video series.
- In 2023, CITZ undertook accessibility audit for 3 government websites covering 5 ministries. The audit ensures that ministries have accessibility lens at the core of their digital work.

Background:

- The previous Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility, Dan Coulter, was appointed Minister of State for Infrastructure and Transit in December 2022.

Appendix 1: Implementation of Parliamentary Secretary Mandate Items

Implementation of Accessible B.C. Act (the Act)

- To support the implementation of the Act, the Parliamentary Secretary:
 - Engages, as required, with persons with disabilities, businesses, and other partners to share information about implementation of the Act and identify opportunities for further engagement.
 - Meets biweekly with the Accessibility Directorate to receive updates and provide input into work underway including the Accessibility Directorate's Annual Report, Accessibility Feedback Tool, and Accessibility Plan.
 - Represents the Ministry during AccessAbility week and other occasions in which the province celebrates the contributions of people with disabilities such as Disability Employment Month, RDSP Awareness Month, Indigenous Disability Awareness Month, and International Day of Persons with Disabilities.
- The Accessibility Directorate is responsible for supporting government's efforts to implement the Act.

Cross-Ministry Work

Ministry of Housing (HOUS) – B.C. Building Code:

- The 2024 BC Building Code delivers on government's mandate to make new buildings more accessible for all people.
- Changes to increase accessibility in public buildings, like power-operated doors for entrances and accessible washrooms, will come into effect in March 2024.
- Updated B.C. Building Code requirements for adaptable dwellings take effect in March 2025 so more units can be more easily and cost effectively renovated to meet peoples' specific needs.

Ministry of Citizens' Services (CITZ):

- In September 2023, the Government Digital Experience (GDX) team launched a Plain Language Training video series to teach government staff to communicate clearly and easily.
 - So far, almost 500 government employees have completed the Plain Language Training course. This is a big step toward creating content that's easy for the public to understand.

- In November 2023, GDx, with support of the Digital Office, launched a Simplified Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) guide for government workers and contractors in B.C. The guide shows how to meet standards for making websites accessible, encouraging staff to make government websites easy to use.
- Digital Accessibility 101 training has been delivered by GDx to ministry staff across government since 2018. There is high demand for this training, with individual sessions attracting an average of several hundred attendees. The training is delivered with support for American Sign Language (ASL). In 2023, GDx delivered 11 live training sessions.
- GDx is supporting the Accessibility Directorate with engagement over the next 1 to 1.5 years on two standards under the Act: accessible service delivery and employment accessibility.
- GDx is launching a new look and feel for gov.bc.ca in early 2024 which will enable better mobile browsing, updated accessibility features and more. The new gov.bc.ca web page templates meet WCAG level AA.
- GDx provides an ongoing accessibility audit for ministries' digital work and make sure that ministries have the accessibility lens at the core of their digital work. This year we covered 5 ministries and audited 3 websites with 15 pages each and 2 apps.

Ministry of Education and Child Care (ECC):

- ECC has been working with the Accessibility Directorate and the BC Council of Administrators for Inclusive Supports in Education (BC CAISE) to provide communications and supports to school districts to meet the requirements of the Accessible B.C. Regulation.
 - As part of this work, BC CAISE, in partnership with the Province, Disability Alliance BC and Untapped Accessibility, provides support for B.C. school districts and independent school authorities to identify and remove barriers for people with disabilities, and meet the requirements of the Accessible B.C. Regulation.
- ECC has shifted to a universal model of support for provincial assessments to ensure students have access to the same supports used in the classroom setting.
 - Students now have access to a built-in universal text-to-speech program for the Provincial Graduation Assessments.
 - ECC has also provided accessible options for the November 2023 session of the Provincial Graduation Assessments for students who are blind or have low vision and require braille and/or large print special formats.

- Other aspects for all provincial assessments have been enhanced and improved, including high contrast mode, zoom, and screen enlargement.
- ECC staff have facilitated meetings and presentations between the Accessibility Directorate, K-12 Partners and School Superintendents regarding the Accessible B.C. Regulations, and the development of resources and supports for the K-12 Education sector.
- Announced in Budget 2023, the Provincial School Outreach (PSO) team is a joint initiative between ECC and the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) to support students with disabilities and diverse abilities in K-12 schools.
 - The PSO is a multi-disciplinary team of specialists, hosted by North Vancouver School District, that will help build the capacity of school districts (especially rural and remote) to address the needs of students with disabilities and diverse abilities.
- ECC, in consultation with K-12 partners, is in the beginning stages of developing Individual Education Plan (IEP) informational resources for educators and parents/caregivers that support the creation of IEPs for students with disabilities and diverse abilities.
- In fall 2023, ECC provided one-time funding to BC CAISE to update the *Supporting Meaningful Consultation with Parents* resource.
 - This resource outlines the critical elements of meaningful consultation and decision-making between schools and parents/guardians regarding a student's educational program.
 - Summer 2024 is the anticipated release date for the updated resource.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Accessible B.C. Regulation

Date Last Revised: January 28, 2024

Key Points:

- The Accessible B.C. Regulation, adopted April 14, 2022, prescribed over 750 public sector organizations to establish: an accessibility committee, an accessibility plan, and a tool to receive feedback on accessibility.
- The first phase of organizations, including local governments, post-secondary institutions, school districts and independent schools, public libraries and some Crowns and agencies, were required to comply with the requirements by September 1, 2023.
- A second phase of organizations, including health authorities, tribunals, and some Crowns and agencies, are required to comply by September 1, 2024.
- The prescription of these organizations was informed by feedback from ministries across government, Indigenous partners, and from targeted engagement conducted with over 750 public sector organizations from August to October 2021.
- These requirements are intended to get organizations planning for accessibility in a way that is informed by people with disabilities in advance of the accessibility standards currently in development.

Accomplishments:

- We are working together with trusted partners to help organizations to comply with the Regulation:

DABC Accessible Organizations Project

- In 2022 the Government of British Columbia provided \$3 million over three years to Disability Alliance BC (DABC) for the Accessible Organizations Project.
- The purpose of the project is to support the organizations prescribed by the Accessible B.C. Regulation to meet the requirements under Part 3 of the *Accessible B.C. Act*.
- A variety of resources including toolkits and guides are available through the BC Accessibility Hub website.
- Since March 2023 DABC has dispersed \$536,724.50 in funds to sector organizations to develop specific training and resources that will meet the needs of their members.

SPARC BC – Local Community Accessibility Grant Program

- In 2023 the Government of British Columbia provided \$5 million over three years to SPARC BC to administer the Local Community Accessibility Grant Program.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

- This program provides up to \$25,000 for all local governments or regional districts to support implementation or projects identified within their Accessibility plan or by their Accessibility Committee.
- Applications are open on a rolling basis and to date five local governments (Victoria, Chilliwack, Saanich, North Cowichan and Slokan) have been granted funding to complete projects ranging from installation of accessible picnic tables, universal changerooms, and training for city staff.

Rick Hansen Foundation - BC Accessibility Grants Program

- The Government of British Columbia provided \$2.5 million in 2022/23 and \$5 million in 2023/24 to the Rick Hansen Foundation BC Accessibility Grants Program.
 - This program provides local governments and Indigenous communities with A Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) rating for three sites to identify key areas of improvements and up to \$82,500 (total) for upgrades to the three rated sites along with accessibility awareness training for municipal staff to foster a positive culture of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
 - Current participants include the municipalities of Coquitlam, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Port Moody, Prince George, Richmond and Whistler, and the communities of Seabird Island, Ditidaht First Nation and Malahat Nation.
- As we develop accessibility standards, we will be working to establish a balanced approach to compliance and enforcement.
 - We know there's more to do, and we will not stop working until we have an inclusive and accessible province for everyone.

Key Data:

- 788 organizations are prescribed in the Accessible B.C. Regulation.
- 755 Organizations were required to comply with Part 3 of the Accessible B.C. Act by September 1, 2023.
- 33 organizations are required to comply with Part 3 of the Accessible B.C. Act by September 1, 2024.

Budget/Financial Context:

- \$15.5 million dollars has been provided to support communities to become more accessible.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Background:

- The Accessibility Directorate has supported implementation of the Accessible B.C. Regulation by providing numerous presentations to many groups including: Crowns Diversity and Inclusion Network, Local Government Management Association, BC School Superintendents, BCEdAccess Advocon, Metro Vancouver, tribunals sector, and many prescribed organizations.
- In September 2023 the Accessibility Directorate coordinated an interactive Accessibility Walk-and-Roll Tour for local government officials at the UBCM Convention alongside partners at DABC, SPARC BC and the Rick Hansen Foundation.
- The requirements to establish an accessibility plan, committee and feedback mechanism are framed flexibly, and organizations have significant discretion to develop the plans, feedback mechanisms and committees that work for their communities. The regulation allows organizations to evolve their approach to the plan, committee and feedback tool over time and with feedback from people with disabilities.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Accessible B.C. Act Compliance and Enforcement

Date Last Revised: January 28, 2024

Key Points:

- Parts 5 and 6 of the *Accessible B.C. Act* enable compliance and enforcement actions in the form of monetary penalties if organizations fail to comply with the Act or regulations.
- These Parts of the legislation are currently not in force. Provisions related to compliance and enforcement, as well as reconsiderations and appeals, will be brought into force by regulation when the first standards and enforcement-related regulatory provisions are ready.
- One of the overarching messages we heard during the public engagement on the *Accessible B.C. Act* was that this work needs to advance a larger effort of creating a culture of accessibility in the province. Given this, our interim approach to compliance and enforcement focuses on working with organizations, supporting and incentivising them to meet the requirements.
- We are committed to supporting compliance and will continue to work to build awareness and understanding to ensure that BC is more accessible for all.

Accomplishments:

- At the moment, our approach to compliance and enforcement focuses on working with organizations, supporting and incentivizing them to meet the requirements (**See Accessible B.C. Regulation Estimates Note**).
- As we develop accessibility standards, we will be working to establish a balanced approach to compliance and enforcement.
- We know there's more to do, and we will not stop working until we have an inclusive and accessible province for everyone.

Key Data:

- 788 organizations are prescribed in the Accessible B.C. Regulation.
- 755 Organizations were required to comply with Part 3 of the Accessible B.C. Act by September 1, 2023.
- 33 organizations are required to comply with Part 3 of the Accessible B.C. Act by September 1, 2024.
- Accessibility standards on employment accessibility and service delivery, currently under development, will likely create requirements for the provincial government, as well as public sector and some private sector organizations.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

- Since April 1, 2023, the Accessibility Directorate have held 24 meetings, provided 8 presentations, and responded to over 55 enquires regarding compliance and enforcement with the Accessible B.C. Regulation.

Budget/Financial Context:

- BC Statistics is currently developing economic modeling for the cost and benefits to organizations of compliance with accessibility standards on employment and service delivery under development.

Background:

- In January 2024 the Accessibility Directorate will dedicate the time of a BC Legislative Intern to policy work on approaches for compliance and enforcement.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Federal Programs: CPP and CPP-D

Date Last Revised: February 6, 2024

Key Points:

- Individuals are expected to access other forms of available income before accessing income assistance (IA) or disability assistance (DA).
- This includes accessing Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPP-D) and, at age 65, Canada Pension Plan (CPP) retirement benefits. These programs provide contributors and their family unit with partial replacement of earnings in the case of disability or retirement.
- BC's treatment of CPP/ CPP-D as non-exempt income is consistent with how other jurisdictions treat this income source.

Accomplishments:

- As of January 1, 2020, BC no longer requires income and disability assistance clients to apply for early CPP retirement benefits. This change ensures BC's approach is aligned with Alberta, Ontario, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, Yukon, Nunavut, and the Northwest Territories.

Key Data:

- As of December 2023:
 - There were 919 people on IA/DA receiving an average of \$247 a month in early CPP retirement benefits.
 - There were 367 people aged 65+ on IA/DA receiving an average of \$216 a month in CPP retirement benefits.
 - There were 9,651 people on DA receiving an average of \$867 a month in CPP-D benefits.

Background:

Canada Pension Plan (CPP) Retirement Benefits

- Once a person turns 60, they can apply for and receive CPP retirement benefits. Prior to age 65, this is referred to as "early CPP".
- The ministry continues to treat amounts of early CPP received as non-exempt income, which will be considered in calculating the client's benefit amount.
- Provided that they meet the 10-year Canadian residency requirement, at age 65, most clients transition to Old Age Security (OAS)/Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) benefits.
- Clients who do not apply for CPP retirement benefits at age 65 may be ineligible for income/disability assistance or they may be eligible at reduced rates.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

- The maximum CPP retirement benefit in 2024 is \$1,364.60 per month. The amount of CPP a person receives is determined by how many years a person worked and how much they contributed to the plan.

Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPP-D) Benefits

- A person can apply for and receive CPP-D benefits if they are under the age of 65 and meet eligibility criteria.
- People who receive CPP-D complete a two-page application form for a provincial Persons with Disabilities (PWD) designation.
- People with PWD designation are also screened for eligibility for CPP-D benefits and assisted to apply where financial eligibility is established.
- Clients can consent to use their PWD application in lieu of completing the CPP-D benefits medical report – saving time and effort for doctors and clients.
- The maximum monthly CPP-D benefit for a single person is \$1,606.78 in 2024.
- A client receiving disability assistance who also receives CPP-D will have their CPP-D payments deducted dollar-for-dollar from their disability assistance.
- Clients who are no longer eligible for disability assistance due to their CPP-D benefits exceeding the disability assistance amount still receive Medical Services Only (MSO) coverage if they continue to receive CPP-D benefits.

Canada Pension Plan Post-Retirement Disability Benefits

- The CPP Post-Retirement Disability Benefit (PRDB) became available January 1, 2019.
- The PRDB is intended for CPP retirement benefit recipients (under the age of 65) found to have a disability, but who are not eligible for a CPP-D benefit due to having received an early CPP retirement benefit for more than 15 months.
- The eligibility criteria for the PRDB are the same for CPP-D and use the same application. The PRDB is provided in addition to CPP retirement benefits until the age of 65 when the PRDB stops, and the recipient continues to receive CPP retirement benefits.
- The Canada Pension Plan Program reported the PRDB in 2024 is \$583.32 per month. The number of people receiving the benefit is not reported.
- Like CPP-D benefits, the PRDB is considered non-exempt income and is deducted dollar-for-dollar from assistance.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Supplements General, Health and Crisis

Date Last Revised: January 25, 2024

Key Points:

- Supplementary assistance provides people on income, disability, and hardship assistance with access to additional benefits to assist with specific needs and circumstances.
- Supplementary assistance is divided into two basic categories:
 - General supplements - supports related to employment, housing, moving and transportation.
 - Health supplements – supports related to basic medical and dental coverage, medical equipment, supplies and nutrition.
- Crisis supplements are also available for clients to address unforeseen emergency.

Accomplishments:

- Effective August 2023, the ministry increased supplementary assistance rates for the crisis supplement, monthly food-related (nutrition) supplements and one-time specific supplements.
- Effective March 2023, the Housing Stability Supplement was introduced to support clients to maintain housing when they are temporarily absent (e.g., in special care, incarcerated, etc.) from their home to ensure they are not at risk of homelessness.

Key Data:

- As of December 31, 2023,
 - Over 113K Crisis Supplements were issued, of which approximately 69K were for food and 9K were for shelter.
 - 8,940 Health Supplements were issued for medical equipment for the 9 months ending December 31, 2023.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Budget/Financial Context:

Assistance Type	2022/23		2023/24		2024/25 Budget
	Budget	Actuals	Budget	Actuals ¹	
	(\$millions)				
General Supplements	210.0	209.8	220.3	171.8	226.7
Health Supplements	167.2	163.1	169.4	124.7	184.2 ¹
Crisis Supplements	11.3	16.6	17.2	19.0	28.6

Source: FASB

¹ Actuals as of December 31, 2023

Note: Clothing supplement for clients in special care facilities, pre-natal shelter supplement, and lost or stolen cheques are not reflected in the budget table as these items are paid out under Income and Disability Assistance.

Background:

General Supplements

- Ministry staff determine eligibility based on specific criteria and documentation requirements outlined in policy and regulations.
- A limited number of general supplements are also available to people and families who meet income thresholds or have financial need, but are not clients:
 - Senior's Bus Pass Program
 - Senior's Supplement, and
 - Funeral Supplement.

Health Supplements

- Eligibility for health supplements varies depending on family type, client category (i.e., expected-to-work, persons with persistent multiple barriers or persons with disabilities), age, or individual needs.
- Most eligibility decisions are made by ministry staff based on criteria and documentation requirements outlined in policy and regulation; however, a small number of supplements are administered under contract by Pacific Blue Cross.
- Health supplements may be issued as either a monetary or in-kind supplement, depending on the specific supplement.
- Low-income British Columbians who have a life-threatening health need may also qualify for assistance with specific medical equipment, supplies and medical transportation needs if no other resources are available.

