

BALANCED BUDGET 2007

*Ministry of
Employment and
Income Assistance*

2007/08 – 2009/10 SERVICE PLAN

February 2007



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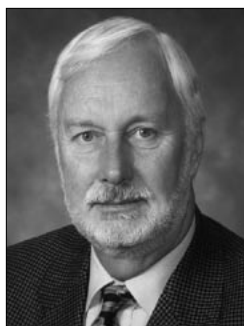
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For more information on the British Columbia
Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance, write to:

MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME ASSISTANCE
PO BOX 9933
STN PROV GOVT
VICTORIA, B.C.
V8W 9R2

or visit our website at
<http://www.gov.bc.ca/eia>

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Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement

As Minister of Employment and Income Assistance, I am pleased to present the Service Plan for 2007/08 – 2009/10, outlining our goals and objectives over the next three years. Our government is strongly committed to providing a fair, caring and sustainable income assistance system for British Columbians most in need. This also means helping those who are on assistance, and able to work, find and keep jobs.

Our notable success in placing so many employable clients into the workforce has changed the Ministry's caseload significantly, both in number and composition. The present caseload is comprised largely of people who face greater challenges. Today, a full two-thirds of our clients are people with disabilities or multiple barriers to employment.

As a result of this shift in our caseload we must ensure that our programs and services continue to meet the needs of clients. We have, therefore, redesigned our training programs for 'expected to work' clients by launching the new *BC Employment Program*. This program provides clients with the all the individualized services they need to benefit from B.C.'s strong economy — and succeed. Clients are assisted to find and keep employment through job referrals, skills training, workshops and supervised, self-directed job searches.

For our more vulnerable clients we continue to provide the Community Assistance Program — revised to focus specifically on life skills and advocacy services to enhance the quality of life for these challenged individuals.

We also recognize that there are some people whose existence is so precarious that they may not be comfortable, or even able, to approach a Ministry office for assistance. To connect with this community we work in partnership with other ministries, municipalities and local agencies across the province to mount effective outreach programs. It is very important that we work, right at the street level, to link B.C.'s most vulnerable citizens with the supports and services that will make a real difference in their lives.

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance also has the cross government leadership role in developing a Provincial Disability Strategy. The Strategy is a key component in reaching our Third Great Goal for a Golden Decade — to build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, persons with special needs, children at risk, and seniors. During the upcoming year we will continue to consult with other ministries and the disability community to ensure our services and supports for people with disabilities are integrated, effective and, most importantly, citizen-centred. We want British Columbians with disabilities to be totally supported in all their endeavours, including the workplace.

I look forward to continuing to work with Ministry staff to achieve our goals and I would like to take this opportunity to thank each one of them for their hard work, tireless dedication and outstanding professionalism.

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance 2007/08 – 2009/10 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. All material fiscal assumptions and policy decisions as of January 31, 2007, have been considered in preparing the plan and I am accountable for achieving the specific objectives in the plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Claude Richmond". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "C".

Honourable Claude Richmond
Minister of Employment and Income Assistance

January 31, 2007

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Ministry Overview

Purpose of Ministry

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance provides income assistance, disability assistance and employment programs for British Columbians in need. These programs are administered under the BC Employment and Assistance program (BCEA), and are guided by the *Employment and Assistance Act* and the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*, which came into effect in September 2002.

Who Our Clients Are:

The Ministry delivers a variety of assistance programs and services to approximately 100,000 individuals and families in need. In order to address the diverse needs of our clients, the Ministry established the following client groups, each of which is supported by a suite of supports and forms of assistance:

- **Expected to Work:** This client group includes employable clients in need of short-term income assistance and supports. This client group also includes those who are temporarily excused from or have limited employment obligations, due to a medical condition or family situation, such as a single parent with a child under three.
- **Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers:** These are clients who experience significant and multiple barriers to employment and are not expected to gain complete financial independence through employment.
- **Persons with Disabilities:** These are clients who experience a severe physical or mental impairment and require assistance as a result of significant restrictions in their ability to perform daily living activities.
- **Seniors:** This group includes persons aged 65 years or older with low-incomes who are eligible for Senior's Supplement benefits and subsidized bus passes, based on their annual tax return.
- **Low and moderate-income families:** These include individuals and families who are not direct clients of the Ministry, but are eligible for health and dental assistance based on their limited incomes. Providing extended coverage to these families improves health outcomes and reduces disincentives to their financial independence.
- **Child in the Home of a Relative:** If a parent is unable to care for and support his or her child and places the child in the home of a relative, the Ministry may provide the relative with financial support.

Each of these client groups may be eligible for a suite of supports and assistance. These are elaborated upon in subsequent sections of this Service Plan.

The Services We Provide:

The Ministry offers a wide variety of assistance and supports to our client groups, reflective of their client designations as well as their individual and family circumstances. These include:

- **Income Assistance:** Income assistance is available to support eligible clients, including clients participating in employment programs. Assistance includes two components: shelter allowance and support allowance. Shelter allowance assists clients in meeting their accommodation costs. Support allowance is provided to purchase food and other basic necessities.
- **Disability Assistance:** Disability assistance includes a shelter and support allowance, and is available to support eligible persons with disabilities who are not expected to gain complete financial independence through employment, including clients with disabilities who are seeking work.
- **Supplementary Assistance:** The Ministry provides a wide range of supplements to clients on a case-by-case basis including: crisis supplements for emergency needs; medical supplies and equipment; dental and optical services; medical transportation; subsidized bus passes; alcohol and drug treatment programs, and employment-related expenses.
- **Employment Programming:** The Ministry provides employment programs and services to clients to assist them in finding and sustaining employment — thereby helping them to achieve independence. Programs and services are developed and provided to clients based on their needs and degree of readiness to work. The Ministry also provides life-skills development services and access to training and volunteer opportunities for those who are less ready for engagement in the workforce.

Individuals with an emergency medical need or an emergency need for food and/or shelter who do not have alternate resources available can have their application for assistance reviewed on an expedited basis.

Ministry supports are part of a larger network of assistance provided by a number of provincial ministries and the federal government. Clients receiving our assistance and supports may also receive additional benefits, including the Canada Pension Plan, National Child Benefit and Child Care subsidy — thereby substantially increasing their available income and financial independence. Families with children have experienced a net increase from government since 2001. For single parent families, the increase ranges from 2.5 to over 13 per cent, and for persons with disabilities with children, from 12 to over 22 per cent.¹

¹ Income supports used in this calculation include: Provincial Income Assistance, the B.C. Family Bonus, Christmas and School Start-Up Supplements, B.C. Sales Tax Credit, GST Credit, Basic Child Tax Benefit, National Child Benefit Supplement and the Universal Child Care Benefit.

Where We Deliver Our Services:

Approximately 2,000 ministry staff deliver our services across the province through 88 Ministry offices, 19 Service BC centres and 2 Service Centres offering telephone-based services. In addition to these community-based centres offering front-desk service, the Ministry provides assistance by telephone and some services over the Internet. To further enhance service delivery, continued development and implementation of the Multi-Channel Service Delivery initiative is underway. The initiative was created to effectively use information technology to improve our services by simplifying procedures, enhancing tools and resources for front line staff, streamlining business processes and developing an integrated approach that meets the needs of clients. Multi-Channel Service Delivery will facilitate more accessible services for clients through enhancement of telephone and other channels of service delivery, such as the Internet, and will streamline other methods of accommodating clients, such as extended office hours. Our ability to provide these services has been made possible by government's substantial progress in bridging the Digital Divide, and the continued expansion of supporting technologies throughout the province.

In 2006, the Ministry launched two revised programs, the BC Employment and Community Assistance Programs, developed in response to our clients' changing needs, including enhanced life-skills support and access to training. The Ministry delivers these programs through external service providers in regions across British Columbia. These contracted services provide employment supports that are tailored to local labour markets as well as the interests and circumstances of individual clients.

The Ministry's service delivery network, developed in response to client feedback and to capitalize on emerging technologies and local partnerships, reflects our focus on improving access to services, particularly for those clients living in rural areas and persons with disabilities. We recognize that the success of these service delivery initiatives is dependent on our dedicated staff working in a service-oriented culture and replacement of outdated information technology.

Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

A province in which British Columbians in need are assisted to achieve their social and economic potential.

Mission

To focus on the customer by transforming the way we deliver services in employment and assistance, using effective and outcome based practices, and working in collaboration with ministries, other levels of government and service agencies.

Values

The Ministry continues to be guided by the British Columbia Public Service's core values of integrity, fiscal responsibility, accountability, respect, and choice.

The Ministry has developed an Organizational Values and Service Code that shapes the design and delivery of our unique programs and services. In developing this resource, the Ministry committed to a staff-driven, broadbased approach, with representation from every region. This collaborative approach is reflective of our interactions with peers and clients, and is the foundation for effective communication. The Ministry's Executive and leadership continue to work with employees to actively build the new Service Code into the organization's culture.

We value:

- People — Valuing people is the foundation of our Ministry's work.
- Personal responsibility — We value personal responsibility leading to increased empowerment, self-reliance and self-worth for staff and clients.
- Respect and Empathy — This value begins within each of us as reflected in daily interactions among staff and in serving clients.
- Equity and Fairness — To effectively serve our clients, the public and each other, we rely on our knowledge, skills and experience in balancing equity with fairness.
- Accountability — Accountability for our decisions and actions, and for those of our clients.
- Transparency and Open Communications — Transparency and open communication in our practices and decision-making are critical to the success of our organization.

Please see the appendix for more detail regarding the Ministry's Values and Service Code.

Strategic Context

The Ministry must be responsive to the context in which it operates in order to effectively and responsibly deliver services. The Ministry continues to operate in a context that is shaped by:

- demographic shifts associated with an aging population. Natural population growth and migration into the province increase demand for the Ministry's employment and disability assistance programs;
- a growing number of persons with disabilities requiring assistance. An increase in the number of Persons with Disabilities clients is anticipated due in part to longer life expectancy for children with disabilities and individuals with significant health issues, an increasing proportion of the population more prone to illness as it ages, and the impact of serious illnesses and conditions (such as HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis-C, and drug and alcohol dependencies); and
- public expectations of the Ministry. The public continue to expect government services that are responsive, professional, inclusive, citizen-centred, cost-effective, transparent, accountable and fiscally sustainable.

The Ministry's operations, caseload and, ultimately, achievement of its goals and performance targets, are significantly impacted by these factors. The Ministry will, therefore, continue to pursue external opportunities and leverage internal strengths to both manage risks to the Ministry and its clients and support continuous improvement in the delivery of services.

Internal

The Ministry continues to leverage internal strengths to improve service delivery in the following areas:

- **Improved Client Capacity:** Ministry programs will continue to support the transition of clients along the employment continuum from assistance to sustainable employment through results-based partnerships with external service providers.
- **Focus on Persons with Disabilities:** The Ministry will continue to assist clients with disabilities through the provision of income assistance and employment and volunteer programs. The involvement of clients in these programs enhances their independence and provides important benefits to the communities in which they live.
- **Enhanced Business Administration:** The Ministry continues to improve its internal operations and delivery of services through adopting best practices in strategic planning, project and performance management, continuous improvement initiatives, and caseload forecasting. The Ministry uses performance management to monitor program effectiveness, and to allocate resources accordingly.

- **Administrative Fairness:** The Ministry is committed to a culture of administrative fairness in all dealings with clients. By providing notice of all decisions impacting assistance, reasons for decisions, disclosure of information on which decisions are based, and reconsideration and appeal information, the Ministry continues to ensure clients are informed of and able to exercise their full rights.
- **Citizen-Centred Service:** Continued and expanded use of information and communication technologies maintains the potential to improve the timeliness, consistency and cost-effectiveness of services and information provided to clients. Placing the citizen at the center of our business, the Ministry will continue working with staff to design services that are coordinated and meet evolving client needs. Ongoing implementation of the Integrated Service Delivery initiative, including expansion of the 1-800 Personal Supports Information Line pertaining to disability programs and services and the Multi-Channel Service Delivery initiative, build upon these service attributes through streamlined business processes and improved tools and job aids. Clients are also being supported through direct deposit of benefit payments which lowers the incidence of lost or stolen income assistance cheques and gives clients greater privacy and choice in accessing their funds.
- **Dedicated Staff:** Members of the Ministry have consistently demonstrated a high degree of dedication, professionalism and flexibility in carrying out their responsibilities. Their continued support and expertise has been, and will continue to be, critical to the success of the Ministry and its clients.

The Ministry will also be addressing several internal challenges including:

- **Recruitment and Retention:** The Ministry is actively building a strong values-based work environment that engages employees at all levels. Over the course of the next three years, the Ministry is committed to building on our values by enhancing our internal capacity; developing leadership at all levels through managing for better results; and implementing plans and supports for recruitment, staffing, and succession to more effectively compete in the employment market reflective of the B.C. Government's corporate Human Resources goals.
- **Privacy of Personal Information:** The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance takes its obligation to properly protect and manage the personal information of its clients seriously. The Ministry will continue to enforce strict information security standards, reviews and ongoing training to protect the large volume of client information required to deliver our basic services. Maintaining the security and integrity of personal information is critical to both the operations of the Ministry and the privacy rights of our clients.
- **Workplace Safety:** A safe environment for both staff and clients is a top priority for the Ministry. Recognizing that organizations serving the public face the risk of workplace violence, the Ministry continues to support initiatives such as workplace safety planning, training, and implementation of a consolidated incident reporting and tracking system.

External

The Ministry is positioning itself to benefit from the following external opportunities:

- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** The Ministry will continue to build new and foster existing partnerships with other ministries, levels of government and stakeholder groups to deliver flexible, cost-effective and innovative services. Among the initiatives currently underway are: Outreach Projects throughout British Columbia addressing mental health, addiction services and homelessness; partnering with the Ministries of Health and Public Safety and Solicitor General to identify alternative services for dual-diagnosis clients and assessing the effectiveness of pre-release programs; renewing the relationship with stakeholders in the disability community by collaborating on the development of a Personal Supports Program; and working with the Aboriginal community and agencies like the First Nations Social Development Society and *Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement* holders to ensure that the development of policies and programs takes into account the unique needs of aboriginal people and their communities.
- **Revived Provincial Economy:** According to B.C.'s independent Economic Forecast Council, the B.C. economy grew 4.0 per cent in 2006, stronger than the 3.6 per cent expected at the start of the year. B.C.'s economic growth is expected to ease somewhat, but remain strong for 2007 through 2011. The Council's average forecast called for growth of 3.4 per cent in 2007.

The Ministry also faces external challenges that could significantly influence our ability to achieve the goals and objectives detailed in this Service Plan. While these challenges cannot be eliminated, the Ministry has adopted a number of strategies to minimize or mitigate their impact.

- **Economic Impacts:** The provincial economy is the largest single determinant of the Ministry's caseload and expenditures. Accordingly, economic fluctuations or unexpected shocks (e.g., avian flu, mountain pine beetle, fire storms, trade disputes) that pose risks to the provincial economy and regional labour markets may also impact ministry operations and fiscal targets. The Ministry mitigates this risk through conservative forecasting, ongoing monitoring of our caseload and operations, and efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.
- **Catastrophic Events:** Potential catastrophic events, such as an earthquake, influenza pandemic and other disruptions, pose significant risks to the continued delivery of mission critical services and assistance programs. The Ministry is undertaking a comprehensive review and update of its Business Continuity Management Program. A Ministry Operations Centre and Regional Operations Centres have been established to manage business disruptions during emergencies. Desktop exercises will be conducted across the Ministry to test recovery plans and response structures.

All areas of the Ministry will continue to monitor the potential influences of these external challenges and will revise strategies and plans that minimize these risks while pursuing internal and external opportunities.

Core Business Areas

The Ministry provides its major services under the BC Employment and Assistance program, which emphasizes self-reliance and personal responsibility, and reduces long-term dependence on income assistance for those who are able to work. BC Employment and Assistance programs and services are delivered through six core business areas, each directly tied to the Ministry's vision, mission and goals.

1. Core Business: Employment Programs

The Employment Programs business area provides for the operation and administration of programs to assist eligible individuals to find sustainable employment. It also provides for the operation and administration of employment-related programs to support individuals with multiple barriers and disabilities. This business area provides for salaries and benefits for individuals with disabilities under the Public Service Employment Program.

The Ministry's new employment programs result in enhanced employment and life skills services to reduce barriers to employment for our clients. The programs include work search assistance, short-term certificate training, life skills and supports, and include:

- British Columbia Employment Program: Provides employment services and supports designed to meet the needs of individual clients who are deemed Expected to Work or Expected to Work — Medical Condition.
- Community Assistance Program: This program has been redesigned to provide multi-barriered clients with a range of life skill services and supports to enhance their quality of life and to help them participate more fully in their communities.
- Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities: Assists persons with disabilities in achieving their economic and social potential to the fullest extent possible.

Employment programming is delivered through community-based, external service providers. These service providers were selected using a procurement and performance-based contract management process designed to ensure a fair, transparent and accountable selection process. Compensation is based partly on their ability to achieve specified client outcomes.

To ensure that assistance is available to all clients, the Ministry also offers clients assistance with transportation, work clothing and certification fees in cases where programming gaps may exist (for example in rural and remote communities).

2. Core Business: Temporary Assistance

The Temporary Assistance business area provides for temporary assistance in accordance with the *Employment and Assistance Act* for the family units of eligible individuals who are capable of financial independence through employment or are currently unable to seek work because of a prescribed short-term medical or other condition, or who have

persistent multiple barriers to employment. It also provides for support services and direct operating costs.

The *Employment and Assistance Act* sets out criteria the ministry uses to determine eligibility for temporary assistance. Temporary assistance includes income support and shelter allowances for those with accommodation expenses. Clients experiencing difficulties, such as mental illness, addiction or a developmental disability, can request that the ministry provide their shelter allowances directly to their landlord to avoid loss, misuse or misappropriation of their funds. The majority of clients who receive temporary assistance are those in the Expected to Work category.

Expected to Work

This group of clients includes individuals who are capable of employment and have ongoing employment-related obligations. Expected to Work clients must maintain individualized employment plans detailing specific job search activities as a condition of continued eligibility for assistance. The Expected to Work client group represents 17 per cent of the Ministry's caseload.