¹ Includes increase to per diem funding for Mental Health and Substance Use facilities.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

- Some former clients, such as those who get Medical Services Only (MSO) coverage or families with children eligible for Transitional Health Services (THS), may still access specific health supplements after they leave assistance for employment or federal income benefits.
- The ministry also provides access to basic dental, optical and hearing benefits to children in low-income families through the Healthy Kids Program.

Crisis Supplements

- Crisis supplements are available to people receiving income assistance, disability assistance, or hardship assistance:
 - who have no other resources available to pay for an unexpected expense or item of need, and
 - if the expense or item is necessary to address an imminent danger to the physical health of a person in the family unit, or to prevent the risk of removal of a child.
- Crisis supplements are available for Food, Shelter, Clothing and Utilities.
- Other crisis supplement items or expenses may include furniture, home repairs, household items, transportation, and fuel for heating and cooking.
- Crisis supplements are most commonly requested to purchase food.

Emergency/Disaster Crisis Supplements

- The Emergency/Disaster Crisis Supplement is only activated when an identified local, regional, or provincial emergency or disaster occurs.
- The use of the Emergency/Disaster Crisis Supplement is very situational, and the supports provided depends on the type of emergency or disaster that occurs, such as floods, fires, etc.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Earnings Exemptions

Date Last Revised: February 13, 2024

Key Points:

- On January 1, 2024, earnings exemptions for income and disability assistance clients were increased. This is the third increase since October 2017.
- The monthly earnings exemption limit for a single person on income assistance is now \$600 and the annual earnings exemption limit for a single person on disability assistance is now \$16,200.
- Earnings exemptions allow people receiving income assistance or disability assistance to earn money from working in addition to the assistance they receive from the ministry.
- Any earnings that fall under monthly or annual earnings exemption limits will not affect the amount of income or disability assistance provided. Any amounts that exceed these limits will be deducted dollar-for-dollar from income or disability assistance.

Accomplishments:

- As of January 1, 2024, the earnings exemption for a single individual receiving income assistance has increased by \$400/month while the earnings exemption for a single individual receiving disability assistance has increased by \$6,600/year since September 2017.
- This represents a 200% increase for income assistance clients and a 69% increase for disability assistance.

Key Data:

Statistics

- From April 2023 to December 2023, 7,098 or 10.8% of expected-to-work cases declared income in at least one month over the year. The average amount declared was \$695 per month.
- From April 2023 to December 2023, 22,956 or 17.6% of disability assistance cases declared income at some time in the year. The average amount declared was \$6,806 during that time.
- Earnings exemptions have had a positive impact on client incomes, especially families with children:

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

- From April 2023 to December 2023, \$156 million of earnings was declared by disability assistance clients, compared to \$92 million in 2015/16.
- From April 2023 to December 2023, \$144 million of earnings was exempted for disability assistance clients, or 92.0% of total earned income, compared to \$90 million in 2015/16.
- Earnings exemptions increased the total income for families with children by \$31 million from April 2023 to December 2023.
- An estimated 4,100 disability assistance cases or 3.3% of the disability assistance caseload benefit from the increase in earnings exemptions.
- Approximately 6,600 income assistance cases, or 10% of the caseload, benefit from the increase in earnings exemptions.
- Overall, about 7% of BCEA cases benefit from the increase in earnings exemptions.

Budget/Financial Context:

	2021/22	2022/23	April 2023 to December 2023
	Actuals	Actuals	Actuals
Income Assistance	\$13.4M	\$17.4M	\$14.8M
Disability Assistance	\$155.5M	\$177.6M	\$143.7M
Totals	\$169.0M	\$195.0M	\$158.4M

Source: Research Branch

Note: The above amounts are actual exempted earnings and represent foregone savings to the ministry.

Background:

- For details on past earnings exemption increases by client category, see ADM Binder: Earnings Exemptions- Income & Disability Assistance.

Interjurisdictional

- BC's earning exemption ends after the limit is reached. Most other provinces include a percentage exemption for income received that exceeds the amount of their flat rate exemptions (see rate comparison in Appendix A and B).

Expected-to-Work (Income Assistance)

- BC's income assistance flat rate monthly earnings exemptions are the highest in Canada.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Persons with Disabilities (Disability Assistance)

- Yukon, Saskatchewan, Manitoba (specific cases only), and Quebec (Basic Income Program) are the only other Canadian jurisdictions that provide an annual earnings exemption for persons with disabilities.
- BC's disability assistance flat rate annual earnings exemption for singles is currently the highest in Canada. The flat rate annual earnings exemption for couples/couples with children and single parent families is the second highest in Canada (2nd after Alberta).

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Appendix A: Expected to Work Earnings Exemptions (January 2024)

BC	Single: \$600 per month. Couple (no children): \$600 per month. Parents (with children): \$900 per month.
AB	Single: \$230 per month + 25% of remaining net earnings. Couple: \$115 per adult per month + 25% of remaining net earnings.
SK	Single: \$325 per month. Couple (no children): \$425 per month. Families: \$500 per month.
MB	\$200 per adult per month + 30% of remaining net earnings.
ON	\$200 per adult per month + 50% of remaining net earnings.
QU	Single: \$200 per month. Couple: \$300 per month.
NB	Singles: \$500 per month + 50%. More than one person: \$500 per month + 50%.
NS	100% on the first \$250; 75% on the next \$250; 50% on the next \$250; 25% on amount over \$750.
PEI	Singles: \$250 per month + 30% of remaining net earnings. Families: \$400 per month + 30% of remaining net earnings.
NF	Single: \$75 per month + 20% of remaining net earnings. More than one person: \$150 per month + 20 % of remaining net earnings.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Appendix B: Persons with Disability Earnings Exemptions (January 2024)

BC	Single: \$16,200 per year. Couple, 1 PWD: \$19,440 per year. Couple, 2 PWDs: \$32,400 per year.
AB	Single: \$1,072 per month + 50% up to \$2,009 (\$1,541 maximum). Couple (both adults AISH eligible): \$1,072 per month + 50% up to \$2,009 (\$1,541 maximum) per adult. Family/ Couple (One adult AISH eligible): \$2,612 per month + 50% up to \$3,349 (\$2,981 maximum). Family (2 adults both AISH eligible): One adult receives the single exemption; one adult receives the family exemption.
SK	Single: \$6,000 per year Couple: \$7,200 per year Families: \$8,500 per year
MB	\$200 per adult per month + 30% of remaining net earnings. Those eligible for Community Living Services, living in a personal care home or receiving CPPD are eligible for an annual earnings exemption of \$12,000 per year for singles, \$18,000 per year for Couples/Families with Children.
ON	\$1,000 per month +25% of remaining net earnings.
QU	Single: \$200 per month. Couple: \$300 per month. *Basic Income Program: \$14,532 and 45% for the remaining net earnings.
NB	Singles: \$500 per month + 50% of remaining net earnings. More than one person: \$500 + 50% of remaining net earnings.
NS	100% on the first \$350; 75% on the next \$150; 50% on the next \$250; 25% on amount over \$750.
PEI	Single and Families: \$500 per month + 30% of remaining net wages.
NF	Single: \$150 per month + 20% of remaining net earnings. More than one person: \$250 per month + 20% of remaining net earnings.

* On January 1, 2023, Quebec implemented the Basic Income Program. Social Solidarity Program (i.e., Disability Assistance) recipients who have been in receipt of assistance for 66 of the previous 72 months are transferred to this program.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Income and Disability Assistance Rates

Date Last Revised: January 25, 2024

Key Points:

- On August 1, 2023, the maximum shelter allowance for income and disability assistance clients increased by \$125 per family unit– the first increase in maximum shelter rates since 2007. This increase benefits over 160,000 people (122,000 cases) and marks the fifth increase to income assistance since 2017.
- As of August 2023, the maximum monthly income assistance (support + shelter) rate is \$1,060 for a single person on income assistance and \$1,483.50 for a single person on disability assistance.
- BC’s income assistance rate for singles is the second highest and disability assistance rates for singles are the third highest in the country.
- Effective May 1, 2022, a minimum shelter allowance was established to provide additional funds to help persons experiencing homelessness meet their needs.
- People who receive income assistance or disability assistance may also receive other supports and benefits such as subsidized housing, dental and optical care for children, free Pharmacare, and employment services through WorkBC.

Accomplishments:

- In April 2021, the monthly income and disability assistance support rate increased by \$175 per adult– the largest single increase in B.C.’s history.
- Income and disability assistance rates have increased five times since September 2017. The rate for a single individual has increased by \$450 per month, an increase of 74% for income assistance and 44% for disability assistance.

Key Data: Monthly Rates- Single Individuals. Effective February 1, 2024

Province	Employable	Barriers/PPMB	PWD
British Columbia	1,060.00	1,110.00	1,483.50
Alberta	824.00	959.00	1,863.00
Saskatchewan	975.00	975.00	1,421.00
Manitoba	861.00	1,166.00	1,166.00
Ontario	733.00	733.00	1,308.00
Quebec	770.00	1,205.00	1,205.00
New Brunswick	837.00	883.00	1,086.00
Prince Edward Island	1,401.00	1,401.00	1,551.00
Nova Scotia	686.00	950.00	950.00
Newfoundland & Labrador	931.00	931.00	931.00
BC RANK	2	4	3

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Budget/Financial Context:

- In Budget 2023, government allocated \$499M over three years for the August 1, 2023, increase to shelter rates:
 - \$131M in 2023/24
 - \$183M in 2024/25
 - \$185M in 2025/26
- In Budget 2022, \$11M/year ongoing was allocated to support the minimum shelter allowance implemented May 1, 2022.

Background:

Cumulative Rate Increase

- As of August 2023, the income assistance rate for a single individual had increased by \$450 per month since September 2017, an increase of 74% for income assistance and 44% for disability assistance.

2023 Shelter Rate Increase

- Effective August 1, 2023, monthly income and disability assistance shelter rates increased by \$125 per case, from \$375 to \$500 per month for a single sheltered person.
- A minimum shelter allowance of \$75 per month (for a single individual) was implemented in May 2022 as part of government's Homelessness Strategy (See Minister's Binder Program Note: Homelessness Initiatives).

2021 Support Rate Increase

- Effective May 1, 2021, monthly income and disability assistance support rates increased by \$175 per eligible adult.

2019 Support Rate Increases

- Effective April 1, 2019, monthly income and disability assistance support rates increased by \$50 per eligible adult.

2017 Support Rate Increases

- Effective October 2017, monthly income assistance support rates increased by \$100 per family and disability assistance rates increased by \$100 per family member with the PWD designation.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Declaration Act and Reconciliation Overview

Date Last Revised: February 8, 2024

Key Points:

- The Ministry has been implementing the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act), including supporting the development and implementation of the 2022-2027 Action Plan and consulting and cooperating with Indigenous Peoples in the development and implementation of the *Accessible B.C. Act*, the renewal of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and upcoming legislative amendments to the *Poverty Reduction Strategy Act* (PRSA), *Employment and Assistance Act* and *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act* (BCEA legislation).

Accessible B.C. Act

- The Ministry engaged Indigenous Peoples in the development of the *Accessible B.C. Act* to identify opportunities to strengthen the legislation's alignment with the UN Declaration.
- Specific commitments to consult and consider the rights of Indigenous Peoples in the development of accessibility standards are included in Sections 16 and 19 of the *Accessible B.C. Act* and in action 4.9 of B.C.'s Declaration Act Action Plan.

Poverty Reduction

- As required under legislation, the PRS must be updated every five years, with the next strategy due to be released in Spring 2024.
- To help inform this work, the Ministry undertook an extensive public engagement process, including a distinctions-based approach to Indigenous engagement.

Accomplishments:

- SDPR undertook a distinctions-based engagement for renewal of the PRS beginning in winter 2022/2023, which is ongoing through winter 2023/2024. Engagement included a public online survey with approximately 1,000 self-identified Indigenous respondents (57% First Nations; 38% Métis; 1% Inuit), consultation and cooperation with Indigenous leadership organizations and advisory groups, in-person and virtual engagement sessions, and attendance at First Nations gatherings. For full details on engagement activities, see Note: Reconciliation PRS/Full articulation of activities.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Key Data:

Income and Disability Assistance

- Indigenous people are overrepresented on the SDPR income and disability assistance caseload. In 2023, 17.8% of employable cases starting assistance self-identified as Indigenous, over three times the percentage of Indigenous people in B.C. Similarly, 17% of disability assistance cases starting assistance self-identified as Indigenous.

WorkBC Employment Services

- In FY 2023/24 the Ministry saw an increase in the number of Indigenous clients participating in WorkBC services and provided funding to 16 Indigenous focused Community and Employer Partnership (CEP) projects. See Note 51 - Services to Indigenous Peoples, for more information.

Background:

Implementing the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*

- Section 3 of the Declaration Act requires government to align all laws with the UN Declaration in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples.
 - SDPR activities include providing early notification of upcoming statutory and regulatory changes to the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), Métis Nation BC (MNBC), and Modern Treaty Nations.
 - Indigenous Peoples and organizations are being engaged to inform proposed BCEA legislative changes in a way that aims to meet the priorities, needs and distinct interests of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous groups.
 - SDPR shared material to support drafting approaches for updating the BCEA legislation, with a particular focus on enabling section 6 and 7 of the Declaration Act.
- Sections 4 and 5 of the Declaration Act require, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, the development of an Action Plan and Annual Report. SDPR leads two action items and supports an additional two actions in the Action Plan.

Accessible B.C. Act

- The Ministry engaged Indigenous Peoples in the development of the *Accessible B.C. Act* to identify opportunities to strengthen the legislation's alignment with the UN Declaration. For example, embedding requirements for representation by Indigenous Peoples to ensure a direct role in shaping how the legislation is implemented.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

- As per action 4.9 in the Declaration Act Action Plan, ongoing consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples is critical to identify, prevent and remove barriers for Indigenous persons with disabilities and will ensure that regulations developed under the *Accessible B.C. Act* align with the UN Declaration in accordance with the Declaration Act and reflect the input we receive from Indigenous Peoples.
- The Provincial Accessibility Committee works with government to provide advice on implementing the *Accessible B.C. Act*.
- Two Technical Committees have been appointed to develop standards for Employment Accessibility and Service Delivery.

Poverty Reduction Strategy

- Reconciliation is a guiding principle of TogetherBC, as government recognizes the lasting, harmful effect of colonial practices and policies on Indigenous Peoples.
- Ministry staff are engaging directly with Indigenous Peoples and organizations on the development of the renewed Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- Consistent with action 4.15 in the Declaration Act Action Plan, the renewed Poverty Reduction Strategy will incorporate Indigenous experiences and knowledge of poverty and well-being, including Indigenous-identified actions and progress measures.
- The Minister's Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee advises the Minister on poverty reduction and prevention and includes Indigenous representatives (3/12 members are Indigenous).
- Feedback from engagement sessions also influenced updates of the *Employment and Assistance Act* and *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*, which seeks to align the BCEA program with commitments to poverty reduction, equity and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, particularly regarding financial penalties, employment planning changes, and simplifying the appeals process. This feedback will also be considered for potential regulatory changes in the future.
- Since 2020, with support from the Ministry, the First Nations Public Service Secretariat, on behalf of the First Nations Summit, has distributed over \$20M in grants from the First Nations Well Being Fund to promote wellness and reduce poverty in First Nations communities in B.C., including Indigenous food sovereignty and food security initiatives.

Indigenous Skills and Employment Training

- In FY 2023/24, the Ministry focused on building and strengthening relationships with Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) service providers and advancing commitments to Action 4.41 of the Declaration Act Action Plan. See Note 51 – Services to Indigenous Peoples, for more information.

Social Services Sector Community Pathways to Reconciliation Project

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

- A total of \$9.6 million¹ in grants have been provided to the B.C. Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres in 2022 to lead the development and implementation of the Community Pathways to Reconciliation Project for the social services sector over the coming five years.
- There are four main components of the Community Pathways to Reconciliation Project including the development and implementation of: a Masters' Degree in Business Administration in Indigenous and not-for-profit services, an Organizational Assessment tool, a Safe Space app expansion, and San'yas (pronunciation: san-yas, way of knowing) 2.0 training.

Inclusion, Diversity and Cultural Safety Strategy

- The Ministry developed a three-year Inclusion, Diversity and Cultural Safety (IDCS) Strategy for staff in May 2022. This strategy builds on the first IDCS strategy and moves our focus from awareness and understanding to action with an internal focus on employee development and improving workplace culture. It is a three-year roadmap with a focus on cultural safety, equity and anti-racism, and inclusion and diversity.