There are circumstances where clients may be temporarily excused from, or have limited, employment obligations. These clients form the following two groups:

- Expected to Work — Medical Condition: The Ministry recognizes that some clients may be unable to work due to short-term medical conditions or participation in a rehabilitation program. These clients have employment plans that work to address their barriers to employment and represent 6 per cent of the Ministry's caseload.
- Expected to Work — Temporarily Excused: Clients may also be temporarily excused from standard employment requirements if they: are parents of children under three years of age; are caring for a dependent child or spouse with serious physical or mental conditions; have recently left an abusive relationship; or have reached 65 years of age. These clients comprise 6 per cent of the Ministry's caseload.

Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers

Clients may be designated as a Person with Persistent Multiple Barriers if they are unable to achieve financial independence due to specific barriers to employment that they have been unable to overcome. Barriers may include a long-term medical condition, or one that is likely to continue, that interferes with or precludes employment. Additionally, poor literacy skills, lack of training or work experience may also be considered.

While designated a Person with Persistent Multiple Barriers, clients receive temporary assistance and are exempt from employment obligations. They receive increased support, a monthly earnings exemption to facilitate their entry into the workforce, and enhanced medical coverage to recognize their need for continuing assistance. Person with Persistent Multiple Barriers clients comprise 7 per cent of the Ministry's caseload.

Child in the Home of a Relative

Children who have been voluntarily placed in the care of a relative by a parent who is unable to assume full responsibility for caring for the child may be eligible for financial assistance from the Ministry under the Child in the Home of a Relative program.

These are private arrangements between relatives and do not involve children who have been identified as “at risk” or who are in the care of the government. Over the next year, the Ministry will be working with the Ministry of Children and Family Development to ensure all services for children living with relatives are integrated into the Ministry of Children and Family Development’s continuum of services for children. Child in the Home of a Relative clients represent 5 per cent of the Ministry caseload. In addition to the Ministry’s assistance on behalf of the child, caregivers may also be eligible for the Canada Child Tax Benefit and BC Family Bonus.

3. Core Business: Disability Assistance

The Disability Assistance business area provides for disability assistance in accordance with the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act* for the family units of eligible individuals with disabilities who are not expected to gain financial independence through employment or who are seeking work. It also provides for support services and direct operating costs.

Income and disability assistance legislation and Ministry policies recognize that people with disabilities face unique challenges in daily living and may require additional support. Clients may apply for a “Persons with Disabilities” designation by submitting an application form that has been filled out by their physician and other health professionals with details concerning diagnosis, health history, the degree of impairment and impact on their daily living activities. Applicants may be designated as a Person with Disabilities if their medical history demonstrates they have a severe physical or mental impairment that significantly restricts their ability to carry out daily living activities. Clients receiving disability assistance are eligible for increased income support and shelter allowances, a low-cost annual bus pass, a monthly earnings exemption and enhanced medical coverage which includes Medical Services Plan and Pharmacare coverage with no deductible, as well as other health supplements.

In addition to disability assistance, the Ministry offers programs to Persons with Disabilities clients designed to increase independence, provide greater income security, promote increased participation in the community, and enhance self-reliance. Participation in these programs is voluntary. Under the Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities, employment includes voluntary employment, part-time or full-time paid employment, or self-employment. The Ministry also supports the Minister’s Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities’ *10 by 10 Challenge* to increase employment by 10 per cent by 2010.

Persons with disabilities who successfully leave assistance for employment retain their Persons with Disabilities designation and are eligible to maintain their medical assistance. Persons with Disabilities clients represent 59 per cent of the Ministry caseload.

4. Core Business: Supplementary Assistance

The Supplementary Assistance business area provides for health and other supports for family units of eligible individuals in accordance with the *Employment and Assistance Act* and *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*, and for programs that support the purposes of the legislation. It also provides for support services and direct operating costs.

Supplementary assistance provides eligible clients with additional assistance for expenses related to health and medical needs, crisis assistance for food and shelter, transportation costs, some moving costs, employment-related expenses and other specified expenses.

Supplementary assistance includes:

- subsidized bus passes for low-income seniors and persons with disabilities;
- dental and optical services for clients' prescribed needs;
- dental and optical supplements to children in low-income families under the Healthy Kids program;
- employment-related expenses including work clothes, recognition of foreign credentials, language training, moving expenses to accept confirmed employment, transportation, books and supplies;
- fees for residential care facilities;
- fees to obtain specified identification documents;
- maintenance for registered guide dog used by a recipient or their dependent;
- medical equipment and supplies;
- Medical Services Program premiums;
- medical transportation (such as flights from remote locations for medical treatments);
- burial or cremation expenses;
- moving expenses if the client has confirmed employment in a new community or their physical safety is at risk;
- natal supplements, monthly diet and nutritional supplements;
- payment for alcohol and drug counselling treatment services; and
- low-income persons with life-threatening health needs can access certain health supplements.

5. Core Business: Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal

The Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal business area provides for salaries, benefits, allowances, operating and related expenses of the Tribunal, which provides for an independent and impartial appeal of the Ministry's reconsideration decisions. The Employment and Income Assistance Appeal Tribunal is a single-level, regionally-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 other

ministries and levels of government. More information about the Tribunal can be found online at <http://www.gov.bc.ca/eaat/default.htm>.

6. Core Business: Executive and Support Services

The Executive and Support Services business area provides for the office of the Minister of Employment and Income Assistance. It also provides for executive direction of the Ministry and administrative services for the operating programs of the Ministry. This includes: strategic and business planning, financial administration and budget co-ordination, human resources, asset and risk management, information technology, records management, freedom of information and protection of privacy. It also provides for corporate and community-based service delivery, including services provided by ministries and agencies on behalf of the Ministry. The Ministry Information Resource Management Plan overview is available on the Ministry's website at: <http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/sp>.

New Relationship

The Government of British Columbia is leading the nation in developing a New Relationship with First Nations and Aboriginal people. Guided by principles of trust, and by recognition and respect of First Nations' rights and title, we are building a stronger and healthier relationship between government and Aboriginal people. By working together, we will bring tangible social and economic benefits to Aboriginal people across the Province and narrow the gap between Aboriginal people and other British Columbians.

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance will continue working with the Aboriginal community and agencies like the First Nations Social Development Society and *Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement* holders to support their provision of employment programming to Aboriginal persons, and to ensure that Ministry policy and program development take into account the unique needs of Aboriginal people and their communities. The Ministry will also continue to work with the Aboriginal community to implement the Aboriginal Self-Identifier initiative that will allow clients to voluntarily indicate their Aboriginal status as a basis for designing services and programs that better meet their needs. The Ministry will be mapping personal supports programs and services delivered or funded by the provincial, federal and First Nations governments and Aboriginal organizations to determine options for integration.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Results

Overview

Ministry Goals

The Ministry's goals are unchanged from the previous year, reflective of our consistent mandate and focus upon the delivery of income assistance, disability assistance and employment programs for British Columbians in need. This strategic direction sets clear priorities, ensuring that effort at every level of the organization is aligned and focused on common results.

Goal 1: Deliver responsive, innovative and effective services to clients in need.

Goal 2: Provide low-income persons with disabilities with the best system of support in Canada.

Goal 3: Support integrated service delivery through cross ministry services that provide disadvantaged British Columbians with supports that are responsive to their unique needs.

Goal 4: Provide employment programming that is flexible in meeting individual client needs to achieve sustainable employment.

Planning is a continuous activity involving all areas of the Ministry. Members of the Ministry's executive and management teams meet regularly throughout the year to systematically evaluate the Ministry's direction against client and stakeholder feedback, organizational performance and emerging strategic issues as part of ongoing risk management processes. When appropriate, the Ministry adjusts its activities accordingly to reflect necessary changes.

Linkage to the Five Great Goals

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance plays an important role in the achievement of four of government's Five Great Goals which are to:

1. Make British Columbia the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent.

Employment programming and a school start-up supplement that was doubled in 2006.

2. Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness.

Provision of income and shelter assistance; extended medical coverage; Healthy Kids offering dental and optical services; medical equipment and supplies; nutritional supplements, funding for drug and alcohol treatment and activity fee supplements.

3. Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk, and seniors.

Lead the Disability Strategy including: Expansion of the 1-800 Personal Supports Information Line; Outreach programs assisting those with mental illness; Delivery of the Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities; Support for the Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities' *10 by 10 Challenge* to increase employment by 10 per cent by 2010; and support for 2010 Legacies Now which is endeavouring to leave lasting legacies in sport and recreation, the arts, literacy and volunteerism from B.C.'s hosting of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

The Ministry also offers subsidized bus passes for low-income persons with disabilities and seniors, a Community Volunteer Supplement, and the Senior's Supplement.

4. Lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none.

The Ministry's mandate does not directly contribute to the achievement of Great Goal 4.

5. Create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada.

Employment programming and funding for employment-related expenses, including work clothes and moving expenses to accept confirmed employment.

Cross Ministry Initiatives

To effect real change in the lives of our clients, the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance recognizes that we need to continue to work closely with partner ministries, organizations and other levels of government; shared responsibility requires shared solutions. Accordingly, over the next three years, the Ministry will continue to partner on the following cross ministry initiatives (*lead ministry in italics*):

StrongStart BC

Ministry of Children and Family Development

StrongStart BC is a government cross ministry initiative to support the healthy development and early learning of children (birth to six). Priorities for the early years include early diagnosis for hearing, sight and dental problems; booster seat awareness; informing parents of the link between early childhood physical education and skill development; new "StrongStart Centres" for early childhood education; and language and cultural opportunities for Aboriginal children.