As part of the IDCS Strategy, the ministry committed to developing an implementation plan for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. The ministry's approach to reconciliation is available on the ministry Intranet: The Loop. It identifies how the ministry aims to engage in respectful consultation, cooperation and engagement with Indigenous Peoples in the following areas: Programs, policies and legislation, Service delivery, and the Work environment.

Community Integration Services

- The Community Integration Services Branch (CISB) provides in-person services to individuals who are homeless, precariously housed or at risk of experiencing homelessness by connecting them with financial assistance and community supports.
- CISB continues to expand on the Surrey Indigenous Hub pilot project that took place in 2020. Building on the pilot, the Ministry continues exploring partnerships with Friendship Centres across the province. As of December 2023, there are 11 current partnerships in place and more are in the negotiation phase.
- The Community Integration Specialist job profile underwent a review to plain language the requirements, decolonize the language and remove systemic barriers to employment.

Ahousaht Funeral Pilot Project

- The Ministry continues to work with Ahousaht First Nation (pronunciation: A-house-sat) to ensure access to the Ministry's funeral services, allowing for reimbursement of

¹ Transfer of \$2.6M from the previous 2021 Indigenous Training program and \$7M in 2022 for the Community Pathways to Reconciliation Project.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

funeral costs (rather than pre-approval) based on existing program criteria and rates.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Poverty Reduction Strategy Act and Legislation

Date Last Revised: February 13, 2024

Key Points:

- The *Poverty Reduction Strategy Act* (PRSA), passed unanimously in 2018, set the framework for TogetherBC: B.C.'s first poverty strategy released in March 2019.
- The PRSA committed to reducing the poverty rate from 2016 Market Basket Measure (MBM) benchmarks by 25% for all persons and 50% for children by 2024.
 - B.C. first met its targets in 2019. Although poverty rates increased in 2021, B.C. continues to meet its legislated targets.
- The next Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), to be released by Spring 2024, will continue to advance a cross-government approach to poverty reduction across the areas of housing, supports for children and youth, income support, and employment among others.
- The Strategy will be informed by comprehensive engagement, including a distinctions-based Indigenous engagement, with those most impacted by poverty to ensure that future government actions support those who need it most.
- A key component informing the renewed PRS is a review of the legislation that governs the BC Employment and Assistance program to align with government's poverty reduction and reconciliation objectives.

Key Data:

- Using the latest MBM data (2021 statistics released May 2023), B.C. has met its targets.
 - Overall poverty rate. Goal: 25% reduction. Achieved: 45.0% reduction. From 16.0% in 2016 to 8.8% in 2021.
 - Child poverty rate. Goal: 50% reduction. Achieved: 54.6% reduction. From 17.4% in 2016 to 7.9% in 2021.
- Poverty statistics are reported with a two-year lag, meaning that the final results regarding 2024 targets will not be known until 2026.
- BC has the second highest overall poverty rate in Canada, and the 4th highest child poverty rate.

Background:

Legislation – *Poverty Reduction Strategy Act* (PRSA)

- The PRSA sets the framework for B.C.'s strategy including principles, priority areas, population groups, consultation, and reporting requirements.
- It requires government to prepare an annual report by each October 1 that describes actions to implement the strategy and effects on poverty reduction. The 2022 annual report was tabled in the legislature on October 5, 2023.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

- The legislation requires that the PRS be updated once every five years.

Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee (PRAC)

- As required by the PRSA, PRAC was formed in 2019 to advise the minister on poverty reduction and prevention.
- It includes representation from Indigenous organizations, unions, persons with lived experience of poverty, local government, rural and remote communities, and persons living with disabilities, among others.

Renewing the PRS

- The PRSA requires the PRS to be updated every five years, with the next update due to be released in Spring 2024.
- To inform the updated PRS, the ministry undertook a broad public engagement, including a survey, small group sessions, virtual regional townhall meetings, written submissions, and the opportunity for groups to self-convene using a “conversation toolkit.”
- A distinctions-based approach was used to develop engagement with Indigenous people and offered several engagement streams.
- Through our engagement, we heard from over 10,000 people, at least 70% with lived experience of poverty.
- A key component of updating the PRS is updating legislation that governs the BCEA program (the *Employment and Assistance Act* and the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*.)

More on Targets and Statistics

- B.C.’s poverty reduction targets use 2016 as the baseline year. That was the most current data available at the time (poverty statistics have a two-year data lag).
- Since 2016:
 - 313,000 fewer people living in poverty, including 77,000 fewer children.
 - Overall poverty rate dropped from 16% to 8.8%.
 - Child poverty rate went from 17.4% to 7.9%.
- BC first met its targets in 2019, primarily due to a number of significant federal and provincial programs, largely benefiting families.
- From 2020 to 2021, poverty rates increased, largely due to the ending of temporary federal and provincial COVID-19 relief payments.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Overdose Crisis

Date Last Revised: February 13, 2024

Key Points:

- The ministry recognizes that income and disability assistance clients are at increased risk of suffering an unregulated drug overdose.
- The ministry has processes to help clients who may be at greater risk of overdose, including direct deposit of funds, paying landlords directly, administering smaller cheques to avoid large sums of money being provided at once, and paying for alcohol and drug counselling services.
- To support people on assistance who are participating in alcohol and drug treatment, the ministry will pay daily user fees (per diems) directly to licensed residential treatment facilities and registered supportive recovery homes.
- The ministry provides the Housing Stability Supplement which allows clients receiving treatment in a residential care facility to maintain their usual place of residence.
- The ministry continues to work with experts to identify ways to reduce the risk from an unregulated drug overdose.

Accomplishments:

- The Housing Stability Supplement was introduced in 2023 and 1,511 singles and families have benefited from it since April 2023.

Key Data:

- 2,511 British Columbians died from unregulated drugs in 2023, the largest number of drug-related deaths ever recorded – nearly 7 per day.
- 9,508 clients have used the ministry's Alcohol and Drug Supplement, which pays for counselling services, from April to December 2023.
- 25% of all clients who rent have their rent paid directly to the landlord.
- 80% of all clients use direct deposit (EFT).

Background:

Processes to Reduce Impact of Cheque Days

- Research has shown that nearly half of all unregulated drug overdose deaths occur among existing or recent ministry clients, with overdose deaths increasing 40% in the week assistance cheques are distributed compared to non-cheque weeks.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

- To reduce overdoses, the ministry has procedures in place to limit the amount of assistance that an at-risk client receives at one time. For example, the ministry encourages clients to use direct deposit and direct payment of rent to landlords, and clients who have difficulty managing their money can have their payments administered by a third-party.

Support for UBC Study on Alternative Cheque Distribution Models

- Since 2015 the ministry has been supporting Professor Lindsey Richardson from UBC as she studies the impact of alternative income assistance cheque distribution models on clients with severe substance abuse problems. Her results have shown mixed results. While there were some positive results, including fewer spikes in drug use on government payment days and individual payment days for those with split and staggered cheques, there was a noticeable increase in exposure to violence, interactions with police and increased odds of a serious overdose. The ministry continues to work with Professor Richardson to better understand how we can reduce drug overdose deaths amongst clients while limiting other potential harms.

Supports for Clients Participating in Treatment

- For clients who wish to participate in alcohol and drug treatment programs, the ministry will pay the daily user fees (per diems) directly to licensed residential treatment facilities and registered supportive recovery homes. To reduce the risk that clients will lose their current shelter if they participate in treatment, the ministry implemented the Housing Stability Supplement in March 2023 which allows clients receiving treatment in a residential care facility to maintain their usual place of residence. Finally, clients can have their counselling services paid for through the alcohol and drug supplement.

Interjurisdictional

- Alberta is also experiencing an increase in drug overdose deaths – the death rate from drugs jumped to 41.1 per 100,000 population though August 2023, higher than the previous record of 36.7 deaths per 100,000 in 2021.
 - For comparison, BC's death rate was 45.7 per 100,000 population.
- Ontario hasn't released their statistics yet but early in 2023 announced that they were seeing a significant increase in deaths, with the number dying slightly above BC's.
 - However, as Ontario has a much larger population their death rate from drugs would be much lower than BC's rate.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Mandate Letter Commitments: Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development and Non-Profits

Date Last Revised: February 21, 2024

Key Points:

- In 2020, the role of Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development and Non-Profits was created in recognition of the sector, to act as the focal point and advocate.
- A key achievement of this role was announced in Budget 2022 where government committed \$30M towards a Non-Profit Recovery and Resiliency Fund to support organizations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.
- In 2023, an additional \$60M was allocated to support a diverse range of non-profit organizations across BC through the Stronger Community Services Fund.
- October 30, 2023, was commemorated as “Non-Profit Day” in recognition of the valuable contributions made by non-profits to B.C.

Accomplishments:

PS Dykeman has four mandate commitments, which include:

1. Continue work to support and engage charitable organizations and the non-profit sector by acting as their advocate and key point of contact within government.

Engagement:

- PS Dykeman continues to be a key point of contact and advocate for the non-profit sector, meeting with non-profits regularly.
- Since the creation of this role, PS Dykeman and her predecessor, PS Sharma, have collectively met with over 600 non-profit organizations and held many roundtables with local non-profits across BC.
- Key issues heard in these engagements include:
 - Need for targeted and reliable funding to build capacity, adapt to rising demand, and pivot to address changing community needs.
 - Need for streamlined funding and reporting processes.

Outcomes:

- Recognition: October 30th was proclaimed Non-Profit Recognition Day
- Communication: The newsletter and website developed in 2022 continue to provide updates and information directly to the non-profit sector.
- Addressing sector issues: PS Dykeman has been supporting the work of Ministry of the Attorney General to address key issues with the Lobbyist Transparency Act as identified by the sector. Work on targeted changes is underway in advance of a more fulsome review in 2025.
- Sector coordination: In March 2023, SDPR provided \$650,000 to Vantage Point to support the development of a provincial Non-Profit Network.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

- **Funding:** Two innovative new funds were created to support the sector in response to the key issues heard through engagement:
 - Recovery & Resiliency Fund – funded 167 organizations: 144 via Vancouver Foundation and 23 via New Relationship Trust.
 - An additional \$60M was allocated in 2023 towards the Stronger Community Services Fund, announced in October 2023. For more details, see 2024 Estimates Note: Support For Non-Profits.
- 2. Work with co-operative sector to support sector strengthening and modernization.
 - PS Dykeman continues to build connections with the sector, including supporting the current review of the Co-operative Association Act (Ministry of Finance lead).
 - In 2022, SDPR provided \$2M to the BC Cooperative Association to support co-op sector development.
- 3. Continue work to support the Minister of SDPR's food security mandate, including recognizing the impacts of global inflation and extreme weather events on household food security for British Columbians.
 - In 2023, PS Dykeman hosted a food security roundtable with non-profit organizations in the Fraser Valley to discuss key issues related to food security and how to create a robust, sustainable food security system going forward.
 - Input from this meeting, as well as other meetings with food security organizations, is informing SDPR's food security mandate.
- 4. Support the work of the Minister of Housing to protect and expand non-profit, non-market, and co-op housing in B.C.
 - This work is under development with the Ministry of Housing as the lead.

Key Data:

- There are over 31,000 non-profits throughout the province, employing over 335,000 people, 74% of whom are women.
- Non-profits make an economic contribution of \$28B to the province's gross domestic product (GDP) and \$6B in volunteer hours, the equivalent of more than 147,000 jobs.

Background:

- Non-profits do critical work to enrich people's lives and support their basic needs from arts, culture and sports to health, social services, and environmental advocacy.
- All ministries work with non-profits to deliver on government priorities.
- In recognition of the importance of the sector, the PS role was created in 2020 and Niki Sharma was appointed. PS Dykeman was later appointed to this role in December 2022.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Supports for Non-Profits

Date Last Revised: February 23, 2024

Key Points:

- All ministries, including SDPR, work with non-profits to deliver on government priorities including housing, childcare, healthcare, employment supports, legal services, and community development, among others.
- In YE 2022-23, SDPR allocated over \$160M in grants to non-profit organizations in B.C. to address key community issues including poverty reduction, accessibility, and food security.
- Key investments included (See Appendix A for full list):
 - \$60M to Vancouver Foundation to establish the Stronger Community Services Fund, which built on the \$30M 2022 Recovery and Resiliency Fund.
 - \$14M to United Way BC to launch a Critical Food Infrastructure fund for community organizations supporting food security.
 - \$5M to the Rick Hanson Foundation to support a range of accessibility projects and policy development to remove barriers and create a culture of inclusion.
 - \$650,000 to Vantage Point to develop a Non-Profit Network in BC.
- Non-profits have also benefitted from the creation of the role of Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development and Non-Profits in 2020 to be the focal point and advocate for the sector in government. Then-MLA Sharma was the first PS appointed to this role. PS Dykeman was appointed to this role in December 2022.

Accomplishments:

- In response to feedback from over 600 non-profit organizations starting in 2020, SDPR funded two new Funds based on trust-based philanthropy principles in 2022 and 2023.
- Both provide unrestricted, multi-year grants through new and innovative approaches that reduce barriers and administrative burden.

Recovery and Resiliency Fund & Stronger Community Services Fund (SCSF)

- In Budget 2022, SDPR committed \$30M towards a Non-Profit Recovery and Resiliency Fund to support organizations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.
- Building on the Recovery and Resiliency Fund, an additional \$60M was allocated to the Vancouver Foundation in 2023 to establish the SCSF.
- The funding is being distributed by Vancouver Foundation across four streams:
 - Lighthouse Organizations Fund (\$22.9M): Funding for large multi-service organizations with a provincial or regional footprint that support poverty reduction, have experienced increased demand and were ineligible last year due to their size.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

- Approximately \$3M from this Fund is being distributed by New Relationship Trust, an Indigenous-led funder, to Indigenous-led non-profits.
- Community Prosperity Fund (\$25M): Supported by Community Foundations Canada, grants for local organizations across B.C., delivered by community foundations.
- Recovery & Resiliency Fund (\$7.1M): Flexible multi-year funding of \$72,000 per year to applicants who were eligible for the 2022 Recovery and Resiliency fund.
- LEVEL BIPOC grants (\$5m): Funding up to \$50,000 to BIPOC-led non-profits to advance racial equity and racial justice in their communities.
- Of the four funding streams, the Community Prosperity Fund is still available, with applications to open in April 2024.

Sector Recognition and Capacity Building

- October 30, 2023, was commemorated as “Non-Profit Day” in recognition of the valuable contributions made by non-profits to B.C.’s economy and social fabric.
- In March 2023, SDPR provided \$650,000 to Vantage Point to support the development of a provincial Non-Profit Network, work is currently underway.

Food Security Funding

- In 2023, SDPR provided over \$50M to non-profit partners supporting food security.

Accessibility Funding

- Funding for supports for people with disabilities through the Rick Hansen Foundation (\$5M), the BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (\$1M), BC Spinal Cord Injury Network (\$2M), Disability Alliance B.C. (\$2.3M) and others.

Key Data:

- For statistical data regarding the non-profit sector please refer to note number 38.

Budget/Financial Context:

- In 2023, SDPR provided a series of year-end grants to non-profits to advance ministry priorities, including supports for non-profits, accessibility, and food security.
- In total, \$166.43M was distributed to 31 sector organizations. See Appendix A.

Background:

Community Gaming Grants

- Provides \$140M annually to not-for-profit organizations throughout B.C., to support the delivery of ongoing programs and services that meet the needs of their communities.
- Funding to the Vancouver Foundation in 2022 and 2023 has sought to fill crucial gaps not covered by other Gaming grants or other sources, with a focus on organizational resilience.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Appendix A:

Table 1: Overview of 2022/2023 Fiscal Year End SDPR Funding.