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance will continue to support improved health outcomes and physical fitness among children in low-income families through the provision of dental and eye care supports, sports camp fees, school start-up assistance and natal supplements.

Crystal Meth

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Government's Crystal Meth Strategy, led by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, targets the use and production of Crystal Meth through an integrated framework that strengthens partnerships amongst communities, service providers and law enforcement agencies. The Crystal Meth Secretariat was established in 2005 to support new and continuing initiatives based on prevention, treatment and enforcement.

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance is committed to continuing to work with partners to develop strategies to prevent the use and mitigate the effects of Crystal Meth on our clients and their families.

ActNow BC

Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts

ActNow BC, led by the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts, combines cross government and community-based approaches to promote healthy living choices for British Columbians. The programs and initiatives champion healthy eating, physical activity, ending tobacco use, and healthy choices during pregnancy.

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance will support enhanced wellness and healthy lifestyles among clients through the provision of health supplements for eligible clients such as nutritional supplements, dental coverage, and assistance with sports and recreation fees for children in low-income families.

Literacy

Ministry of Education

The Government of British Columbia has set a Goal to make B.C. the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent. To be considered literate, a person has sufficient reading skills to understand and process printed information encountered in everyday activities. The Ministry of Education is leading the development and implementation of the Provincial Literacy Action Plan — ReadNow BC — to help British Columbians improve their reading skills.

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance continues to support the involvement of low-income children in the educational opportunities available to them through the provision of a School Start-up Supplement.

The Ministry will also continue working with the Ministry of Advanced Education to develop a long-term study to determine the impact of Adult Basic Education and related supports (i.e., child-care) on income dependence of single-parent clients with young children who have no employment obligations.

2010 Olympics and Paralympics Winter Games

Ministry of Economic Development

All provincial ministries, agencies and Crowns have been working together to ensure every available opportunity to develop sustainable economic legacies are explored and pursued so that businesses and communities in British Columbia receive benefit from the Games.

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance will continue expanding opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate and volunteer in the 2010 events through the Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities and WorkAble Solutions website.

The Ministry will also support the roll-out of the Measuring-Up framework in conjunction with 2010 Legacies Now's focus on accessibility and inclusiveness.

Regulatory Reform

British Columbia continues to make regulatory reform a priority across government, making it easier for businesses to operate and succeed in British Columbia, while still preserving regulations that protect public health, safety and the environment. A citizen-centred approach to regulatory reform will reduce the number of steps it takes to comply with government requirements or access government programs and services.

The Ministry is committed to reducing its regulatory burden and has committed to a zero net increase in regulatory requirements through to 2008/09.

The Ministry is also committed to improving regulatory quality by:

- streamlining access to personal supports information by expanding the 1-800 Personal Supports Information Line for persons with disabilities to include a website and provide information about and referrals to additional programs and services;
- leading, in collaboration with partner social development ministries, the alignment of eligibility criteria for government's disability programs and services;
- streamlining the Persons with Disabilities designation application and adjudication processes; and
- streamlining processes for children with disabilities or special needs to ensure a smooth transition of services from children's programs to adult programs.

Citizen-Centred Service Delivery

Citizen-centred service delivery is a government-wide initiative to coordinate information, programs and services so that they can be presented to citizens in a way that takes their needs into account from beginning to end. The vision is to make it possible for citizens to access the government information and services they need in a simple and timely manner with a phone call, a mouse click or a visit to a service centre, no matter how many programs or ministries are involved in their request.

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance supports government's commitment to citizen-centred services by:

- taking an important role in providing British Columbians with disabilities with a single-window, toll-free number, offering information and referrals for 17 programs and services delivered by five ministries;
- continuing to develop and implement its Multi-Channel Service Delivery initiative, which will simplify procedures, enhance tools and resources for staff, streamline business processes, and develop an integrated approach to better meet the needs of clients;
- interacting with clients and other members of the public in a manner founded upon the Ministry's Values and Service Code;
- providing expanded client access to Ministry services through partnering with Service BC in 24 communities; and
- citizens primarily assess service quality by five factors identified by Citizen's First: timeliness, knowledge and competence of staff, courtesy/comfort, fair treatment, and outcome.² Recognizing this, the Ministry will continue to evidence its commitment to citizen-centred services by measuring performance through ongoing implementation of its service standards.

² Citizen's First: <http://www.iccs-isac.org/eng/cf-98.htm>.

Performance Plan

Link to Government's Five Great Goals		Ministry Mission To focus on the customer by transforming the way we deliver services in employment and assistance, using effective and outcome based practices, and working in collaboration with ministries, other levels of government and service agencies.		
Direct Impact	Indirect Impact	Ministry Goals	Ministry Objectives	Performance Measures
<p>Goal 3: Building the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, special needs, children at risk and seniors.</p> <p>Goal 1: Make British Columbia the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent.</p> <p>Goal 2: To lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness.</p> <p>Goal 5: Creating more jobs per capita than anywhere in Canada.</p>		<p>1. Deliver responsive, innovative and effective services to clients in need.</p>	<p>1.1 Clients receive appropriate and responsive income and supplementary supports that meet their changing needs.</p> <p>1.2 Persons with disabilities who are unable to provide for their basic needs will receive the assistance they need and be supported in becoming as independent as possible.</p> <p>1.3 Reinforce high quality citizen-centred services that are consistent, respectful, innovative and accountable.</p> <p>1.4 Individuals have access to a fair and timely reconsideration and appeal process.</p>	<p>Expected to Work clients as a per cent of BC's adult population.</p> <p>Per cent of all clients who are Persons with Disabilities.</p> <p>Per cent of Ministry services provided to clients that meet or exceed established service standards.</p> <p>Per cent of reconsideration decisions that are made within ten business days.</p>
		<p>2. Provide low-income persons with disabilities with the best system of support in Canada.</p>	<p>2.1 Persons with disabilities who seek employment or volunteer opportunities are supported through the revised Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities.</p> <p>2.2 Minister's Council on Employment for Persons With Disabilities continues to remove barriers to employment for persons with disabilities through partnerships with business and industry throughout the province.</p> <p>2.3 Develop and implement a comprehensive and integrated system of supports and services for persons with disabilities.</p>	<p>Percentage of persons receiving disability assistance with income from working or a volunteer supplement.</p> <p>Average time to process new Persons with Disabilities applications.</p>

Link to Government's Five Great Goals		Ministry Mission		
		To focus on the customer by transforming the way we deliver services in employment and assistance, using effective and outcome based practices, and working in collaboration with ministries, other levels of government and service agencies.		
Direct Impact	Indirect Impact	Ministry Goals	Ministry Objectives	Performance Measures
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		<p>4. Provide employment programming that is flexible in meeting individual client needs to achieve sustainable employment.</p>	<p>4.1 Job ready clients will be assisted to reach independence as quickly as possible.</p> <p>4.2 Invest in clients with barriers to progress towards sustainable employment.</p>	<p>Percentage of BC Employment Program clients who achieve \$560 or 70 hours per month.</p>

Goal 1: *Deliver responsive, innovative and effective services to clients in need.*

Core Business Areas: *Employment Programs, Temporary Assistance, Disability Assistance, Supplementary Assistance, Executive and Support Services.*

The Ministry continues to make every effort to ensure that British Columbians in need have access to quality service and are treated with dignity and respect. Ministry clients can expect to receive consistent, fair and responsive service across the province and regardless of the delivery channel used (e.g., local office, telephone, and growing use of the Internet), as supported by our Values and Service Code.

The Ministry provides a wide range of services to our clients, including income and shelter supports, and employment programs for clients who are able to work. Clients with barriers to employment or persons with disabilities have access to extended services, including supplementary assistance and special life skills programs. The Ministry also proactively engages with clients through outreach initiatives and integration projects to connect eligible persons with the services the Ministry provides. The Ministry engages in ongoing evaluations to maximize the effectiveness of our programs and services and respond to the unique and changing nature of our clients' needs.

Objective 1.1: *Clients receive appropriate and responsive income and supplementary assistance supports that meet their changing needs.*

The Ministry operates local offices in communities across the province, where people in need can access information about services available through this Ministry, other government agencies, and community organizations.

Advances in technology, including wider availability of the Internet, provide new opportunities to deliver information about the Ministry's services online. In addition to accessing information in-person or online, people may contact the Ministry-operated call centre toll-free to ask questions or apply for assistance by telephone. By using one or a combination of these channels, enquirers and clients can access information, programs, and services in ways that suit their needs.

It is critical that the services the Ministry provides be responsive to the unique needs of its clients. To ensure that client needs are being met, the Ministry conducts regular reviews of its income assistance rates, regulations, policies and processes. Ongoing reviews of income assistance rates and policies across Canada allow the Ministry to monitor how British Columbia compares to other jurisdictions providing services to people in financial need.

Strategies

- Conduct annual income assistance rates review in the context of changing client needs.
- Expansion of partnership with Service BC to maintain services in B.C. communities.
- Ongoing implementation of the Multi-Channel Service Delivery project which improves consistency and choice in how and when clients access the Ministry's service and information.
- Provision of current and complete information about policy and programs to the public through the OnLine Resource.