APPENDIX A FOR SDPR ESTIMATES NOTE #39

	Organization	Funding Amount (\$ millions)	Initiative(s)	Announced as of March 25, 2024
1	Vancouver Foundation	60.00	For continued intakes of the Recovery and Resiliency Fund and continued support of non-profits across BC	Yes
2	Vantage Point	0.650	Research to support development of a BC Not-for-Profit Network to enhance the overall voice, presence, coordination, and recognition of BC's not-for-profit sector and to facilitate collaboration and resource-sharing. Coordinate a 2023 State of the Sector report regarding the impact of the pandemic on BC non-profits	Yes - To be announced Feb 09
3	First Nations Summit	15.000	To support additional intakes of the First Nations Well-Being Fund.	Yes
4	Vancouver Foundation	2.700	To support delivery of the Access Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) program.	Not announced
5	BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS) and Inclusion BC	0.200	Funding for large-scale public accessibility events and gatherings.	Not announced
6	BCANDS	0.825	To support the Disability Case Management / Navigator Program for Indigenous person or families living with a disability. The program assists clients to access services and supports across the province.	Yes
7	BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres	10.350	Funding for the Gathering Our Voices (GOV) Legacy Fund to support Indigenous youth across the province to attend the annual GOV event which provides exposure to future employment and training opportunities.	Yes
8	BC Spinal Cord Injury Network	2.000	Initiative will provide funding to a network of five organizations to support initiatives that align with government priorities in the areas of access and inclusion, mental and physical health, employment, poverty reduction, and Indigenous reconciliation, including the creation of a shared Indigenous liaison position.	Yes
9	Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)	0.370	To support delivery of Deafblind Community Services	Yes
10	Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information			

Table 1: Overview of 2022/23 Fiscal Year End Funding Provided to Non-Profits				
	Organization	Funding Amount (\$ millions)	Initiative(s)	Announced as of March 25, 2024
11	Disability Alliance B.C. (DABC)	0.825	DABC will partner with MOSAIC to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide PWD/PPMB application assistance within MOSAIC's Legal Advocacy Program. • Build capacity and develop mentorship opportunities between the organizations to support the Accessibility for Newcomers Program. • Make it possible for DABC's PWD advocates to access MOSAIC's interpretation services across 80 different languages. MOSAIC's interpretation service will be utilized during client appointments for DABC advocates assisting with PWD/PPMB applications. 	Not announced
12	The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre	0.600	Expand programs and services for women made vulnerable in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and support renovation and accessibility upgrades to 161 E. Pender Street, Vancouver location.	Yes
14	Immigrant Link Centre Society	0.300	Funding to build on innovative practices to support food access for immigrants, refugees, and newcomers.	Yes
15	Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia Society (SPARC)	5.000	Funding for a Local Government Accessibility Grant. This funding to be distributed by a third-party familiar with the needs of local governments to access grants for one-off projects that would identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers around the province.	Yes
16	Rick Hansen Foundation	5.000	Funding would support a range of accessibility projects and policy development to remove barriers and create a culture of inclusion.	Yes
17	Support Network for Indigenous Women and Women of Colour	0.300	Funding to improve access to culturally preferable food for Indigenous women and women of colour in the capital region.	No
18	Victoria Foundation	1.300	Funding will support the Food Security (Provincial Initiatives) Fund, including food redistribution and Indigenous food security and food sovereignty projects	Yes
19	Island Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre (IDHHC)	0.845	Through the Sound of Change program, IDHHC has provided low-cost refurbished hearing aids to over 675 low-income seniors (2016 - 2021) as well as audiological assessments and sees 120 - 140 clients entering the program annually.	Not announced

Table 1: Overview of 2022/23 Fiscal Year End Funding Provided to Non-Profits				
	Organization	Funding Amount (\$ millions)	Initiative(s)	Announced as of March 25, 2024
20	Loaves & Fishes Community Food Bank	7.000	Support construction costs of a centralized Food Recovery and Distribution Warehouse in Nanaimo, BC.	Yes
21	Cloverdale Community Kitchen	0.044	Support purchase and installation of a commercial dishwasher and walk in cooler to maintain and expand existing food programming to waitlisted community members.	Yes
22	Fateh Care Charity	0.070	Supports for the mobile food bank program including refrigeration storage and a vehicle to transport food and necessities to service users.	No
23	Britannia Community Services Centre Society	0.080	Support food security programming in East Vancouver including critical infrastructure upgrades and capital improvements through purchasing of an HVAC, walk-in cold food storage, and other commercial kitchen equipment.	No
24	LIFT Impact Partners Society	0.806	Funding to support diverse community organizations strengthen or advance food security programs services for people in need.	No
25	United Way BC	14.000	Funding would support launch of a Critical Food Infrastructure fund for community organizations. Areas of focus could include cold storage, warehouse space, and transportation to improve fresh food access and support food delivery and waste diversion.	Yes
26	United Way BC	7.500	Support expansion of UWBC regional community food hub programming, including new hubs in Northern BC and Southern Vancouver Island, and support coordination of effective community food access responses through an advisory committee.	Yes
27	Food Banks BC	15.00	Funding will support food access programming, crisis response, ongoing recovery support for communities impacted by climate emergencies, and work towards long-term planning and more sustainable food security outcomes.	Yes
28	Disability Alliance BC Society	1.437	Continuation of the Tax Assistance and Information for People with Disabilities (Tax AID) program until 2027.	Not announced

Table 1: Overview of 2022/23 Fiscal Year End Funding Provided to Non-Profits

	Organization	Funding Amount (\$ millions)	Initiative(s)	Announced as of March 25, 2024
29	WISH Drop in Centre Society	0.054	Support three one-time critical infrastructure and systems needs including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrades to failing door and security system • Plumbing upgrades and repairs • Implementing an HR Information System (WorkZoom) to support the Centre's 200+ staff with currently manual HR processes. 	Yes
30	MakeWay Charitable Society	0.025	Support for the Binners' Project's social enterprise programs that provide low barrier income opportunities for binners, also known as waste-pickers. These programs have the triple benefit of increasing waste diversion, social inclusion, and community economic development	Yes
31	Overdose Prevention Society	0.021	Funding for the DTES Distribution HUB which would support purchase of supports to ensure continued program operations and a move to a new location. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving specialized equipment (freezers and fitted appliances): \$11,000 • Storage containers and shelving to move and organize the HUB at a new location: \$10,000 	Yes
32	Langley Meals on Wheels Society	0.350	Support for elevator accessibility infrastructure upgrades to ensure inclusive access to food programming.	Yes
33	BabyGoRound Helping Families Society	0.150	Funding will leverage partnerships with gear manufacturers and support bulk purchase of the anticipated baby gear required for 3 years, ensuring families have continued access to essential baby items.	No
34	Downtown Chilliwack Business Association Society	0.125	Street Clean Teams Program Funding will support the Downtown Chilliwack Street Clean Teams, a peer support program that employs people living in local shelters to clean downtown streets in Chilliwack each weekend and assist with snow removal/drainage in the winter. The program is led in partnership between the Downtown Chilliwack Business Improvement Association and Ruth & Naomi's Mission.	Yes https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2023SDPR0034-000922
35	Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria – Coordinated Personal ID Services	0.2	Funding will be used to help individuals navigate the complex and confusing processes of obtaining identification that is essential to access services, including health care, housing and income assistance.	Yes

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Residential Facilities

Date Last Revised: March 15, 2024

Key Points:

- The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction pays user fees on behalf of people on assistance who are living in residential care facilities and assisted living residences based on rates set by the Ministry of Health.
- These user fees are paid directly to facilities that are licensed or registered under the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*.
- These facilities provide service under three categories:
 - Community care (seniors, persons with disabilities);
 - Mental health; and
 - Substance use.
- The user fees for these facilities are:
 - Licensed community care facilities \$1,417.00 per month (\$46.59 per day).
 - Licensed mental health and substance use facilities: \$45 per day.
 - Registered mental health and substance use facilities, including supportive recovery homes (SRH): \$35.90 per day.
- In addition, the Ministry provides recipients with a monthly comforts allowance to help pay for sundry items.
 - Recipients with the Persons with Disabilities designation: \$222/month.
 - Recipients who do not have the Persons with Disabilities designation: \$115/month.

Accomplishments:

- Effective June 1, 2024, as part of Budget 2024, the daily rate for mental health and substance use facilities will increase from \$35.90 to \$60 for registered bed-based services and \$45.00 to \$70 for licensed bed-based services.
- This rate increase is part of Budget 2024's investment of \$117 million over the next three years to continue supporting British Columbians in response to financial strains experienced by bed-based service providers due to rising inflation and costs of service delivery.
- Previously, in March 2021, the monthly comforts allowance was increased from \$95 to \$115 per month for income assistance recipients. On October 1, 2019, user fee rates were increased for mental health and substance use facilities for the first time in 10 years.
 - Licensed facilities received a 12.5% increase (from \$40/day to \$45/day).
 - Registered facilities received a 16% increase (from \$30.90/day to \$35.90/day).

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Key Data:

- The ministry supports approximately:
 - 1,252 people on assistance per month across 321 community care facilities,
 - 845 people on assistance per month in 133 mental health facilities/homes and,
 - 1,891 people on assistance per month in 156 substance use facilities/homes.

Budget/Financial Context:

	2022/23		2023/24		2024/25
	Budget	Actuals	Budget	Actuals	Budget
Residential Care Facilities (includes Community Care and Mental Health Facilities)	\$32.3M	\$29.9M	\$29.9M	\$22.0M	\$39.90
Substance Care Facilities	\$18.1M	\$18.8M	\$19.1M	\$14.4M	\$31.00
Total	\$50.4M	\$48.7M	\$49.0M	\$34.4M	\$70.9

Background:

Community Care Facilities

- The Ministry of Health (MoH) has an individualized income-based rate structure that requires residential care clients to pay a monthly charge of 80% of their after-tax income, with minimum and maximum rates.
- Ministry rates are aligned with the monthly structure and pay the MoH minimum rate.
- Each year on January 1st, the minimum rate for licensed community care facilities is adjusted based on the maximum monthly total amount of Old Age Security (OAS) and Guaranteed Income Supplements (GIS) as of July 1, of the previous year.

Mental Health and Substance Use Facilities

- Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and Ministry of Health set the rates for licensed and registered mental health and substance use facilities, in collaboration with SDPR.
- The rates were last increased in 2019 and will be increased as of June 2024.
 - Licensed facilities were increased from \$40 to \$45 per day (12.5%).
 - Registered facilities were increased from \$30.90 to \$35.90 per day, including supportive recovery homes (16%).

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

- The SRH sector continues to advocate for the daily rate user fee to increase from \$35.90 to \$50 per day. User fees rates were last increased on October 1, 2019 and will be increased as of June 2024.

Supportive Recovery Homes (SRH)

- A SRH is a registered substance use facility and must be registered through the MoH's Assisted Living Registry, under the Community Care and Assisted Living Act, to be eligible for the daily rate user fee.
- The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR) continues to collaborate with MoH and the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions to improve supports and services for people experiencing mental health and substance use issues.

Maintaining Stable Shelter

- While in a residential care facility, the Housing Stability Supplement maybe be provided for up to six months to maintain a client's usual place of residence. In extenuating circumstances, an additional three months to a maximum of 6 months may be provided.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: On-Reserve Supports

Date Last Revised: February 15, 2024

Key Points:

- SDPR provides Income Assistance (IA) and Disability Assistance (DA) to eligible people who live off-reserve in British Columbia (B.C.).
- Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) provides funding and policy direction to First Nations that deliver IA/DA to eligible people who live on-reserve in B.C.
- ISC's social development programs are intended to be reasonably comparable to B.C.'s programs and standards.
- The following First Nations are not required to meet comparability requirements and can design their own programs:
 - First Nations who have signed treaties.
 - First Nations that have signed "10-Year Grants" with ISC

Accomplishments:

- ISC regularly implements SDPR rate and policy changes for on-reserve recipients.
 - Key recent examples include: SDPR's maximum shelter allowance increase, Indigenous financial settlement exemption, and other recent rate increases (e.g., crisis supplements, diet-related supplements).
- SDPR and ISC have also aligned other important services:
 - The BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS) is an ISC contractor that adjudicates PWD Designation and Monthly Nutritional Supplement applications for people living on-reserve, using the same criteria as SDPR.
 - SDPR has a reimbursement agreement with ISC to ensure that people living on-reserve can access the BC Bus Pass program and Community Living BC services.

Key Data:

- As of December 31, 2023, 73 First Nations in B.C. have signed 10-Year Grant agreements with ISC.

Background:

- Since 2002, ISC and SDPR have been working together to ensure that people receive comparable services regardless of where they live in B.C.
- This work supports ISC's requirement for policy comparability with the province.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

- In April 2019, ISC introduced a funding mechanism called “10-Year Grants”: A New Fiscal Relationship, which consolidates funding for several core programs, including IA/DA, into one fund, reduces reporting requirements, and provides First Nations with flexibility to design and deliver their own programs.
- Because of the relationship between federally funded programs on-reserve and provincial programs off-reserve, any changes to provincial assistance legislation, regulations, policy, or programs directly impact federal budgets, programs, and services as well as on-reserve IA/DA recipients.
- While there is alignment in many areas, not all programs and services are comparable; disparity still exists in some areas such as health supports, general supplements, and employment programs.
- Shelter policy differences have been an ongoing concern from some Nations. SDPR considers rent as an allowable shelter cost, whether there is a mortgage on the home. On-reserve IA recipients are only entitled to shelter allowance in two circumstances:
 1. If the First Nation establishes a universal rental regime to ensure rent is applied fairly to all tenants.
 2. For social housing when there is an outstanding mortgage with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.
- Some First Nations have not implemented a universal rental regime, which means that IA recipients living on those Nations’ reserves will not receive shelter funds if they are charged rent by a private homeowner.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Homelessness Initiatives

Date Last Revised: February 13, 2024

Key Points:

- Homelessness is a complex social and economic issue that requires collaboration amongst all levels of government to properly address.
- It is estimated that in 2021, 26,240 individuals experienced homelessness across the province.¹
- Government takes a cross-ministry approach to both prevent homelessness and respond quickly to assist people experiencing homelessness to become stably housed.
- As part of this approach, Budget 2023 allocated \$499 million to SDPR over three years to increase the maximum shelter allowance by \$125 for income and disability assistance clients effective August 1, 2023; the first increase to maximum shelter rates since 2007.
- The ministry continues to review the BCEA program to make improvements that will align with this cross-government approach to homelessness.

Accomplishments:

- From 2022/23 to 2025/26, the ministry has allocated \$678 million towards homelessness initiatives (see Budget and Background).

Budget/Financial Context:

Item (Budget 2022)	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Expand/Enhance CIS Team	\$14.4M	\$24.2M	\$24.2M	\$24.2M
Minimum Shelter Allowance	\$11.0M	\$11.0M	\$11.0M	\$11.0M
Housing Stability Supplement	\$10.0M	\$10.0M	\$10.0M	\$10.0M
Clarify Moving Supplement Policy	\$1.0	\$1.0M	\$1.0M	\$1.0M
Welcome Home Kits	\$1.0	\$1.0M	\$1.0M	\$1.0M
Total Budget 2022	\$37.4M	\$47.2M	\$47.2M	\$47.2M
Item (Budget 2023)	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Shelter Allowance Increase (Budget 2023)	N/A	\$131.0M	\$183.0M	\$185.0M
Total Budget 2023	N/A	\$131.0M	\$183.0M	\$185.0M

Data Source: FASB

¹ Source: Most recent data available from Preventing & Reducing Homelessness: An Integrated Data Project.

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Background:

Details of Initiatives to Date

Expanding and enhancing the Community Integration Specialist (CIS) team (Budget 2022).

- Community Integration Specialists work directly with people in the communities they serve, creating relationships with clients and community partners and connecting people experiencing homelessness to various government and community supports.
- Budget 2022 announced that the number of CIS workers would increase from 73 to approximately 190 positions. That target has since increased to 200 positions.
- As of December 31, 2023, there are 165 CIS workers.
- There are 11 teams with funding for 17 positions per team. The 17 positions are based on homelessness data by census areas, Complex Care Housing sites, possible partnerships with Friendship Centres, as well as ministry client data of individuals with no fixed address (including encampments).

Welcome Home Kits (April 2022)

- Budget 2022 granted \$1million to the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) which developed the Welcome Home Kit program which provides kits for individuals who secure housing. Kits contain essential items (e.g., dishes, towels, bedding) needed to establish stable living arrangements. The approximate value of each kit is \$450.
- Approximately 2,000 kits are distributed each year.

Implementing a minimum shelter allowance (April 2022)

- This benefits homeless recipients who may have incidental expenses but have little or no actual shelter costs.
- The minimum shelter allowance is based on the number of people in the family. The minimum rate for a single person is \$75.
- The minimum shelter allowance benefits approximately 12,000 clients each month.

Clarifying the Moving Supplement (July 2022)

- This initiative supports individuals in their transition from homelessness to housing by clarifying that the moving supplement can be provided to those experiencing homelessness.
- This clarification will help reduce barriers for clients experiencing homelessness in their

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

search for housing, including broadening their search for housing options in more affordable communities.

- Approximately 1,200 clients transition from homelessness to housing per month.

Implementing the Housing Stability Supplement (HSS) (March 2023)

- The HSS assists clients in maintaining their living arrangements when there is an absence of a family member or a change in circumstance.
- The HSS replaces a former policy which only permitted for the shelter allowance to be maintained. The HSS now provides up to the prescribed maximum support and shelter allowances based on previous family unit size to meet shelter costs.
- The HSS expands the number of eligible scenarios to help clients maintain their housing and prevent homelessness.
- The HSS was provided to 1,511 clients between April and December 2023.

Increase to Maximum Shelter Allowance (August 2023)

- Budget 2023 increased the maximum shelter allowance by \$125 for income and disability assistance clients.
- A shelter allowance is provided to eligible recipients to cover allowable shelter costs such as rent and utility payments. On August 1, 2023, the maximum shelter allowance for a single increased by \$125 to \$500.
- This increase assists approximately 122,000 cases in paying for their shelter costs.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Food Security

Date Last Revised: February 2, 2024

Key Points:

- Food security is a key challenge for many people living in British Columbia (BC) that has only become more pressing with inflation and the rising cost of living.
- Food insecurity has increased substantially in British Columbia (BC) in recent years, with food banks experiencing historic levels of demand.
- SDPR has invested over \$66 million in food security initiatives:
- Between 2019-2022, SDPR invested over \$16 million in targeted food security funding and more than \$10 million to support poverty reduction initiatives with food security components.
- In 2023, SDPR allocated over \$50 million to strengthen food banks, food distribution and food access via Food Banks BC, United Way BC and other community partners.
- Food insecurity was a top theme in the 2023 engagement with over 10K people in BC (70% with lived experience) to renew BC's poverty reduction strategy (PRS) for 2024 and is expected to be a key theme in the strategy.

Key Data:

- In 2021, the Canadian Income Survey showed that 16.8% of people living in BC experienced food insecurity (an increase from 14.9% in 2020).
- Demand for food banks in BC has increased to historic levels (20% increase between 2022-2023; 57% since 2019).
- In March 2023 (latest available data), there were 195,925 food bank visits in BC.
- Indigenous people are 25% more likely to live in poverty than non-Indigenous people and represent 12% of food bank users (vs. 5.6% of the population).

Financial Context:

- As an unfunded mandate item for SDPR, the ministry has leveraged year-end funding to advance progress including:
 - Over \$50 million in year-end 2023 to support food banks and other crucial food access programs, with the majority funded as part of a \$200 million historic investment.
 - \$16 million between 2019-2022 in targeted food security funding with an additional \$10 million to support poverty reduction initiatives with food security components, including supports for Indigenous Peoples.

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Background:

- Food insecurity is inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial or other constraints.
- While primarily an income issue, food insecurity is complex and impacted by factors such as the rising cost of food and other core expenses such as housing and utilities, transportation, mobility challenges, social isolation, and the long lasting and ongoing impacts of colonialism and other systemic inequities.
- In 2022, 16.8% of BC families reported experiencing some form of food insecurity (ranging from mild to severe/chronic). This number has likely increased in 2023.
- Food insecurity is most prevalent in populations facing high poverty rates, including income and disability assistance clients, Indigenous Peoples, single working-age individuals, single female-led families, people who are marginally housed or unhoused, immigrants and newcomers, and people with disabilities.
- Effectively addressing food security requires strategic coordination across ministries, sectors, and jurisdictions, to support an integrated food security approach.
- SDPR is working with internal and external partners to develop a long-term approach to improve food security, while simultaneously working to ensure that people have immediate access to food when they need it the most.

Cross-Ministry and Cross-Sector Collaboration

Food Security Steering Committee

- Since 2020, SDPR has played a key leadership role in government by co-chairing the cross-government Executive Director Food Security Steering Committee (FSSC) with AF and the Ministry of Health (HLTH).
- The FSSC is working to develop an integrated, effective provincial approach to food security across ministries that is informed by engagement with Indigenous Peoples and external partners.

Food Access Advisory Committee

- The Food Access Advisory Committee (FAAC) was convened in Summer 2023 by United Way BC to help inform SDPR's food security mandate.
- Comprised of key food security leaders across BC, the FAAC shared their final report in Fall 2023.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Immigration/Refugees

Date Last Revised: February 1, 2024

Key Points:

- The BC Employment and Assistance Program is intended to provide assistance to low-income people who are in BC on a longer-term residency basis, rather than individuals who come to Canada temporarily. Citizenship requirements are set out in regulation.
- Recently, the federal government has taken a new approach to providing refuge for people fleeing armed conflict in their home countries, using ad hoc humanitarian pathways to respond to geopolitical crises around the globe, such as providing:
 - displaced Ukrainians an expedited Canada-Ukraine Emergency Authorization (CUAET) Process,
 - special permanent resident pathway for Colombians, Haitians, and Venezuelans to come to Canada,
 - permanent residence in Canada to people impacted by the war in Sudan, or,
 - Palestinians fleeing Gaza a temporary resident visa valid for up to 3 years.
- While many of these people would most likely meet the definition of “refugee”, the federal government has chosen to not classify them as refugees. This prohibits them from accessing federal government support normally provided to sponsored refugees.
- BC has seen a significant increase in refugee claimants and other displaced persons who have come through these new immigration pathways.

Accomplishments:

- On July 1, 2023, the ministry amended regulations to allow temporary residents who are fleeing armed conflict abroad, such as displaced Ukrainians, to meet the citizenship requirement, allowing them to apply for income and disability assistance.

Key Data:

- *Refugee Claimants:* The number of refugee claimants (e.g. asylum seekers) receiving assistance began to rise in early 2022 and the growth has continued to accelerate. From December 2021 to December 2023, the number of refugee claimants has nearly tripled, from 1,594 in December 2021 to 4,595 in December 2023 (up 188.3%).
- *Displaced Ukrainians:* the federal government has shared, in confidence, to expect 30,000 CUAET visa holders to arrive in Canada before March 2024. BC consistently receives 10% of all CUAET arrivals (3,000). 500 families are in receipt of assistance.
- *Other displaced persons:* Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MUNI) estimates about 8,000 people will arrive in BC through these new humanitarian pathways by March 2024.

Background:

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- There are many different immigration pathways for a person to enter Canada. These immigration pathways are determined by the federal government.

Refugees:

- There are two main types of refugees: **Refugee Claimants** and **Sponsored Refugees**.
- Both groups are eligible to apply for income and disability assistance.
 - **Refugee Claimants** travel to Canada and make a claim upon arrival (“asylum seekers”). Claimants are not eligible for the federal government’s Resettlement Assistance Program.
 - **Sponsored Refugees** apply for refugee status outside Canada and are sponsored to come to Canada by either the federal government, family, a private sponsor, or a mixture. Sponsored refugees are supported for up to one-year by the federal government’s Resettlement Assistance Program.

New Immigration Pathways to Canada:

- Canada has recently implemented ad hoc pathways for people fleeing humanitarian crises.
- In addition to the CUAET process, in April 2023, the federal government announced three new humanitarian immigration pathways establishing permanent residency for people from South America and Sudan, and a temporary resident visa for Palestinians fleeing Gaza.
- People entering Canada through one of the new ad hoc pathways are not eligible for the Resettlement Assistance Program.
- The federal government has adopted a new concept of an “anchor” family member in Canada who is responsible for financially supporting newcomers for up to 1 year.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Canada Dental Care Program

Date Last Revised: February 1, 2024

Key Points:

- In December 2023, Canada announced the launch of the Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP).
- The CDCP is currently in a phased enrollment stage, starting with seniors, then people with a valid Disability Tax Credit (DTC) certificate, and lastly children under 18 years old.
- Services for enrolled seniors are anticipated to begin in May 2024, followed by people with valid DTC certificate and children as they enrol in the CDCP this year; with full implementation for families with an annual income of less than \$90,000 by 2025.
- The Ministry of Health (HLTH) is the lead ministry for British Columbia (BC) working with Canada on the development of the CDCP.
- Ministry staff are working closely with Canada and our colleagues at HLTH to understand how the programs intersect and how the CDCP will impact Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR) dental programs.

Accomplishments:

SDPR is working to:

- Ensure ministry clients are fully supported to access the CDCP.
- Negotiate to establish the CDCP as the first payer when coordinating benefits with SDPR's provincial dental programs.

Key Data:

- The CDCP is intended to provide support for up to 9 million uninsured Canadian residents once it is fully implemented.
- As of December 31, 2023 (9 months), approximately 113,500 people have accessed treatment through SDPR's dental programs in FY 2023/24, which is an increase of approximately 2,500 people when compared to the same period last year.

SDPR Dental Program Statistics:

	Clients Served 2021/22	Clients Served 2022/23	Clients Served 2023/24*
Dental and Orthodontic (including Healthy Kids Program)	130,298	128,011	113,503

Data Source: Pacific Blue Cross Dental Program Reports

*As of December 31, 2023

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Budget/Financial Context:

- Canada has publicly committed to invest \$13 billion over five years, and \$4.4 billion ongoing to implement the CDCP, as outlined in their Budget 2023.

SDPR Dental Program Budget:

	2022/23		2023/24		2024/25 Budget
	Budget	Actuals	Budget	Actuals*	
Dental and Orthodontic (including Healthy Kids Program)	\$60.2M	\$52.9M	\$52.9M	\$42.1M	\$55.7M

Data source: FASB

*Preliminary Actuals as of December 31, 2023

Background:

CDCP:

- The intent of the CDCP is to help ease financial barriers to accessing oral health care for uninsured Canadian residents with an annual family income of less than \$90,000.
- The CDCP is also intended to fill gaps in coverage and complement existing provincial and territorial dental programs.
- Details such as basket of services, fee schedules, and co-pay amounts have just been finalized and made public.
- Canada has encouraged provinces and territories to maintain their existing dental programs and to continue investing in oral health.
- SDPR has met with other provinces and territories, who are also working to understand intersections and implications for their own provincial dental programs.
- SDPR will continue to work to understand the CDCP, the intersections with our programs, and how to best support our clients to maintain good oral health.

SDPR Dental Programs:

- The intent of BC Employment and Assistance (BCEA) dental supplements is to help with the cost of dental treatment for ministry clients and their children.
- The BC Healthy Kids program provides dental coverage to children in lower-income families, who are not ministry clients.
- Former clients who are eligible for Medical Services Only or Transitional Health Services maintain access to their existing dental benefits while eligible for those programs.
- SDPR's dental coverage is similar to other provinces, although it has the lowest dental rates for adults for government-funded dental programs in Canada.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Canada Disability Benefit

Date Last Revised: February 7, 2024

Key Points:

- In consultation with provinces, territories and the public, the federal government is developing a Canada Disability Benefit (CDB).
- The purpose of the Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) is to reduce poverty and to support the financial security of working age persons (18-64) with disabilities.
- BC looks forward to continuing its participation in the development of the CDB, however, more details are required before a decision can be made on the treatment of this income if received by ministry clients.

Accomplishments:

- The ministry has been engaging with Canada on the development of the CDB since July 2021.
- To date, no financial details of Canada's plans for the CDB have been shared with us.

Budget/Financial Context:

- An exemption for the CDB, if received by ministry clients, will have financial implications in terms of forgone savings and potential caseload growth. More details on the CDB are required to fully understand these implications, which will impact the ministry's decision on an exemption.
- No other provinces or territories have determined if the Canada Disability Benefit will be exempt as they also require this information to make a decision.

Background:

- Bill C-22 (the *Canada Disability Benefit Act*) received royal assent on June 22, 2023. The *Act* comes into force on or before June 22, 2024.
- The *Act* requires that regulations be made within 12 months of its coming into force. This means regulations must be in place no later than June 21, 2025. This deadline does not apply to actual CDB payments which may occur once this date has passed.
- Details such as eligibility, administration, and benefit amounts are not yet known. These will be established through regulations.
- Consultation with the public and the disability community to inform the development of the regulations began on November 15, 2023, and closed on January 4, 2024.
- Consultation with Provinces and Territories is ongoing.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Spousal Rates

Date Last Revised: February 13, 2024

Key Points:

- For assistance purposes, two people are spouses if they are married, declare that they are in a marriage-like relationship, or the ministry conducts an assessment and determines they are in a marriage-like relationship.
- Eligibility for income and disability assistance is based on family income.
- Shelter rates are determined by family size. The maximum shelter rate for a single individual is \$500 per month. The maximum shelter rate for a couple (no children) or single parent (one adult, one dependent child) is \$695 per month.
- Support rates are determined according to the size and composition of the family unit (i.e., number of adults, dependent children).
 - The support rate for a single employable individual on income assistance is \$560 per month. The support rate for an employable couple (no children) on income assistance is \$955 per month.
 - The support rate for a single individual on disability assistance is \$983.50 per month. The support rate for a couple (no children, one adult has PWD designation) on disability assistance is \$1,378.50 per month.
- As couples who are married or in a marriage-like relationship share expenses, such as rent and bills, their assistance rate is less than for two individuals.

Key Data:

- There are 9,171 cases consisting of couples (both with and without children) receiving income and disability assistance.

Budget/Financial Context:

As of December 2023:

Family Type	Cases	Recipients	Payments
Couples (IA/DA)	4,376	8,752	\$8,626,941
Two Parent Families (IA/DA)	4,795	20,862	\$11,547,756
Total	9,171	29,614	\$20,174,697

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Background:

- As part of *TogetherBC*, BC Government's first poverty reduction strategy, the ministry updated the definition of "spouse". The main changes are:
 - The length of time unmarried people reside together before they are assessed as spouses was increased from three months to 12 months, aligning with the Canada Revenue Agency definition; and
 - Married spouses who are separated but living together independently may be considered separate family units.
- These changes treat people in relationships more fairly. They allow unmarried couples trying out a marriage-like relationship to receive more assistance over a longer period, and they provide housing stability for married spouses who are separated and reside together but are not divorced.
- The ministry now uses the following criteria to assess spousal relationships:
 - The individuals have lived together for at least the previous 12 consecutive months;
 - The relationship demonstrates financial dependence or interdependence consistent with a marriage-like relationship; and
 - The relationship demonstrates social and familial interdependence consistent with a marriage-like relationship.
- Other provinces' assistance programs follow this same basic framework.
- The support allowance for a family unit consisting of a couple (i.e., two adults) is lower than the combined support allowance rate provided to two separate family units with a single adult in each.

Support rates

Income assistance	Disability assistance
Employable Single: \$560	Single: \$983.50
Employable Couple (no children): \$955	Couple (no children, one PWD): \$1,378.50

- This results in a reduction in total support allowance when two adults form a family unit.
- This policy is frequently criticized by advocates and clients.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Inflation

Date Last Revised: February 2, 2024

Key Points:

- All British Columbians are feeling the impact of high inflation, but clients and others living in low income are finding it difficult to pay for necessities such as food and rent.
- To help clients with rising shelter costs, the ministry increased shelter rates by up to \$125 on August 1, 2023, the first shelter rate increase since 2007.
- Since 2017 the ministry has raised rates five times, providing clients with \$450 more per month to help pay for food, clothing, and rent.
- Ongoing ministry efforts to reduce poverty, food insecurity and period poverty will continue to help low-income British Columbians through not only the current period of inflation, but also future challenges caused by climate change and supply issues.

Accomplishments:

- Implemented a \$125 shelter rate increase on August 1, 2023, the first increase since 2007.
- \$100 per month earnings exemption increase for Income Assistance recipients and \$1,200 per year annual earnings exemption increase for Disability Assistance recipients, effective January 2024.
- Effective August 2023, there were increases to the BCEA supplementary assistance budget for items such as the crisis supplement, food-related health supplements, and other one-time specific general supplements.

Key Data:

- Inflation in BC was 3.9% in 2023, down from 6.9% in 2022.
 - Food purchased from stores increased by 7.1% in 2023, while average rents increased by 7.3%.
- Over 136,000 income and disability assistance clients are benefitting from the shelter rate increase, or over 75% of all clients.
 - The cost (client benefit) of the increase is \$16 million per month - \$120 per impacted client.
- An estimated 4,100 disability assistance cases and 6,600 income assistance cases will benefit from the increase in earnings exemptions.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Budget/Financial Context:

Incremental Increases in Budget 2023:

Policy Change (\$million)	2023/24	2024/25
Shelter Rate Increase	130.690	183.233
Earnings Exemptions	0.202	4.985
Affordability Changes	13.900	16.600

Source: Financial Administration Services Branch

Background:

- While inflation averaged 3.9% in 2023, the cost of living for people living in low income was 5.2% - the difference being that low-income people spend a higher proportion of their total income on food purchased from stores and rent.
- The percentage of income and disability assistance cases that paid more for their shelter than the maximum shelter benefit has fallen from 73% to 54%.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Community and Employer Partnerships (CEP)

Date Last Revised: February 16, 2024

Key Points:

- The goal of the Community and Employer Partnerships (CEP) fund is to increase training and work experience opportunities for people in communities across B.C.
- CEP projects deliver a wide range of employment and skills-training services and innovative initiatives to help to make life better for people and their families while strengthening local labour markets and contributing to economic growth.
- The CEP budget for next fiscal year is unknown pending LMDA negotiations.