Performance Measure	Baseline	Actual	Targets		
	2001/02	2006/07 ¹	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
1.1 Expected-to-Work clients as a per cent of B.C.'s adult population.	3.4%	.90%	.89%	.89%	.89%

¹ Result for April 2006–December 2006.

Description of measure: Assisting clients to find employment is a critical aspect of the Ministry's mission. Temporary assistance is provided to people who have employment-related obligations, and to those who are temporarily excused from seeking work (e.g., parents of a young child, clients fleeing an abusive relationship). Measure 1.1 tracks the percentage of B.C.'s working age population receiving temporary assistance with employment-related obligations. This measure is an indicator of the economic health of the province as well as the appropriate incentives that foster independence and improve outcomes for clients and their families. Monitoring this measure at the community level enables the Ministry to anticipate changes in demand for its services in communities across the province and develop programs that respond to client needs.

Objective 1.2: *Persons with disabilities who are unable to provide for their basic needs will receive the assistance they need and be supported in becoming as independent as possible.*

The Ministry continues to support greater independence for persons with disabilities, founded upon financial security, enhanced well-being and full participation as members of the community. We recognize that persons with disabilities face unique challenges in daily living and may require supports for voluntary employment or continuous assistance.

In order to meet the unique challenges of clients designated as Persons with Disabilities, this client group receives the highest rate of assistance and the widest array of benefits available in British Columbia. The Ministry is committed to maintaining both the \$70 per month increase for disability assistance and the increased allowable earnings exemption provided in 2006. As a result of these increases, Persons with Disabilities clients may receive a monthly income (made up of a combination of income assistance and earnings) of more than \$1,350.

Additional supports available to clients receiving disability assistance include low-cost bus passes and enhanced medical coverage — such as Medical Services Plan coverage, Pharmacare, extended dental and optical insurance and medical supplies. Persons with disabilities in British Columbia may also access information and referrals for personal supports through a single-window, 1-800 number.

The Ministry also offers a full continuum of services that assist Persons with Disabilities clients to move toward employment to the degree that they are able. A Persons with Disabilities designation is not affected by a client’s ability to work or their participation in an employment training program or placement.

Strategies

- Supporting employment, volunteerism and community engagement among Persons with Disabilities through employment programs and supporting the Minister’s Council’s *10 by 10 Challenge* to increase employment for all persons with disabilities by 10 per cent by 2010. The Challenge is supported by the 2010 Legacies Now *Measuring Up* document.
- Enhance service delivery options such as the Internet to better accommodate the needs of Persons with Disabilities.

Performance Measure	Baseline	Actual	Targets		
	2001/02	2006/07 ¹	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
1.2 Per cent of all clients who are Persons with Disabilities.	29.6%	58.9%	60.6%	61.4%	61.5%

¹ Result for April 2006–December 2006.

Description of measure: Measure 1.2 tracks the percentage of the total caseload receiving disability assistance. As the number of clients receiving temporary assistance declines (i.e., demonstrating success in finding employment) the proportion of the total caseload receiving disability assistance increases. The Ministry monitors this measure to anticipate future trends in the Ministry’s caseload and emerging trends in needs of clients with disabilities. Projected increases in the Persons with Disabilities caseload are reflective of an aging population and increased life expectancy due to improved medical treatments.

Objective 1.3: *Reinforce high quality, citizen-centred services that are consistent, respectful, innovative and accountable.*

The Ministry continues to implement strategies to build a citizen-centred approach to service delivery. Built on the foundation of the Service Code and Organizational Values, the Ministry is developing service standards to ensure that clients throughout the province consistently receive quality service when interacting with the Ministry. The Ministry has initiated and will continue to engage staff in developing general and program-specific service standards

through further dialogue. For more information about the Ministry’s service standards, please visit the Ministry’s website at: <http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/sp>.

Strategies

- Continue implementation of the Ministry’s performance management framework.
- Continue integration of the Values and Service Code with all Ministry activities.

Performance Measure	Baseline	Targets		
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
1.3 Per cent of Ministry services provided to clients that meet or exceed established service standards.	Establish baseline	Exceed baseline	Exceed baseline	Exceed baseline

Description of measure: This measure tracks the Ministry’s success in meeting service standard targets. A higher per cent for this measure indicates that citizens receive more consistent and timely service when interacting with the Ministry. The baseline reported in this Service Plan focuses on standards for core programs, while general service standards continue to be refined.

Objective 1.4: *Individuals have access to a fair and timely reconsideration and appeal process.*

The Ministry is committed to openness and transparency in its delivery of services to clients. All clients are informed of their rights to request a reconsideration of Ministry decisions that affect their application for services. Clients dissatisfied with a decision may request an internal ‘second look’ by Reconsideration Adjudicators within the Ministry who are removed from the initial determination.

The BC Employment and Assistance appeal system ensures unbiased, fair, timely, and transparent decision-making for clients. The Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal operates under the authority of the *Employment and Assistance Act* and the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*. The mission of the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal is to provide an accessible appeal process that delivers timely and fair decisions. The Appeal Tribunal is structured as an independent public body to ensure unbiased, fair and transparent decision-making. The Appeal Tribunal’s Chair and Vice-Chairs are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor; Tribunal members are appointed by the Minister. Members are recruited throughout the province as hearings are held in local communities. Although most hearings are in person, they may also occur by teleconference, or, if both parties agree, through written submissions to the Tribunal. This flexibility ensures all clients have access to the appeal process, regardless of where they reside.

Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance

Performance Measure	Baseline	Actual	Targets		
	2003/04	2006/07¹	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
1.4 Per cent of reconsideration decisions that are made within 10 business days.	81.9%	72.9%	90.0%	90%	90%

¹ Result for April 2006–December 2006.

Description of measure: A higher percentage for this measure indicates the Ministry is doing a better job of providing timely and efficient service to clients and meeting regulatory requirements. Adjudication of health decisions represents a large proportion of the reconsideration requests that the Ministry undertakes annually. Significant increases in the number of complex health reconsiderations have impacted the Ministry results for 2006/07. The Ministry will continue to refine its processes and work with medical service providers to improve the efficiency and timeliness of reconsiderations.

Goal 2: Provide low-income persons with disabilities with the best system of support in Canada.

Core Business Areas: *Disability Assistance, Supplementary Assistance and Employment Programs.*

The Ministry envisions a province in which British Columbians in need are assisted to achieve their social and economic potential. The Ministry’s services for persons with disabilities directly support government’s Great Goal of building “the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk, and seniors”.

The Ministry is continuing its leadership role developing cross ministry strategies that support the above Great Goal. The Disability Strategy will provide for a flexible, comprehensive, and integrated system of support for persons with disabilities that will allow them to participate more fully in the social and economic life of the province. A key focus of the Strategy is the integration of government services to make them more accessible, easier to deal with, and more responsive to those who need them. Providing opportunities for persons with disabilities benefits both individuals and their communities. Of all adults with disabilities in British Columbia aged 19 – 64, 22 per cent receive income assistance. 44 per cent are not working, however, a large percentage of this number consider themselves able and willing to work. Persons with disabilities today have more access to technology, education and other supports, but still they have high levels of unemployment and low levels of labour market participation. They have the motivation, education and abilities to be valuable members of our workforce.

Those British Columbians on income assistance who have a disability can apply for the Persons with Disabilities designation. This designation is given under the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*. The Act recognizes that persons with disabilities may require additional supports, including a higher assistance rate, supplementary assistance and specialized supports to employment.

Performance Measure	Baseline	Actual	Targets		
	2005/06	2006/07 ¹	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
2.0 Average time to process new Persons with Disabilities applications.	8.9 weeks	7.5 weeks	7.5 weeks	7 weeks	6.5 weeks

¹ Result for April 2006 – September 2006.

Description of measure: This measure evaluates the Ministry's performance in the review and adjudication of applications for designation as a person with a disability. Determining eligibility for designation as a person with a disability is a complex and often time-intensive process, requiring the review of detailed medical evidence and a close examination of all case materials. The Persons with Disabilities Designation Application includes detailed information from the applicant's physician and other health professionals on diagnosis, health history, the degree of impairment and its impact on the applicant's daily living activities. The length of the adjudication process reflects the commitment to reaching fair and consistent decisions that comply with legislative requirements and the principles of administrative fairness. A triage process allows the Ministry to identify cases that involve urgent medical situations or children with disabilities, requiring expedited adjudication.

A shorter timeframe for this measure indicates that clients are receiving more timely and efficient service. Future-year targets anticipate continual improvements in performance and business processes and these time-frames may be accelerated.

Objective 2.1: *Persons with disabilities who seek employment or volunteer opportunities are supported through the revised Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities.*

One of the most significant barriers that persons with disabilities face is social isolation. Volunteering and employment help break down those barriers, enrich clients' lives and enhance community participation. A successful strategy for improving independence for persons with disabilities must consider the full spectrum of programs, services and supports required to address the needs of persons with disabilities. It should recognize that individuals experience disabilities in different degrees and at different stages of their lives, and that their needs will vary over time.

To meet the needs of persons with disabilities who wish to work or volunteer, the Ministry provides the Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities, which will be revised in 2007. As the revision is completed, we are ensuring a continuity of services for clients. The Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities provides a range of specialized employment programs to help people with disabilities participate more in their communities, pursue their employment goals as they are able, increase their self-reliance, and build skills and experience that may lead to further employment or volunteer opportunities. Participation in any Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities service is voluntary. Under the Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities, employment includes voluntary employment, part-time or full-time paid employment, or self-employment.

Persons with Disabilities clients who volunteer may increase their economic well-being as they are eligible to receive a monthly volunteer supplement of up to \$100. The Ministry increased funding for the Community Volunteer Supplement in 2006/07 to reduce wait lists for this program.

To further support Persons with Disabilities clients in achieving greater financial independence while increasing involvement in their communities, the Ministry is maintaining the increased earning exemption for clients receiving disability assistance. Earning exemptions combined with disability assistance provide the opportunity for clients to receive a monthly income of approximately \$1,350.

Services offered through the Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities are designed to assist persons with disabilities to improve and maintain their employability and their chances of being meaningfully engaged in employment-related activities. Services include:

- Employment Crisis Services
- Disability Supports
- Pre-Employment Services
- Employment-Based Services
- Formal Assessments
- Participant Supports

A person with a disability does not have to be a recipient of BC Employment and Assistance to participate in the program, which is available across the province and accessed through community service providers or by contacting a ministry office.

The revised Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities is intended to assist individuals with a significant physical, developmental or mental health disability that is the primary barrier to finding and maintaining employment; secondary barriers to employment may also be present. It is also important to note that goals such as increased job readiness, disability management, employability skills and enhanced work experience are within the Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities mandate. However, it is an expectation that potential Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities participants are capable of participating in and benefiting from the range of activities and services provided.

Contracts are performance-based as service providers receive milestone payments based on client progress in training and job placement. The Ministry is committed to procuring contract services through a fair, open and competitive process. To implement the revised Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities initiative, the Ministry will be engaging the Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services, Strategic Acquisitions and Technology Procurement Branch and utilizing a Request for Proposal process to engage service providers to deliver the revised Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities services.

Strategy

- Implementation and ongoing monitoring of the revised Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities.

Performance Measure	Baseline	Actual	Targets		
	2001/02	2006/07 ¹	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
2.1 Percentage of persons receiving disability assistance with income from working or a volunteer supplement	13.6%	19.0%	21.3%	21.8%	22.3%

¹ Result for April 2006–December 2006.

Description of measure: This measure tracks the number of clients receiving disability assistance who have recorded earned income and volunteer supplements. An increase in this measure indicates improved community participation, self-reliance and employability among persons with disabilities.

Objective 2.2: *Minister’s Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities continues to remove barriers to employment for persons with disabilities through partnerships with business and industry throughout the province.*

Leadership, partnership, and action by employers, persons with disabilities, governments, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders are key to the success of employing persons with disabilities. The Minister’s Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities, with representation from the business community, public, private and education/training sectors, is designed to engage employers in finding concrete solutions to increase employment for persons with disabilities in British Columbia.

The Ministry supports the Council’s *10 by 10 Challenge* to increase employment for persons with disabilities by 10 per cent by 2010. Communities and employers will be supported in achieving their goals of the Challenge through the provision of a *10 by 10 Tool Kit*, which includes strategies to achieve and promote the Challenge goals at a local level, media templates, and two key resources: *WorkAble Solutions* and *2010 Legacies Now Measuring Up* guide. The *WorkAble Solutions* tools help employers connect with job-seekers with disabilities and assists both groups through the recruitment and retention process with a job-posting resource website, *Employer Handbook* and corporate video. *WorkAble Solutions* forms a partnership between the B.C. Human Resources Management Association and the Minister’s Council. There are currently over 100 employers registered on the website. *Measuring Up* is a guide to assist communities to collectively assess their access and inclusion level for persons with disabilities, and begin to work on community solutions. In 2007, the Ministry will continue collaborating with other partners to expand employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, and to ensure the *WorkAble Solutions* website continues to meet Web Accessibility Initiative accessibility standards and the needs of its users.

The 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games represent a unique opportunity to assist persons with disabilities and for all British Columbians to experience world class sporting and cultural events. Participation in this special event, including benefit from emerging direct and indirect employment opportunities, will be available to all British Columbians, including persons with disabilities. The Ministry continues to work with the Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities, as well as employment programming service providers in communities across the province, to fully engage persons with disabilities in this unique opportunity.

Strategies

- Improving linkages among persons with disabilities and the business community, businesses and community-based job placement agencies and service providers.
- Support the Minister's Council's *10 by 10 Challenge* to increase employment for persons with disabilities in communities across the province by 10 per cent by 2010.
- Expand opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate and volunteer in the 2010 events through the Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities and WorkAble Solutions website.
- Assist 2010 Legacies Now in developing sustainable, community-based initiatives focused on sport and recreation, arts, literacy, and volunteerism.

Objective 2.3: *Develop and implement a comprehensive and integrated system of support and services for persons with disabilities.*

As outlined in its Strategic Plan, Government has made the development of a comprehensive and integrated system of support and services for persons with disabilities a key priority. The Strategy will make services more citizen-centred and result in improved outcomes for persons with disabilities, including improved health and safety and a greater level of participation in the social and economic life of the province. Persons with disabilities are already benefiting from the single-window, 1-800 Personal Supports Information Line implemented in 2006. The Ministry continues to work with other ministries and organizations to ensure that persons with disabilities in British Columbia have the best system of support in the country.

Strategies

- Lead, in collaboration with partner social development ministries, the alignment of eligibility criteria for government's disability supports and services.
- Simplify the Persons with Disabilities designation application and adjudication processes.
- Streamlining processes for children with disabilities or special needs to ensure a smooth transition of services from children's programs to adult programs.
- Work to ensure that the Workable Solutions website continues to meet Web Accessibility Initiative standards.

Goal 3: *Support integrated service delivery through cross ministry services that provide disadvantaged British Columbians with supports that are responsive to their unique needs.*

Core Business Areas: *Employment Programs, Temporary Assistance, Disability Assistance, Supplementary Assistance and Executive and Support Services.*

The Ministry continues its commitment to leading successful integration of the delivery of social, health, educational and employment services, in support of government's commitment to providing the best system of support for disadvantaged British Columbians. Collaboration between ministries, other levels of government and community organizations is critical to the successful transformation of the design and delivery of health, education and literacy, employment, shelter and assistance programs.

One component of the Ministry's involvement in these partnerships is collaborative participation on numerous research projects. Initiatives include: improving literacy, assessing the impact of Adult Basic Education programs for single parents with young children, and evaluating the impact of the Ministry's employment-first approach to income assistance with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Advanced Education and the Government of Canada, respectively. The intent of these projects is to achieve a better understanding of the impacts and benefits to clients, thereby enhancing client satisfaction, maximizing positive results from available resources, and ultimately improving the outcomes of individuals and communities.

The Ministry participates on the Interministry Research and Innovation Committee, led by the Ministry of Advanced Education. The Committee serves to enhance linkages and communication about key research and innovation initiatives among ministries.

The nature of these inter-ministry, collaborative efforts is one wherein partner organizations contribute in important and diverse ways, making attribution of specific outcomes to individual partners a challenge. To provide appropriate transparency and accountability for results, the Ministry continues to develop outcome measures and monitor activities toward achieving key deliverables and will report on results as they are available.

Objective 3.1: *Provide homeless British Columbians with community-based support services in collaboration with the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions.*

By maintaining its active involvement with the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions, the Ministry continues to support government's efforts to address these issues. The Ministry plays a key role in helping people break the cycle of

homelessness by supporting those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to move beyond temporary shelter to more secure housing, and to gain greater self-reliance through employment.

The Ministry is expanding its outreach programs in communities across the province to assist potential clients who are homeless, in medical care or in correctional facilities. Outreach services include activities such as conducting intake interviews, helping to complete application forms, and connecting clients to community services and ministry supports. The Ministry will also continue focusing resources on the challenges faced by the province's largest metropolitan centre through expanded involvement in the Vancouver Downtown East Side Housing Integrated Task Team targeting unscrupulous landlords. Ongoing advice, assistance and funding is provided by the Ministry to the Vancouver Agreement which brings government partners, community organizations and businesses together in a coordinated strategy that promotes and supports sustainable economic, social and community development, particularly in the Downtown Eastside.

Strategies

- Explore alternative approaches to dual diagnosis clients with the Solicitor General, BC Housing, and the Ministry of Health.
- Continue to support the development and implementation of recommendations from the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions.
- Expand the Vancouver Downtown East Side's Housing Integrated Task Team model, targeting unscrupulous landlords, to other communities across the province.
- Expand outreach programs in communities across the province to assist potential clients that are homeless, in medical care or in correctional facilities.
- Continued development and implementation of an Inter-ministry Strategy for Mentally Disordered Offenders.
- Continuing to support the Vancouver Agreement until March 2008.

Objective 3.2: *Support the development of common systems and information sharing among social sector ministries to improve service delivery and enhance client outcomes.*

Our clients are diverse and frequently require the services and supports provided by other ministries including Health, Children and Family Development, and Education. Addressing the needs of clients through responsive and individualized services is dependent upon government's ability to share, manage and protect client information. Ultimately, new inter-ministry data sharing processes that respect the confidential nature of personal information and comply with information and privacy legislation, are critical for developing effective integrated programs and ensuring that clients receive better service from government.