Accomplishments:

- 75% of individuals who participated in a Project Based Labour Market Training project obtained employment in in-demand occupations including construction and related trades, health, childcare and education and supply chain.
- 60% of individuals who participated in a Job Creation Partnership project obtained employment in in-demand occupations including construction, scientific and administrative.

Key Data:

- As of December 31, 2023, a total of 2,640 individuals have participated in CEP projects.

Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information

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Background:

- Since the implementation of CEP in 2012:
 - 677 CEP agreements have been funded; and
 - 7,131 people gained work experience and employment training.
- CEP ensures funding is accessible and equitably distributed throughout the province by prioritizing applications that:
 - Support people to ensure they have all the employment supports needed to be able to participate fully in the labour market.
 - Provide individual and community tailored training and work experience opportunities with industry recognized certifications in priority sectors.
 - Have the greatest and most immediate impact on employment outcomes.
- There are four CEP streams:
 - Job Creation Partnerships support local projects that provide work experience and skills enhancement to eligible job seekers to help them obtain sustainable employment.
 - Labour Market Partnerships support and facilitate strategies and activities to address local labour market or human resources issues.
 - Project Based Labour Market Training supports local projects that provide a combination of on the job and/or off the job employment training to eligible participants to help them obtain sustainable employment.
 - Research and Innovation supports exploration to find better ways of delivering programming to help individuals find or return to work.
- CEP participants are supported through WorkBC. CEP works with a wide network of post-secondary and training institutions. If any concerns emerge CEP supports project participants by following up directly to address emerging concerns, and complaints.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Labour Market Transfer Agreements – LMDA & WDA

Date Last Revised: February 14, 2024

Key Points:

- BC has two Labour Market Transfer Agreements (LMTA) with Canada, administered between the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR) and the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (PSFS).
- Through the Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) and the Workforce Development Agreement (WDA), the federal government provides B.C. with approximately \$470M per year.
- LMTAs support over 110,000 British Columbians annually to participate in a diverse employment and skills training services to secure good jobs, including:
 - 102 WorkBC Centres across BC and province-wide apprenticeship services;
 - Innovative cohort-based skills training and diverse programs designed to meet the needs of vulnerable and underrepresented groups, including persons with disabilities, to prepare people for participation in the labour market, and gain skills for good jobs across in-demand sectors;
 - Services and supports to meet the needs of communities, sectors, and employers to build the experience and skills of the workforce and to connect employers with job seekers.

Accomplishments:

- Through LMTA funded services, over 80% of people find jobs or get into further education or training for sustainable employment.

Key Data:

- Annually, over 110,000 people access LMTA funded programming each year, including over 80,000 through WorkBC Employment Services.
- Over 70% of people accessing LMTA services identify with one or more underrepresented group, advancing B.C.'s goals for inclusive growth and an economy that works for everyone.

Budget/Financial Context:

- In place since 2017/18, incremental LMTA top up funding is set to expire March 31, 2024, which if not continued, will result in an estimated \$73.7M reduction in annual funding **for B.C.** (comprised of \$46.5M under the LMDA and \$27.2M for the WDA).

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

- In 2023/24, **SDPR** received \$46.5M under LMDA, and \$8.1M under a transfer from the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills through the WDA (part of the total \$27.2M received by the Province).

Background:

- LMTAs are critical in B.C.'s overall strategy to develop an inclusive, resilient, and adaptable labour force and to the province's ability to provide programs, services, and supports to prepare workers with the skills needed for today and for the future, and to match skilled workers with employers in high demand sectors.
- LMTA investments are supporting people, employers, sectors, and communities - advancing key government priorities to ensure a skilled workforce including housing, construction, skilled trades, the health and social sectors and emerging demand in the clean economy.

Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information; Intergovernmental Communications

- **Reporting:** Under the terms of the LMTAs, B.C. must submit the following to Canada:
 - annual LMDA and WDA Plans,
 - annual LMDA and WDA Reports including audited financial statements,
 - quarterly client-level reporting, and
 - annual public reporting.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Appendix 1: Labour Market Development Agreement

Administered by SDPR, the Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) is a funding agreement between the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.

- The funding agreement provides B.C. with over \$300 million annually to deliver employment programming and supports to British Columbians.
- The LMDA is an ongoing agreement signed in February 2008 and fully implemented in February 2009, providing B.C. with \$2.3 billion over a seven-year period from 2017/2018 to 2023/2024.
- Through WorkBC, the LMDA supports over 80,000 job seekers each year to access the employment and skills training services they need to prepare for, find, and get good jobs.
- LMDA funding supports WorkBC Employment Services, WorkBC Apprentice Services, and the Community and Employer Partnerships fund that supports innovative cohort-based skills training initiatives to help people gain the skills the need for good jobs across in-demand sectors and prioritizes services to underrepresented groups and vulnerable citizens.
- Programming and funding provide a wide range of inclusive and flexible services to meet the needs of all British Columbians, employers, in-demand sectors, and communities.
- LMDA funding also supports sector labour market partnerships, employer training grants, research and innovation, labour market information, WorkBC.ca and the online Job Bank through the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills.

LMDA Amendment – Official Languages

- The LMDA termination notice related to official languages resulted in Canada and B.C. recently negotiating an amended agreement, restoring the LMDA in perpetuity, in alignment with all other jurisdictions.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Appendix 2: LMTA Funding Allocations

Labour Market Development Agreement Funding Allocation

Fiscal	Base Program Funding	Incremental Funding	Targeted Funding*	Admin Funding	Total Funding
2017/18	\$278,354,408	\$13,576,215	\$6,873,508	\$20,535,000	\$319,339,131
2018/19	\$276,944,000	\$24,437,187	\$7,503,560	\$20,535,000	\$329,419,747
2019/20	\$275,522,390	\$25,184,810	\$2,548,952	\$20,535,000	\$323,791,152
2020/21	\$273,893,674	\$34,825,928	N/A	\$20,535,000	\$329,254,602
2021/22	\$273,505,313	\$44,970,363	N/A	\$20,535,000	\$339,010,676
2022/23	\$275,211,299	\$49,418,557	N/A	\$20,535,000	\$345,164,856
2023/24	\$275,380,128	\$46,474,213	N/A	\$20,535,000	\$342,389,341
Subtotal	\$1,928,811,21	\$238,887,273	\$16,926,020	\$143,745,000	\$2,328,369,505

***Targeted Funding:**

2017/18: Forestry Workers only (Softwood Lumber Action Plan)

2018/19: Forestry Workers \$4,954,608 + Steel and Aluminum impacts \$1,562,541 + Seasonal Workers \$986,411

2019/20: Seasonal Workers \$986,410 + Steel and Aluminum impacts (\$1,562,542)

Workforce Development Agreement

Fiscal	Base Program Funding*	Incremental Funding	Total Funding
2017/18	\$96,069,514	\$9,475,683	\$105,545,197
2018/19	\$97,709,057	\$9,738,268	\$107,447,325
2019/20	\$98,788,201	\$18,511,929	\$117,300,130
2020/21	\$97,236,731	\$26,935,382	\$124,172,113
2021/22	\$97,885,051	\$27,114,972	\$125,000,023
2022/23	\$98,092,493	\$27,172,436	\$125,264,928
2023/24	\$98,092,493	\$27,172,436	\$125,264,928
Subtotal	\$686,873,539	\$143,121,107	\$829,994,645

Persons With Disabilities (PWD) Funding:

Each year \$27.7M of Base WDA Program Funding must be spent on PWD programs. A portion of the incremental funding must also go to PWD expenditures.

Admin funding is allocated as 10% of Total Funding.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Services to Indigenous Peoples

Date Last Revised: February 16, 2024

Key Points:

- The ministry is committed to working with Indigenous rights holders and organizations in the spirit and intent of Reconciliation and in a manner that aligns with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and the Distinctions-Based Approach guidance.
- The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction is supporting the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, which is leading work to meet government's commitment set out in Action 4.41 of the Declaration Act Action Plan.
- The Employment and Labour Market Services Division (ELMSD) is leading our work to ensure that our employment programs and policies meet the needs of Indigenous people.
- Indigenous job seekers across BC can access employment services and supports through Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) centres and/or WorkBC centres.
- The ministry collaborates with provincial and federal colleagues, Indigenous governments, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous service providers, to build relationships and enhance services to Indigenous Peoples in BC.

Accomplishments:

- In FY23/24 the ministry invested \$27.3M in strategic investment initiatives to advance the objectives of Action 4.41 of the Declaration Act Action Plan (see Appendix 1).
- The ministry has been actively engaging with ISETs and First Nations to ensure Community and Employer Partnership (CEP) projects demonstrate respect for Indigenous values, culture, and protocols, and are mutually beneficial to the contract holder and Indigenous partners.

Key Data:

- Indigenous clients served by WorkBC from April 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023:
 - In 2023/24, about 6,100 clients who self-identify as Indigenous are participating in WorkBC services, compared to about 5,100 the prior year.
 - 2,180 Indigenous clients actively participated in Skills Enhancement.
 - Over 220 Indigenous clients were supported in partnership with other agencies to access wrap-around support in a culturally sensitive manner through external referrals to other community agencies or employment services.
 - 2,400 Indigenous clients are being supported through their first year of employment.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Budget/Financial Context:

- Investments in Indigenous Peoples and communities, from April 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023:
 - \$4.57M financial supports to Indigenous clients, as compared to \$2.7M for the same time last year.
 - \$6.9M to support 16 Indigenous-focused CEP projects that provided work experience to 317 participants.
 - \$27.3M to Indigenous organizations through two strategic initiative grants (see Appendix 1).

Background:

- Indigenous job seekers can access the full suite of WorkBC services and supports which include case management, employment-focused workshops, job development, skills training, self-employment, and client financial supports.
- CEP funds community-based organizations to respond to local labour market needs across BC. With the help of this fund, Indigenous communities can see job creation, positive social impacts, economic growth, more employment opportunities, and poverty reduction.
- The ISET program is a federally funded program for Indigenous Peoples to improve job skills and find employment.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Appendix 1: Indigenous Focused Strategic Investment Initiatives

- \$4 million to the First Nations Public Sector Secretariat (FNPSS) to plan and deliver programming to increase the employment of First Nations people in First Nations public sector administration. The funds will support First Nations public sector organizations to recruit, train, and retain First Nations employees and increase the capacity of First Nations governing bodies to meet the needs of their communities.
- \$23.3 million to the New Relationship Trust (NRT) to establish a third-party granting program for First Nations governments and Indigenous organizations. The project will test low-barrier ways of administering labour market funds to Indigenous partners, increase access to funding, and empower Indigenous communities to undertake activities to meet the labour market needs of their communities.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Services to Persons with Disabilities (PWD)

Date Last Revised: February 16, 2024

Key Points:

- WorkBC supports government's goal to make B.C. more inclusive for everyone.
- Community and Employer Partnerships (CEP) projects focus on improved employment outcomes for all clients, including those with disabilities.
- The WorkBC Assistive Technology Services contract supports people to overcome disability-related barriers in the workplace.
- SDPR supports job opportunities for persons with disabilities by engaging with employers to shift perspectives and hiring practices and through ongoing collaboration with the ministry and the Presidents Group.
- Employer-targeted marketing material promotes WorkBC as a place to find job seekers with a diverse range of skills and access to assistive technologies.

Accomplishments:

- 39% of clients who self-identified as people with disabilities have an employment outcome or community attachment (volunteer opportunity).
 - This compares to 44% from the previous year, and 43% from 2021/22.
- CEP projects focused on improved employment outcomes provided over \$1M for up to 113 people with disabilities, as of December 31, 2023.

Key Data:

- In 2023/24, as of December 31, 2023, WorkBC served about 10,660 people with disabilities who completed a Disability Related Employment Needs Assessment.

Budget/Financial Context:

- Services for clients with disabilities are funded through a combination of funding from the Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA), Workforce Development Agreement (WDA) and the Provincial budget and use the existing WorkBC infrastructure to deliver supports and services.
- Client Milestone Fees were enhanced in March 2023 for service providers, supporting services to people with disabilities.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Background:

- WorkBC ensures people with disabilities have the supports needed, including:
 - Employment planning, case management, and customized workshops;
 - Specialized assessments and employment related disability supports such as assistive devices; equipment and technology; ergonomic/restorative supports, attendant services; interpreting services, and workplace access and modification;
 - Placement services including individualized and customized job development support, job coaching, and extended on the job follow up support when needed;
 - Access to skills training, self-employment, and work experience;
 - Access to supports to retain employment that is precarious due to disability; and
 - Services to students with disabilities who require support to successfully transition from school to the labour market.
- In 2020/2021, the Ministry funded a variety of multi-year grants through the Workforce Development Agreement (WDA), designed to support an inclusive post-pandemic labour market, targeting some of the most vulnerable and underrepresented British Columbians.
 - This included targeted initiatives for people with disabilities to address gaps in current services across B.C. See Appendix 1 for further details.
- In 2022/2023, the ministry funded projects intended to test new methods of employment service delivery. These include grants that support persons with disabilities. (See Appendix 1)
- Clients with disabilities include:
 - British Columbia Employment Assistance (BCEA) Persons with Disabilities (PWD) designation;
 - BCEA clients with disabilities;
 - Employment Insurance (EI) clients with disabilities; and
 - General clients with disabilities (individuals who are not receiving any level of government support).

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Appendix 1

Recent WDA & LMDA funded grants for persons with disabilities

Organization & Project	Objectives	Funding (approx.)
<p>National Institute of Disability Management and Research (NIDMAR)</p> <p>Building a Workplace Culture of Accommodation</p>	<p>Support employers in British Columbia to maintain equitable employment for workers who are dealing with a mental or physical health impairment through a return to work and disability management education and program support initiative.</p>	<p>\$6,000,000</p>
<p>National Institute of Disability Management and Research (NIDMAR)</p> <p>Reducing Poverty for Persons with Disabilities through Early Intervention and Effective Occupational Rehabilitation</p>	<p>Support persons with disabilities to remain in the workforce through early intervention, occupational rehabilitation, medical evaluation, job coaching, workplace accommodation, and opportunities to maintain employment with pre-disability employers.</p>	<p>\$4,000,000</p>
<p>Small Business BC</p> <p>Employer Supports for Persons with Disabilities</p>	<p>To address gaps in supports for employers in British Columbia who have hired or want to hire persons with a disability.</p>	<p>\$4,800,000</p>
<p>Small Business BC</p> <p>Awareness, Education, and Support – British Columbia Small Business Community</p>	<p>This project addresses the need for education, awareness, and tools to assist small business owners in understanding accessibility by providing them with the educational tools and resources to create and maintain an accessible workplace.</p>	<p>\$3,000,000</p>

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Organization & Project	Objectives	Funding (approx.)
<p>Foundry BC Foundry Works - Individualized Placement Support model</p>	<p>Supplement existing employment services and support youth with mental health and substance use issues to develop skills and gain paid work experience to successfully transition into the labour market.</p>	<p>\$5,000,000</p>
<p>Foundry BC Foundry Youth Peer Support: Creating an Inclusive Foundation for an Emerging Helper Profession</p>	<p>Hire Youth Peer Support Workers from diverse backgrounds, including youth who identify as Indigenous, gender-diverse, neuro-diverse, youth in care or who have aged out of care, youth from racialized populations, youth from rural and remote communities and youth with disabilities.</p> <p>Through the expansion of the Youth Peer Support Model, provide improved services to a greater number of youth in-need at Foundry centres and in the community</p>	<p>\$16,200,000</p>
<p>CanAssist Employment for Youth with Disabilities</p>	<p>Establish a Network for Youth with Disabilities to identify and address best practices, gaps, duplications, and strategies for the future of employment services for Youth with Disabilities.</p> <p>Determine a provincial strategy for Youth with Disabilities that will improve the employment outcomes for this demographic</p>	<p>\$4,000,000</p>

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Organization & Project	Objectives	Funding (approx.)
<p>CanAssist</p> <p>Closing the Employment Gap for People with Disabilities: Innovative Assistive Technology Solutions</p>	<p>Provide individuals with personalized technologies designed to address specific barriers to successful employment.</p> <p>Conduct research on the efficacy of and best practices for integrating a customized assistive technology program into existing employment services.</p>	<p>\$1,000,000</p>
<p>Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)</p> <p>Supporting employers to build psychologically safe and healthy workplaces for employees living with mental illness(es)</p>	<p>Develop a self-paced learning module for employers and leaders to better understand the importance of psychological safety in the workplace, strategies to prevent burnout, and skills to support the success of all employees, including those living with mental illness(s), substance use challenges, and concurrent disorders.</p>	<p>\$700,000</p>
<p>Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)</p> <p>Links to Employment – Primary Care Centres</p>	<p>Expand the Links to Employment program to include service delivery in two new BC sites to increase access to British Columbians in need of these integrated specialized employment and mental health services.</p> <p>At the existing and new sites, to provide integrated and evidence based services to individuals requiring the level of care provided by a Primary Care Centre.</p>	<p>\$8,200,000</p>

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Organization & Project	Objectives	Funding (approx.)
<p>Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)</p> <p>Links to Employment – Bed Based Recovery</p>	<p>Provide enhanced employment services, including pre-employment skills, skills for success, and a range of mental health and substance-use interventions to individuals at five bed-based treatment sites.</p>	<p>\$4,900,000</p>
<p>Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)</p> <p>Growing CNIB BC's Come to Work Employment Program: Youth and Indigenous Outreach</p>	<p>This project will scale up CNIB's employment program operations in British Columbia to respond not only to the COVID-19 pandemic's negative impact on talent with sight loss, but to overcome the systemic barriers that impact employment for youth with sight loss and Indigenous people experiencing sight loss.</p>	<p>\$2,500,000</p>
<p>Delta Community Living Society (DCLS)</p> <p>IMPACT 2.0</p>	<p>To address employment rates for youth with developmental disabilities by intervening with youth as they transition from school to work.</p>	<p>\$2,000,000</p>

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Title: Single Parent Employment Initiative (SPEI)

Date Last Revised: February 16, 2024

Key Points:

- Launched in 2015, SPEI provides eligible single parents on income assistance or disability assistance with increased support to find and keep a job, through WorkBC Employment Services:
 - Up to two years of training for in-demand jobs or a paid work experience placement while remaining eligible for assistance.
 - Childcare costs covered while participating in SPEI and throughout the first year of employment.
 - Assistance with transportation costs while participating in SPEI.
- SPEI participants are more likely to be employed in occupations typically requiring college education or apprenticeship training.