Strategies

- The Ministry is working with the Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services and the Ministry of Children and Family Development on a case management system that will facilitate an integrated and citizen-centred approach to service delivery.
- Data-matching project with the Ministry of Health to assess client use of the medical system.
- Partnering with the Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addiction to evaluate client outcomes associated with the Drug Treatment Court of Vancouver.
- Assessing the impact of pre-release programs on income assistance dependency in support of an inter-ministry strategy for mentally-disordered offenders.
- Ongoing monitoring of information and systems to ensure proper safeguards and appropriate usage of personal information as well as strict adherence to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Objective 3.3: *Improve the employment and literacy supports available to Aboriginal people through collaboration with Aboriginal organizations and other Ministry stakeholders, ministries and governments.*

In support of the B.C. government's New Relationship with Aboriginal people, the Ministry continues to liaise with Aboriginal organizations to identify social, educational and economic opportunities for Aboriginal people. These opportunities may include increased participation in Aboriginal education and literacy programs, and expanded access to new and existing employment opportunities.

The Ministry will be working with the Ministry of Advanced Education to develop a long-term study to determine the impact of Adult Basic Education and related supports (i.e., child-care) on the income assistance dependence of single-parent clients with young children and Aboriginals living in economically-depressed areas. The Ministry will also continue to support the Aboriginal Self-Identifier Project which will allow the Ministry to better understand and meet the needs of Aboriginal clients. In support of Government's Great Goal 3, the Ministry will continue mapping personal support programs and services delivered or funded by the provincial, federal and First Nations governments and Aboriginal organizations to determine options for integration, resulting in more streamlined, citizen-centred services.

Strategies

- Work with Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement holders to provide Aboriginal persons with targeted employment programming.

- Complete the mapping of personal supports programs and services delivered or funded by the provincial, federal and First Nations governments and Aboriginal organizations to determine options for integration.
- Work with Aboriginal community on the development and implementation of the Aboriginal Self-Identifier Project.

Objective 3.4: *Link clients with the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts' ActNow BC initiative which addresses the risk factors of physical inactivity, tobacco use, obesity, poor nutrition and alcohol use during pregnancy.*

The Ministry plays an important role in supporting the ActNow BC initiative; a comprehensive health promotion program designed to support individuals and communities in protecting and improving their wellness. The Ministry provides supports to low and moderate-income families with children at risk, including programs such as the Healthy Kids program. Recognizing that basic dental care and vision are important determinants of overall health, the Healthy Kids program provides basic dental and optical care to low and moderate-income families not already covered by insurance plans. Extending coverage to these families ensures that low-income working families have access to dental and optical coverage they otherwise could not afford.

The Ministry also provides clients with supports that promote good nutrition and a physically active lifestyle, including natal nutritional supplements and camp fees for clients.

Strategies

- Continued provision of natal nutritional supplement, Christmas supplement, camp and recreation fees, and Healthy Kids optical and dental coverage for children in low and moderate-income families.
- Increasing awareness of the Healthy Kids and other health-promotion programs to encourage financial independence for low and moderate-income families.

Objective 3.5: *Contribute to government's effort to maximize the physical, intellectual, social and emotional potential of the province's children.*

Providing children with the opportunities to succeed requires the involvement of families, communities and all levels of government. The Ministry exempts the parent of a child under three years of age from the income assistance eligibility requirement of seeking employment, and makes specialized supplementary assistance available to assist with the health, dental and educational needs of children, including a School Start-Up supplement that was doubled in 2006. In addition to providing higher income and disability assistance rates to clients with

children, the Ministry also supports non-parent caregivers through the Children in the Home of a Relative program. The Ministry will continue working with the Ministry of Children and Family Development to enhance child protection and support services through the transition of this program.

Strategy

- Continuing to provide a suite of supplementary assistance, including a School Start-Up Supplement, and higher rates of support to clients with children.

Goal 4: Provide employment programming that is flexible in meeting individual client needs to achieve sustainable employment.

Core Business Areas: *Employment Programs.*

Employment programming remains a key priority for the Ministry. Employment programs are intended to assist clients to move along the employment continuum.

The Ministry implemented two new programs in 2006:

- The BC Employment Program — launched July 4, 2006. The BC Employment Program consolidates two of the Ministry’s former employment programs, Training for Jobs and Job Placement, and the employment-focused aspects of the Community Assistance Program, into a single program designed to be more flexible in meeting the needs of individual clients with employment obligations; and
- A revised Community Assistance Program which provides services to those clients who have more significant barriers to employment in order to enhance their quality of life and support them to participate more fully in their communities. This program is not focused on employment.

In addition, the Ministry is finalizing a revised Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities to be implemented in July 2007.

These programs are designed to ensure that there is a high degree of flexibility available to tailor services to meet the needs of individual clients.

The Ministry will continue to closely monitor the performance of these programs.

The BC Employment Program was introduced in response to the Ministry’s changing caseload and to provide individualized, flexible services to meet the needs of clients with multiple barriers and employment obligations. As such, the program has an extensive performance management framework ensuring clients receive the services they require in a supportive environment. Outcomes of the BC Employment Program are focused on clients making progress along the employment continuum to become job ready or achieve employment defined as \$560 or 70 hours per month.

Performance Measure	Actual	Targets		
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
4.0 Percentage of BC Employment Program clients who achieve \$560 or 70 hours per month.	Establish Baseline	25%	25%	25%

Description of measure: This performance measure indicates success of a client securing sustainable employment. It is changed from last year to incorporate the focus of the Ministry’s new BC Employment Program.

Objective 4.1: *Job ready clients will be assisted to reach independence as quickly as possible.*

Clients who are able to work will be supported to achieve financial independence through services provided under the new BC Employment Program, launched July 4, 2006. The program is delivered by three contractors in nine service delivery bundles across the province, with 82 sub-contractors forming an extensive service delivery network. Contractors receive compensation through a fee-for-service model with performance incentives. The annual budget for the BC Employment Program is \$35 million and will serve 15,000 clients annually throughout British Columbia.

Ministry objectives for the BC Employment Program include:

- assist employable clients to reach independence as quickly as possible through sustainable employment;
- assist clients who have barriers to employment to progress along the employment continuum through increased employability and connections with community services; and
- improved administrative efficiencies in employment programming.

Clients benefit from this approach as 50 per cent leave assistance for employment within four months. Since 2001, over 48,000 clients have found employment through employment programs (particularly in the hospitality and construction industries), earning an average starting wage of almost \$11 per hour — 40 per cent above minimum wage. Immediate benefits of employment include a higher household income than would be received from income assistance. Over the long-term, research indicates that this approach benefits families and individuals by breaking the inter-generational pattern of welfare-dependency that many clients have experienced. Children raised in income assistance-dependent families are 70 per cent more likely to require income assistance in their lifetime than are children raised in financially independent families.

The BC Employment Program is the product of an open, consultative process that incorporated feedback and input from Ministry staff and stakeholders, including community-based service providers from across the province. As a result of this engagement, the BC Employment Program is a comprehensive program that offers:

- flexible, individualized programming that meets the unique needs of clients;
- programming that utilizes the in-depth knowledge and experience of community-based service providers to deliver frontline services; and
- administrative efficiencies gained through streamlining processes such as a single referral for clients and reduction in the review of employment plans.

The Ministry expects the BC Employment Program to be delivered seamlessly to clients as they move through the program. The program has three main components:

- Client Intake: assess client suitability to participate in the program;
- Directed Work Search: provides short-term support to clients who are considered capable of conducting their own work search; and
- Individualized Services and Supports: geared for clients who could, with additional services and supports, move into employment. Individualized Services and Supports provides a range of service options tailored to individual client need, including Life Skills, Short Term Certificate Training (to help participants obtain common certificates) and Employment Services (e.g., resume writing assistance, arranging interviews and access to job banks).

Strategy

- Monitor client outcomes relating to the new BC Employment Program.

Objective 4.2: *Invest in clients with barriers to help them progress towards sustainable employment.*

Some of our clients who face multiple barriers may never achieve and/or sustain financial independence through employment. The revised Community Assistance Program, implemented in October 2006, offers flexible, individualized services to meet the unique needs of these clients and to support them in enhancing their quality of life and in participating more fully in their communities. These services are delivered using the in-depth knowledge and experience of community-based service providers. The services include personal counseling and coaching, core and supplementary life skills, and being connected with external community services. The Community Assistance Program is expected to serve approximately 5,000 clients annually with a program budget of \$7.5 million per year.

The revised Community Assistance Program provides structured services and supports designed to meet the needs of BC Employment and Assistance clients with significant barriers to employment who are deemed:

- Expected to Work or Expected to Work-Medical Condition;
- Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers;
- Persons with Disabilities; or
- No Employment Obligations.

The Community Assistance Program is not an employment program, as the employment elements of the original Community Assistance Program were moved to the BC Employment Program, launched in July 2006.

The Community Assistance Program is delivered through 50 contracts with 33 community service providers. Through its focus on service provider linkages with other community services and support systems, participants in the Community Assistance Program may have outcomes resulting in:

- increased community involvement;
- enhanced networking;
- commitment to healthier lifestyle;
- enrolment in education or training;
- volunteer placements;
- improved personal budgeting abilities;
- movement into employment programming;
- development of skills that contribute to stronger family relationships; and
- employment may also be an outcome for participants.

Strategy

- Ongoing monitoring of the revised Community Assistance Program.

Resource Summary

Core Business Areas	2006/07 Restated Estimates ¹	2007/08 Estimates	2008/09 Plan	2009/010 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Employment Programs	95,689	97,867	99,025	99,987
Temporary Assistance	365,387	358,180	349,501	346,890
Disability Assistance	663,735	732,884	761,217	793,206
Supplementary Assistance	235,624	263,809	271,855	283,230
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	2,019	2,070	2,070	2,070
Executive and Support Services	24,139	24,718	25,187	25,472
Total	1,386,593	1,479,528	1,508,855	1,550,855
Full-time Equivalents (FTEs)				
Employment Programs	302	302	302	302
Temporary Assistance	514	514	514	514
Disability Assistance	592	592	592	592
Supplementary Assistance	312	312	312	312
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	14	14	14	14
Executive and Support Services	239	239	239	239
Total	1,973	1,973	1,973	1,973
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)				
Executive and Support Services	18,000	17,595	22,725	22,725
Total	18,000	17,595	22,725	22,725

¹ These amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with the presentation of the 2007/08 *Estimates*. Schedule A of the *Estimates*, presents a detailed reconciliation.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Values and Service Code

Values

Our values support the integrity of the Ministry. How we deliver our services and demonstrate our ability to operate in a manner that reflects our values is fundamental to building confidence among staff, clients and the public.

We Value:

- People
- Personal Responsibility
- Respect and Empathy
- Equity and Fairness
- Accountability
- Transparency and Open Communication

Service Code

In support of the Ministry's Values, we commit to:

- be personally responsible for our thoughts, feelings and actions;
- honour and respect diversity, and support this through our organizational practices;
- listen to understand;
- enhance our communication skills by practicing open, honest dialogue in a manner that does not discount others;
- define and respect our own boundaries and the boundaries of others;
- include or consult those affected in planning and decision-making processes when appropriate; and
- hold others in goodwill.

Within the context of our working relationships, each of us is expected to:

- model the Ministry's core values in our daily work and align our actions with the Ministry's mission and vision;
- take responsibility for our own work by seeking clarity in, and fulfilling our roles and responsibilities, setting realistic goals, acknowledging and learning through mistakes, and taking appropriate action;
- participate actively in employee performance development processes, including learning to give and receive effective feedback;

- share information openly, when appropriate, and communicate personally whenever possible;
- help foster and maintain a solutions-oriented and supportive work environment in which people can speak freely without fear of repercussion;
- take responsibility for resolving issues directly;
- recognize, acknowledge and celebrate individual and team success;
- stay current on our understanding of issues facing clients and communities, and of relevant legislation, policy and procedures; and
- take responsibility for our own well-being, including work/life balance.

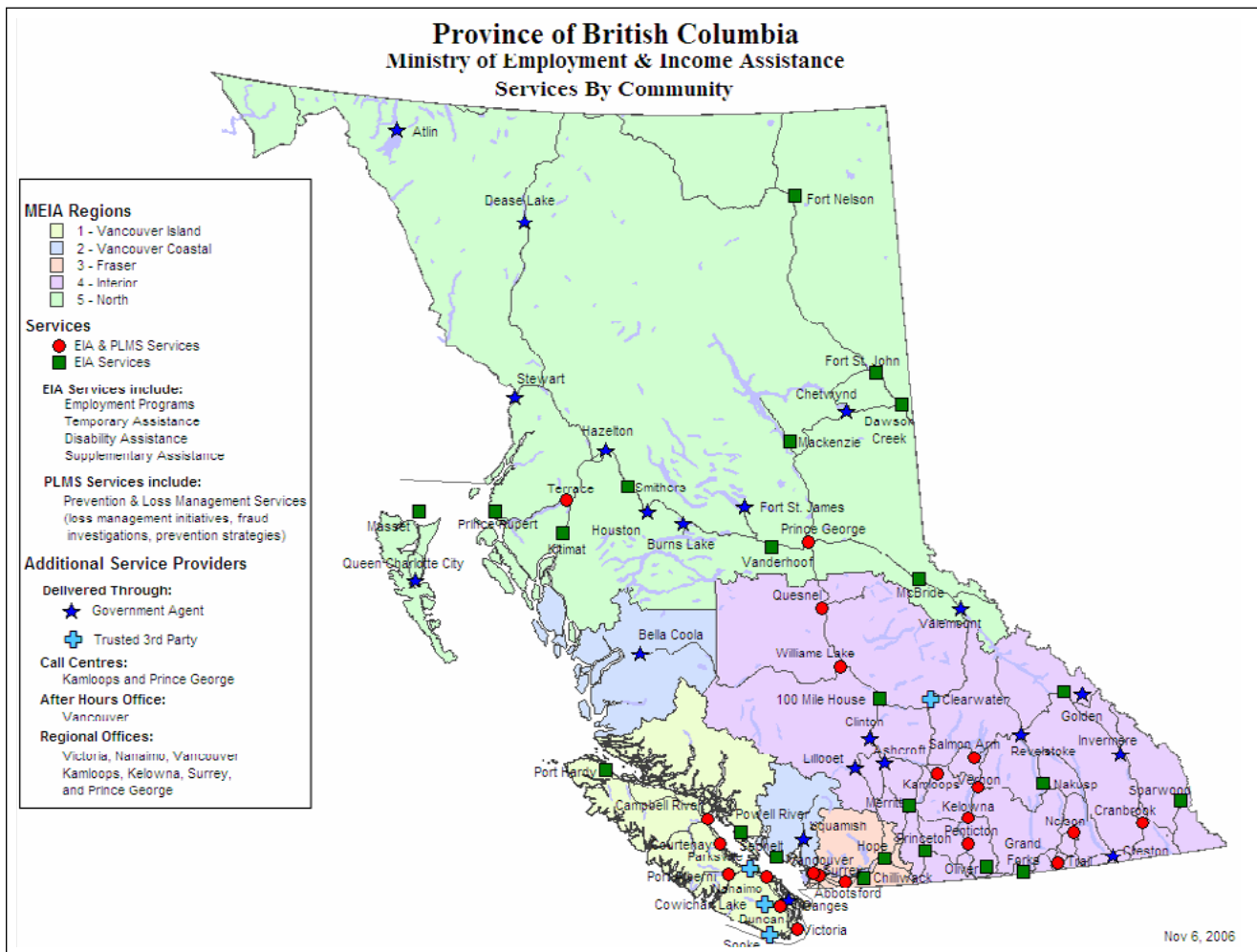
As a client or a member of the public, you can expect Ministry staff to provide:

- courteous, professional and consistent service, in a manner that emphasizes listening to understand;
- respect for your privacy and confidentiality;
- fair and thorough assessments of your situation and needs;
- assistance in identifying realistic approaches for meeting your needs;
- information and clear explanations of decisions as soon as possible; and
- help in understanding the Ministry's legislation, and internal reconsideration and appeal processes.

As Ministry employees, we expect that clients and members of the public will:

- treat us courteously and respectfully;
- provide us with the information we require to serve them;
- be accountable for meeting the requirements to receive assistance; and
- take responsibility towards achieving their potential.

Appendix 2: Services Map



Appendix 3: What Benefits Do Clients Retain When They Leave Income Assistance For Work?¹

Expected to Work	NO CHILDREN		WITH CHILDREN	
	On Income Assistance	Off Income Assistance	On Income Assistance	Off Income Assistance
Provincial Programs				
Income Assistance	✓		✓	
Rental Assistance Plan				✓
BC Child Care Subsidy			✓	✓
Free Medical Services Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pharmacare — prescription costs paid	100%	70%	100%	70%
Healthy Kids (Dental & Optical)			✓	✓
Emergency Dental Service	✓		✓	
BC Earned Income Benefit			✓	✓
BC Sales Tax Credit	✓	✓	✓	✓
Federal Programs				
Base Canada Child Tax Benefit			✓	✓
National Child Benefit Supplement			✓	✓
Universal Child Care Benefit			✓	✓
GST Credit	✓	✓	✓	✓

Shaded rows indicate a change in benefits when leaving income assistance.

¹ All benefits are income-tested except the Universal Child Care Benefit, which is taxable.

Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance

Persons With Disability	NO CHILDREN		WITH CHILDREN	
	On Income Assistance	Off Income Assistance	On Income Assistance	Off Income Assistance
Provincial Programs				
Income Assistance	✓		✓	
Rental Assistance Plan				✓
BC Child Care Subsidy			✓	✓
Free Medical Services Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pharmacare — prescription costs paid	100%	100%	100%	100%
Healthy Kids (Dental & Optical)			✓	✓
Medical Equipment and Supplies	✓	✓	✓	✓
Basic Dental and Orthodontic	✓	✓	✓	✓
Employment Services (EPPD)	✓	✓	✓	✓
BC Earned Income Benefit			✓	✓
Subsidized BC Bus Pass	✓		✓	
BC Sales Tax Credit	✓	✓	✓	✓
Federal Programs				
Base Canada Child Tax Benefit			✓	✓
National Child Benefit Supplement			✓	✓
Universal Child Care Benefit			✓	✓
GST Credit	✓	✓	✓	✓