Accomplishments:

- As of December 2023, 1,856 clients found employment in a variety of in-demand occupations in sectors such as retail, health, construction, and community service.
 - Just over 79% of SPEI participants had an employment outcome, compared to 31% for those who did not participate¹.

Key Data:

- As of December 31, 2023, 2,640 participants have received SPEI services.
- There was a 5.4 % increase in SPEI participation from the previous year (see Appendix 1 for yearly statistics).
- As of December 2022, approximately 97% of the SPEI participants are women.
- Average wage of employment achieved by participants is over \$20.00/hour.
- The top three jobs participants are pursuing in their training are:
 - Early Childhood Educators & Assistants
 - Nurse Aide / Orderly
 - Social / Community Service Worker

Budget/Financial Context:

- The Ministry leverages LMDA funding where appropriate and uses the existing WorkBC infrastructure to deliver SPEI supports and services.

¹ Single parent clients who have participated in WorkBC Employment Services but have not received any SPEI-like services (e.g., wage subsidy services/ supports, occupational skills training/ supports, or Dependent Care support) during the first year of employment.

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- Average cost per SPEI participant is over \$6,400/participant annually.
- Over \$39.2² million has been spent on SPEI since it launched in 2015, comprised of \$24.1M in provincial funds and \$15.1M in federal funding through the LMDA.

Background:

- SPEI supports single parents who want to pursue employment and move towards financial independence.
- Since the implementation of SPEI, the Ministry introduced increased earnings exemptions for families receiving income assistance. As of January 1, 2024:
 - All families with children eligible for Temporary Assistance have a \$900 per month earnings exemption.
 - Temporary Assistance-eligible families who care for a child with a severe disability have a \$1,080 earnings exemption.

² Program to date expenditure reporting methodology has recently been updated, and as such these figures may differ from previous reports.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

APPENDIX 1: Public Reporting – SPEI Report

As of (end of the month)	Single parents who participated in SPEI since program began in 2015	Of those, have found employment since program began in 2015
October 2018	1,962	1,021
November 2018	1,988	1,049
December 2018	2,024	1,085
December 2019	2,153	1,346
March 2020	2,188	1,404
December 2020	2,258	1,473
March 2021	2,288	1,509
December 2021	2,389	1,618
December 2022	2,505	1,738
March 2023	2,541	1,749
December 2023	2,640	1,856

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: WorkBC Overview and Results

Date Last Revised: February 20, 2024

Key Points:

- WorkBC Employment Services are delivered through 102 centres, and a strong online presence, to provide services that can be accessed from anywhere in the province.
- The program utilizes an outcomes-based funding model, where an individual's success in the job market is prioritized.
- Since 2019/20, the WorkBC Employment Services program has served on average about 80,000 people a year, with the exception of 21/22 when it was 71,000 clients due to the pandemic.
- In 2023/24, the number of people being served has increased, and is expected to exceed 92,000.
 - The increase in people being served is primarily driven by immigration.

Key Data:

- As of December 31, 2023, over 82,300 clients were actively receiving services, with 65,800 being case managed, compared to the same period in the previous year, with 68,300 clients receiving services, of which 53,600 were being case managed.
- As of December 31, 2023, over 29,800 clients are being supported through their first year of employment, up from previous year (28,700).
 - 55% of clients achieve employment that provides sufficient income to be financially independent. For those accessing basic services, the success rate may be understated due to service providers having difficulty confirming employment after client loses contact (see Appendix 1).
 - Those who participate in more intensive services have greater success - 81% of those in Wage Subsidy, and 80% of those in Skills Trainings achieve employment.
 - about 79% (up from 76% for 2022/23) of case managed clients self-identify as belonging to one or more client inclusion groups (see Appendix 2)
- In 2023/24, as of December 31, 2023, the WorkBC client satisfaction score is 72.
- Assistive Technology Services offers adaptive technology to help people with disabilities pursue employment opportunities.
 - In 2023/24, as of December 31, 2023, over 1,600 clients have been served.
- In 2023/24, as of December 31, 2023, over 13,100 apprentices have participated in the WorkBC Apprenticeship program.

Budget/Financial Context:

- In 2023/24, funding totaled \$372.7M including (see Appendix 3):
 - \$342.4M under LMDA (including \$20.5M in LMDA Administration funding).

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- \$30.3M in provincial funding.
- Of the total funding, the commitment to WorkBC Programs, including Community and Employer Partnerships (CEP), is \$292.3M annually. In 2023/24, the funding allocated to WorkBC Programs increased to \$312.9M due to increased investment in CEP. The remainder covers administration of the program, transfers to the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, and other strategic investments.
 - \$253.4M for WorkBC Employment Services contracts
 - \$13.5M in centralized funding for Apprentice Services
 - \$5.9M in centralized funding for Assistive Technology Services
 - \$25M for CEP contracts
 - \$15M in centralized funding for clients participating in CEP projects

Background:

- The program provides comprehensive services and supports based on individual client needs ranging from independent self-serve services to intensive case management. These services and supports help the client become employment ready.
- Currently, 27 organizations hold contracts for the delivery of WorkBC Services through 47 contracts. The proportion of WorkBC contracts is approximately 58% held by local non-profits, 36% by for-profit organizations, and 6% by public institutions.
- Supports and services offered through WorkBC include:
 - Resume preparation
 - Assistance with job search
 - Employment counselling and support
 - Interview preparation
 - Employment related workshops
 - Employment needs assessments
 - Short-term certification
 - Skills training (funding for tuition and living supports)
 - Preparation for self-employment
 - Customized employment
 - Wage subsidy
 - Job development
 - Job coaching
 - Follow-up support for job maintenance & retention
- The Service Plan Performance Measure for WorkBC was changed as of FY2023/24 to focus on clients' experience with the program measured by the Satisfaction Score from the new WorkBC client survey (See Appendix 4).

APPENDICIES:

Appendix 1: WorkBC Employment Program Outcomes

Appendix 2: 2023/24 Client Inclusion Groups and Employment

Appendix 3: Employment Programs Budget Summary

Appendix 4: Ministry 2024/25 – 2026/27 Service Plan

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Appendix 1: WorkBC Employment Program Outcomes

Percentage of WorkBC Clients who achieve Sustainable Employment (Since April 2019)	
Overall, for all clients who participate in the WorkBC employment services	55%
Clients who only receive Job search support	55%
Clients who participate in Wage subsidy	81%
Clients who participate in Skills Training	80%
Clients who receive Financial Supports	72%

- On average, within 16 weeks, WorkBC clients attain some form of employment, including part-time job, full-time job, or self-employment.
- After about 26 weeks of time, WorkBC clients achieve sustainable employment.
- It normally takes about 56 weeks of time to accumulate 52 weeks of sustainable employment.

Appendix 2: 2023/24 Client Inclusion Groups and Employment

Clients in Inclusion Groups as of December 31, 2023 (not mutually exclusive)

	Total clients served in FY	In Sustainment during FY	Achieved Sustainable Employment in FY
Immigrants	27,721	10,720	4,636
Youth	18,946	7,354	2,997
Persons with Disabilities	12,158	3,902	1,332
Survivors of Violence and/or Abuse	8,546	3,057	1,082
Indigenous Peoples	6,143	2,403	887
Multi-Barriered	3,598	1,236	405
Francophones	1,871	723	278
All Inclusion Clients	52,202	19,923	7,971
All WorkBC Case-Managed Clients	65,839	25,917	10,143

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Appendix 3: Employment Programs Budget Summary

\$millions Funding Source:	2022/23 Actuals	2023/24 Budget	2024/25 Plan²	2025/26 Plan²	2026/27 Plan²
Provincial	\$29,168,000	\$30,272,000	\$30,896,000	\$30,896,000	\$30,896,000
LMDA	\$387,722,302	\$321,854,341	\$275,562,000	\$275,669,000	\$275,669,000
LMDA-Admin	\$20,574,191	\$20,535,000	\$20,535,000	\$20,535,000	\$20,535,000
Total	\$437,464,493	\$372,661,341	\$326,993,000	\$327,100,000	\$327,100,000
% change budget:	17.26%	-14.81%	-12.25%	0.03%	0.00%

¹ Budget 2022/23 includes additional funding of \$67.8M because of unspent funds from FY20/21.

² Base funding only in 2024/25, and 2025/26 as federal government's Budget 2017 top up will expire.

Appendix 4: Ministry 2024/25 – 2026/27 Service Plan

Objective 2.2: Job seekers have access to high quality services and supports they need to find and keep meaningful employment.

Performance Measure[s]	2022/23 Baseline	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target
[2d] WorkBC Client Satisfaction Score ¹	75	75	76	76	77

Data source: Employment and Labour Market Services Division, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, WorkBC Employment Services Client Intake Survey, In-Progress Survey and Exit Survey.

¹ WorkBC Client Satisfaction Score represents the overall client satisfaction with WorkBC services. Scores range from 0 to 100, with higher scores being considered better. The score represents the number of clients responding "satisfied" or "very satisfied" out of all survey respondents.

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Title: WorkBC Employment Services, Communities in Transition

Date Last Revised: February 20, 2024

Key Points:

- In 2023, there continued to be lay-offs in the forest sector from temporary and permanent mill closures.
- Government recognizes the need for a rapid response to impacted communities.
- The Community in Transition (CIT) Program, led by the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation (JEDI) with support from the Ministries of Forests and Labour, provides a coordinated response to communities facing significant job loss and a one-window access to government programs through Community Transition Tables.
- SDPR funds WorkBC centres which participate in the local tables in impacted communities to ensure supports are in place for impacted workers. SDPR may also provide funding to affected communities through the Community and Employer Partnerships Program.

Accomplishments:

- In March 2023, SDPR funded a \$3 million community grant (over 2 years until February 2026), Build Your Own Future, with Hubspace that supports the development and delivery of a new method of entrepreneurship training for professionals impacted by mill closures. The focus is to support individuals who already have business concepts by providing entrepreneurship skills.

Key Data:

- Since January 2023, there have been Community Transition Tables active in impacted communities in response to closure announcements (see Appendix 1).
- SDPR responded quickly and engaged local WorkBC service providers to participate in local tables to support impacted workers and the broader community.
- SDPR leveraged Community and Employer Partnerships (CEP) to increase employment and work experience opportunities in impacted communities.
 - CEP funded 10 projects totalling \$10.3M this fiscal year to December 31, 2023. The CEP projects CIT tables as opportunities for impacted workers. One of the funded projects was a labour market study that supported economic development by helping the community understand their local labour market challenges. Other projects provided skills training and work experience opportunities to support

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

underrepresented workers to gain sustainable employment in jobs that address local labour market demands. Sectors included transportation, security, technology, natural resources, care and social economy, and construction/trades.

Background:

- The downturn in the forestry sector began in Fall 2018.
- The number of impacted workers varied throughout 2019-2020, at the peak, there were 45 mills in closure or curtailment status, affecting approximately 7,000 workers and 25 communities. Closures and curtailments slowed during the Covid 19 pandemic.
- CIT responses are limited to rural communities, as larger urban communities have more services available, and the local government has capacity to respond to the situation.
- The primary driver of the significant job loss is mill closures and curtailments (both permanent and temporary).

Appendix:

- Appendix 1 - Ongoing Community Transition Tables

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Appendix 1

- Ongoing Community Transition Tables (as of January 2024):
 - Fraser Lake - announced Jan 22/24, indefinite mill curtailment at West Fraser sawmill (175 impacted workers, plus 70 from previous shift reduction earlier in the year)
 - Campbell River/Gold River - announced Dec 18/23, permanent closure, TRAFIGURA Mining Group, Myra Falls Mine (300+ impacted workers)
 - Williams Lake – announced Apr 17/23, permanent mill closure Tolko, Soda Creek Sawmill (180 impacted workers)
 - Terrace - announced Feb 6/23, permanent closure, ROC Holdings, Skeena Sawmills and Skeena Bioenergy (150 and impacted workers)
 - Port Alberni – announced Jan 26/23, permanent closure, Western Forest Products, Alberni Pacific Division Mill (117 impacted workers)
 - Crofton – announced Oct 6/22, Paper Excellence, permanent closure of paper machine (150 impacted workers); announced Jan 25/24 further permanent closure of paper operations (75 impacted workers)
- Concluded Community Transition Tables:
 - Vanderhoof – announced Aug 3/23, concluded Dec 31/23, permanent shift reduction, Sinclair Group, Nechako Lumber (60 impacted workers)
 - Chetwynd – announced Jan 25/23, concluded Oct 4/23, permanent closure, Canfor, Chetwynd Sawmill (180 impacted workers)
 - Houston – announced Jan 25/23, concluded Dec 12/23, two-year curtailment, Canfor, Houston Sawmill, (330 impacted workers) as well as Chetwynd, Canfor, Houston Sawmill and Bioenergy, Pellet Plant (180 impacted workers)

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- Prince George – announced Jan 11/23, concluded Sept 12/23, permanent mill closure, Canfor, Prince George Pulp and Paper (300 impacted workers)
- Fort St. John/Taylor – announced Feb 16/22, concluded Jul 19/23, permanent closure, Canfor, Taylor Pulp Mill (120 impacted workers)

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Apprenticeship Services

Date Last Revised: February 20, 2024

Key Points:

- WorkBC Apprentice Services provides Employment Insurance (EI) eligible apprentices, who are registered with SkilledTradesBC (formerly Industry Training Authority), with supports to achieve journeyman status including:
 - eligibility for financial assistance during the in-school portion of their apprenticeship program; and,
 - help with expenses such as living supports, travel, living away from home, childcare and disability-related costs.
- WorkBC Apprentice Services provides in-person, outreach, and virtual service delivery to apprentices through a province-wide contract that processes applications and financial support payments.
- British Columbia Labour Market Outlook advises over the next decade 83,000 job openings are expected in the skilled trades with apprentices essential to address the skills gap.

Accomplishments:

- As of December 31, 2023, attendance in apprenticeship training increased approx. 4% over the same period last fiscal year (7,597 vs 7,292).

Key Data:

- In 2022/23 there were 12,420 attendees in apprenticeship training.
- As of December 31, 2023, there were 7,597 attendees in apprenticeship training.

Budget/Financial Context:

- The annual maximum the Province is obligated to pay the Contractor under this contract for total Fees and Financial Supports is \$13,478,338:
 - \$12,000,000 for Apprentice Financial Supports;
 - \$1,078,338 for Contractor Fixed Fees; and
 - \$400,000 for Contractor Additional Services Fees.
- In 2022/23, \$11,148,891.87 was paid.
- As of December 31, 2023, \$12,726,370.03 was paid.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Background:

- In 2018, the Ministry posted a formal Request for Proposals for a provincial WorkBC Apprentice Services contract and the successful applicant was Douglas College. The contract commenced April 1, 2019.
- The contract has been approved for a three-year extension to end March 31, 2027.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Skills Training and Financial Supports Expansion

Date Last Revised: February 1, 2024

Key Points:

- WorkBC provides skills training to assist eligible clients in obtaining the skills necessary to gain employment.
 - Training for in-demand jobs provides clients with an effective, suitable, and direct route to achieve attachment or re-attachment to the BC labour market.
- Clients participating in skills training are eligible for living supports and other financial supports.
- Living supports under skills training are based on a Financial Needs Assessment of the client and may be used to 'top up' other financial supports the client is receiving.

Key Data:

- As of December 31, 2023, WorkBC financial supports have been provided to approximately 3,700 clients.
- During this period, approximately \$20.4 million was paid in WorkBC Employment Services Living Supports and approximately \$9.81 million was paid for Other Financial supports.
- Skills Training is an effective way for people to achieve sustainable employment. Since WorkBC was launched in 2019, approximately 80% of the people who complete training have achieved employment.

Budget/Financial Context:

- Funding for skills training costs (e.g., tuition and other financial supports) are covered under existing WorkBC Employment Services contracts. The budget allocation for Skills Training is incorporated in the WorkBC Employment Services Financial Supports budget (\$69,019,000).
- For 2024, the WorkBC weekly Flat Rate Living Support amount will be maintained at \$650/week.
- Overall, the budget allocation for all WorkBC Financial Supports across all WorkBC programs is \$98,244,000. See Appendix 1 for 2023/24 Financial Supports Budget by program.

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2023/24 Financial Supports Budget by program

2023/2024 WorkBC Financial Supports Budget	
Employment Services	\$69,019,000
CEP Financial Supports	\$15,000,000
Apprenticeship Services	\$12,000,000
Assistive Technology Services	\$2,225,000
Total	\$98,244,000

Background:

- In July 2021, WorkBC and Income Assistance eligibility rules were expanded to allow all people receiving income or disability assistance to take up to two years of skills training while remaining eligible for income assistance.
- In October 2022, WorkBC living support and financial assistance payments were increased and standardized to better support people in training and other programs.
- Prior to this change, only single parents receiving income assistance (through SPEI) and Persons with Disabilities could take training while remaining eligible for income assistance.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Care Economy

Date Last Revised: February 16, 2024

Key Points:

- The Future Ready Plan commits the Ministry to develop, implement and evaluate a Care Economy Strategy between 2023/24 and 2027/28.
- In 2023/24, the Ministry received \$1.05 million to form a team, undertake research, and engage with cross-ministry and social sector partners.
- SDPR will present the Strategy to the Social Services Sector Round Table (SSSRT) in late spring 2024.
- In 2024/25, SDPR intends to launch four, two-year pilot projects to support implementation of the Strategy.

Accomplishments:

- Established SSSRT-endorsed social sector workforce working group to advise policy and project development.
- Partnered with the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions to complete a Mental Health and Substance Use Workforce Analysis.
- Established cross-ministry Assistant Deputy Minister and Executive Director working groups to better coordinate Care Economy workforce activities.

Budget/Financial Context (funds are under approved-in-principle Contingencies):

- 2023/24 = \$1.05M
- 2024/25 = \$1.05M
- Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information
- Current access to contingencies provides funding for work team, research, analysis, policy development, and a limited number of pilot projects.
- Additional future funding would be required to implement larger Strategy components once endorsed if they are ineligible for Labour Market Development Agreement funding.

Background:

- The Care Economy consists of the full range of human services from birth to end-of-life (i.e., childcare, education, elder care, health, mental health, social services, etc.)
 - The Province delivers Care Economy services through ministries, Crown agencies as well as contracted and grant-funded third-party organizations.
 - Strong demand for qualified and experienced workers creates competition between Care Economy employers for limited labour supply.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

- Labour competition may fill gaps in one service sector at the expense of others, which can undermine overall CE service delivery objectives (e.g., health sector recruiting from social sector).
- The Future Ready Action Plan (Future Ready) commits the Ministry to develop and implement the Strategy over the next five years.
 - The purpose of the Strategy is to gain a better understanding of BC's Care Economy, as well as the interconnections between ministry, Crown agency and third-party service delivery.
 - Future Ready provided modest funding to the Ministry to develop and implement the Strategy.
- SDPR staff developed strong working relationships with cross-ministry and social sector partners to identify potential projects.
- SDPR is currently reviewing project proposals to confirm feasibility, partner capabilities and funding levels.
- SDPR will engage on the draft Strategy with internal and external partners between now and April 2024. The Strategy will go through SDPR approvals in May.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Financial Model and Contractor Compensation

Date Last Revised: February 14, 2024

Key Points:

- To respond to unforeseen labour market disruption due to COVID-19, the Ministry amended WorkBC Employment Services contracts for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 to guarantee a portion of Performance Fee funding to ensure service providers had enough resourcing to maintain services.
- The guarantee acknowledged labour market challenges would severely limit the ability of service providers to earn performance fees and remain financially viable.
- The Ministry began to signal a transition away from the guarantee by reducing the amount by 10% in 2022/23.
- In 2023/24, instead of a guarantee, a small lump sum payment was provided, and new milestone fees introduced to support improved service to clients with multiple barriers to employment.
- In 2023/24, to address inflationary cost pressures, fixed fees were increased by 5% for remainder of the contract term through 2026/27.

Budget/Financial Context:

- The budget commitment for WorkBC Employment Services Contracts is \$253.4M annually.
- The total cost of lump sum payments in FY 2023/24 was \$5.5M
- The cost of fixed fees increase implemented in FY203/24 is \$4.4M annually.
- The estimated cost of the new milestone fees is \$4.3M annually.

Background:

- In April 2019, WorkBC Employment Services moved to a performance-based compensation model with the new contracts supplying payments through three streams:
 - Fixed Fee - contractually set contribution towards infrastructure and staffing.
 - Performance Fees - earned fees to compensate for positive client outcomes.
 - Financial Supports - reimbursements to the contractor for direct client supports.
- There is significant variability in the ratio of Fixed versus Performance fees across the contracts, with those in rural areas tending to have a higher percentage of Fixed fees than those in urban areas.
- Performance fee budgets range from as low as 14% to as high as 77% of overall compensation.

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- BC was the first jurisdiction in Canada to implement an outcomes-based pay for performance approach for employment services contracts. Ontario is the only other jurisdiction in Canada to incorporate Performance fees into employment services contracts and has done so using a more conservative approach, limiting performance fees budgets to 25% of overall compensation.
- The model was redesigned from the bottom up based on updated economic and statistical information to determine the current cost for an organization to deliver WorkBC Employment Services.
- Since 2019, the Ministry has provided contractors with added funding once they have reached maximum of their Performance Fee budget or their Financial Supports budget. The contractor can submit a request for a current-year budget increase based on proven need. Multiple catchments have had budget amendments since the launch of the program.
 - If there is no top-up funding in FY 24/25 the practice of topping up service provider budgets may not be possible next year due to reduced funding.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Employability Planning

Date Last Revised: February 20, 2024

Key Points:

- As part of the Poverty Reduction Strategy renewal, SDPR is introducing a new employment planning approach to benefit clients receiving BC Employment and Assistance (BCEA).
- The new approach will be client-centered and help people receiving BCEA to take meaningful steps towards employment without financial consequences being unfairly applied.
- The most significant change is the introduction of a new client needs assessment to understand people's circumstances and barriers to employment, determine their level of employment readiness, and identify needed supports and services prior to the development of an individualized employability plan.
- The new employment planning approach is a critical element of SDPR's work to develop effective employment pathways, increase community and social connections, and help people move out of poverty.

Accomplishments:

- Phased-in implementation of the enhanced services will launch at an early implementation site in June 2024, and will inform and support provincial roll out.
- We've made legislative amendments to the Employment and Assistance Act and the Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act to enable more individualized supports for people most in need.

Key Data:

- Through the poverty reduction public engagements (2017/18 and 2022/23), the Ministry heard the BCEA Program is too complex with rules that function as barriers to escaping poverty.
- There are approximately 20,000 employment-obligated clients who are long-term recipients of income assistance without secured or sustainable labour market attachment. A new approach will help those most in need and furthest removed from the labour market.

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Budget/Financial Context:

- The amendments, enabling a new approach, are expected to have minimal fiscal implications.
- The first phase of testing of the employability planning approach in a defined community will be one year, and SDPR will leverage existing staffing resources.
- In early 2025, decisions will be made about provincial expansion based on success of the initial pilot and available financial resources.

Background:

- Current BCEA legislation assumes applicants are ready to work and requires them to sign an Employment Plan as a condition of their eligibility for income assistance.
- Clients who are not temporarily excused from employment obligations must meet the obligations of their plan, otherwise they are deemed ineligible for BCEA, lose financial benefits, and can become further entrenched in poverty.
- By implementing a client-centered approach to employability planning, the Ministry has identified an opportunity to better support clients along the employment readiness continuum and strengthen alignment with SDPR's poverty reduction strategy.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Federal Funding Top Up

Date Last Revised: February 13, 2024

Key Points:

- Top up funding has been provided under the Labour Market Transfer Agreements since FY 2017/18, and there is no commitment from the Federal Government to provide top up funding next fiscal, leaving significant uncertainty in LMTA funding levels going forward.
- Top up funding has become essential to meet the diverse and growing number of people who rely on these services and to ensure we can continue to innovate and support in-demand sectors, employers, and communities.
- B.C. uses this funding to deliver core programming and will need to consider steps to reduce spending to address the funding shortfall.
- Programs funded through top up supports over 4,300 people annually, and those who participate achieve good employment outcomes.
- B.C. is undertaking several actions to advocate with federal counterparts for the continuation of top up funding.

Budget/Financial Context:

- The estimated total funding shortfall in FY2024/25 for SDPR is \$54.6M based on not receiving the \$46.5M in LMDA top up funding and \$8.1M in WDA funding transferred by the Ministry of Post Secondary Education and Future Skills.

Background:

- B.C. has two Labour Market Transfer Agreements (LMTA) with Canada, administered between the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR) and the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (PSFS). See ELMSD estimate note 20 *Labour Market Transfer Agreements – LMDA & WDA* for further information on the LMTAs.
- LMTAs provide B.C. with the capacity to operate a provincial network of employment programs and services that support unemployed British Columbians, including under-represented populations and Indigenous communities, to upskill, retrain and prepare for employment. B.C. uses these funds to deliver a broad range of programs and services to all British Columbians, including income assistance recipients.
- Base LMDA funding primarily supports the provincial network of 47 multi-year WorkBC service contracts. Maintaining WorkBC operations and limiting direct client impact are key priorities.

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- Top-up funding is strategically invested to support meeting increasing demand for services including access to skills training through innovative Community Employer Partnership (CEP) projects and employer-driven wage subsidy placements.
- CEP provides a flexible and robust portfolio of projects to prepare job seekers for occupations across in-demand sectors including construction, housing and skilled trades, clean economy, care and social sectors, technology, and transportation/trucking (see ELMSD note 49 on CEP).
 - 75% of clients who participate in CEP Project Based Labour Market Training ended up in employment.
 - In 2023/24, 84 projects are providing access to skills training and work experience opportunities for over 2,000 people.
- B.C.'s employer driven wage subsidies (\$12M investment) supporting employers and job seekers, with over 2,300 people benefiting from these job placements annually.
 - 81% of clients who participate in Wage Subsidies end up in employment.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Integrated Case Management System (ICM) – System Performance

Date Revised: January 16, 2024

Key Messages:

- The Integrated Case Management System (ICM) is a critical technology system used by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR), Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC).
- ICM runs 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to support delivery of numerous critical programs.
- The Ministry has set a target that the ICM system is available 99.7% of the time and has exceeded the target every year since 2016.
- The Ministry works with its vendors and corporate partners, including the government Office of the Chief Information Officer, to continually maximize the availability and reliability of the system.
- Like any other complex system, changes in the broader environment may affect the performance of government’s computer programs and applications.

Key Facts:

- When the ICM system is unavailable, the Ministry uses back-up systems and processes to support uninterrupted delivery of critical services.
- There were, and continue to be, scheduled outages for system maintenance. These outages are planned outside of regular business hours and are communicated to staff that may be planning to use the system at those times.
- SDPR continues to work closely with staff in SDPR and MCFD to monitor and adjust the performance of the ICM system moving forward.
- ICM is classified as a Critical System and is supported at all times including by the Office of the Chief Information Officer and vendor partners like Deloitte and DXC (formerly HP Advanced Solutions).
- SDPR has continuously made operational improvements since ICM's inception in 2014.
- The Ministry of Citizens’ Services continues to make improvements to the broader government technical environment including upgrades to the government data centers that have helped to improve the availability of the ICM application.

Accomplishments:

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- The ICM 4.15 release in July 2023 included enhancements to support child welfare, early childcare, employment and assistance programs.
- The ICM 4.16 release in February 2024 included additional enhancements to these programs as well as features to support youth transitions and smartphone interfaces.
- The ICM 5.0 release scheduled for May 2024 is a capital project that addresses technical debt accumulated since 2016, upgrading the underlying software platform.

Budget/Financial:

- Deloitte provides contracted support for ICM under an annual core services budget of \$6.27M with an additional \$11M for enhancements (FY24).
- Capital funding for the ICM 5.0 release is \$9.46M (FY22-25).

Background:

- ICM is one of the largest and most complex IT systems in the BC Government; it's the primary system used by 12,000 public servants and service providers.
- ICM has over 100 applications, integrations, interfaces, and related systems, including citizen-facing portals.
- These systems provide services to over 400,000 citizens each month across 22 distinct programs with over \$4 billion flowing through annually.

2024 SDPR Estimates Note

Title: Flexibility in Number of Payments per Month for Benefit Recipients

Date Revised: February 13, 2024

Key Points:

- The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR) is on a monthly payment cycle with set monthly “cheque issue” dates.
- SDPR and its partners’ systems, business processes and other organizational data feeds are tightly architected around a legacy mainframe system (MIS) and monthly business cycle - changes to this cycle would be highly complex.
- SDPR is focused on updating the legacy systems and processes to align with current technology standards, which will enable much more flexibility in the future.
- Several technology solutions are required to replace the legacy mainframe technology, including:
 - Capturing and applying complex eligibility and business rules.
 - Maintaining integrations with more than 80 other internal and external systems (e.g., the Corporate Financial System); and,
 - Calculating and processing payments reliably for the people we serve.
- Altering the current monthly benefit cycle would have several impacts, including:
 - Front-line staffing to manage more frequent cheque issue.
 - ICM, mainframe, and partner systems and data feeds.
 - Re-negotiation of terms and conditions of agreements with external organizations, federal and provincial partners.
 - Legislative and policy frameworks.

Accomplishments:

- SDPR is approximately 75% free from restrictive legacy mainframe technology and is targeting to complete migration in three years.

Background:

- SDPR systems and business processes are built around a monthly business cycle.
 - For example, monthly report processing and verification of income is scheduled to occur monthly. In addition, other programs such as employment programs and sponsorship receivables all have events triggered by monthly cycles.
- SDPR has previously considered adjusting the monthly benefit cycle for SDPR benefit recipients and determined not to proceed due to complexity

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of the current landscape, including impacts to the legacy mainframe application “MIS” and the Ministry’s strategy to move away from the mainframe.

- Adjusting the current monthly benefit cycle is a highly complex change that impacts many stakeholders. The technology processes to calculate payments rely on information and rule bases contained in multiple systems. ICM integrates with 25+ systems, including MIS and federal government, BC central agencies including Finance and BC Mail Plus, other ministries, service partners, vendors, and other ISD systems.
- When a system update occurs due to a policy change, thorough analysis and testing are required to ensure all the potential impacts to ICM and integrated systems are considered. Numerous scenarios are required to reflect all possible policy and client circumstances. Missing any component can have significant impacts such as an incorrect or missing payment to clients. Adding a layer of complexity of variable dates will significantly increase this already complex situation.
- Below is a summary of payment totals that have been processed in 2023:

Payment Type	Net Payments (\$)	Net Payments (#)
Temporary Assistance	\$745,534,264.74	969,939
Disability Assistance	\$2,056,401,851.05	2,255,704
Total	\$2,801,936,115.79	3,225,643

- Below is a summary of annual costs to maintain and enhance ICM and related systems (based on FY2023/2024):

Category	Annual Cost (millions)
System maintenance	\$29.3
Projects and enhancements	\$36.0
Amortization	\$12.0
Total	\$77.3