



**BC Public Service  
Agency**

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**2009/10 – 2011/12  
Service Plan**

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February 2009



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Published by the BC Public Service Agency

## Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement



I am pleased to present the 2009/10 – 2011/12 Service Plan for the BC Public Service Agency. The Agency's mandate is to provide human resource leadership for the ministries and agencies and the 30,000 employees working to serve British Columbians.

Government's vision is to be a leader in Canada and to be recognized internationally for public service excellence - already we've been recognized as one of B.C.'s Top 50 employers for the second consecutive year. We intend to build on this reputation to attract and retain the people we need to provide effective, high quality services and programs to British Columbians as government is committed to building and maintaining a high calibre public service.

Our strategic approach is outlined in the Corporate Human Resources Plan for Government - by building our internal capacity, improving competitiveness and managing for results, we are supporting B.C. in becoming the best public service employer in Canada. The third edition of this plan - *Being the Best* - sets out the next steps in our ongoing work to be a more competitive employer so we have the people we need to serve British Columbians into the future.

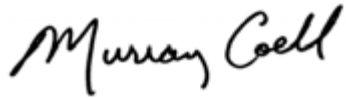
We recognize it is a particularly challenging time as government, along with all other public and private sector organizations, competes in a shrinking talent pool as baby boomers leave the workforce. The government must remain a competitive employer as it is projected that within the B.C. public service, we will lose 44 per cent of managers and 33 per cent of bargaining unit staff through retirement, by 2018.

To meet this challenge, we made the decision to open all job postings to external candidates. Our increased recruitment efforts have resulted in receiving more than twice as many job applications a month as we did in 2006. The Pacific Leaders program has provided scholarships to more than 700 employees to pursue work related training and development, and another 700 employees are benefiting from the student loan forgiveness program to attract new employees.

The latest Work Environment Survey of provincial employees, meant to seek opinions on issues impacting their work experience, showed a continued increase in engagement, contributing to a cumulative gain of 8 points since the benchmark 2006 survey; this is regarded as a significant move for an organization of 30,000 employees. Another positive indicator is that 82 per cent of employees completed the survey, up from 70 per cent in 2007.

This Service Plan outlines the strategies the BC Public Service Agency will continue to implement as it leads and supports public service excellence, making a positive difference in the lives of the more than four million citizens in this province. As Minister responsible, I believe this plan will contribute to a public service of the highest standard.

The 2009/10 – 2011/12 BC Public Service Agency 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 February 12, 2009 have been considered in preparing the plan and I am accountable for achieving the specific objectives in this plan.



Honourable Murray Coell  
Minister of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development

February 12, 2009

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## Purpose of the Agency

The mandate of the BC Public Service Agency is to provide human resource leadership for the ministries, agencies and the employees working to serve British Columbians. The BC Public Service Agency takes pride in serving its customers and clients so they can create a work environment where all public servants can excel.

The Government's Strategic Plan calls for the achievement of Five Great Goals that are intended to achieve a long term vision for British Columbia — a prosperous and just province, whose citizens' achieve their full potential and have confidence in the future. To achieve this there needs to be a strong and nimble public service that strives to be the leader in Canada and is recognized internationally for public service excellence.

The drive toward service excellence requires every employee to challenge the status quo, to look for ways to improve performance in the organization and to turn good ideas into action. Improving the way the B.C. public service operates requires an engaged workforce, an ability to attract and retain top talent, flexibility to adjust to emerging priorities, an ability to grow and share knowledge freely, and collaboration across various business units. Public servants are more likely to recommend the B.C. public service as a great place to work and be prepared to move beyond the status quo if they feel energized, inspired by their leaders and valued for the contributions that they make.

The BC Public Service Agency is accountable to the Deputy Ministers' Council to provide cost effective service on day-to-day transactional activities to our customers and clients in the B.C. public service. In addition, the BC Public Service Agency is called upon to play a strategic role in support of the B.C. public service realizing its vision of becoming a more dynamic and rewarding place to work than ever before – one recognized as the employer of choice across the country.

With more than 400 employees, the BC Public Service Agency is one of the largest human resources organizations in British Columbia and is bound by a singular commitment to make the B.C. public service the best public service employer in Canada. BC Public Service Agency employees have deep knowledge and specialized skills in human resources and represents the best in this profession in the country.

# Strategic Context

## Planning Context and Key Strategic Issues

The B.C. public service is the largest corporate workforce in the province, serving over 280 communities across British Columbia. From frontline workers to accountants and architects, researchers and analysts, to information technology professionals and others, there is virtually no area of expertise unrepresented. Public servants provide a wide range of services to British Columbians such as health care, public safety, education, and environmental management, to name a few.

The British Columbia public service is vital to making Government's goals a reality. The ongoing provision of these services is challenged by a number of internal and external factors that are driving change to human resource management policies and practices in the B.C. public service.

## Internal Factors

- While the fiscal challenge resulting from the global economic downturn will have an impact on the public service workforce, the B.C. public service remains committed to the longer-term vision set out in the Corporate Human Resource Plan to ensure it will have the skilled employees needed in the face of longer-term demographic forces affecting the labour market.
- Maintaining a healthy balance of exits and entrants - By 2011, it is projected that exits from the B.C. public service will outnumber entrants. An astounding 44 per cent of public service managers and 33 per cent of unionized employees are expected to retire during the next ten years. Even the current economic situation does not change this demographic reality. If the B.C. public service is unable to increase its proportion of labour force growth in the future, the size of the public service could shrink significantly. This will have unprecedented implications on how the public service operates and how it delivers services in the future.
- Renewing the workforce - Historically, nine out of ten vacancies in the B.C. public service were filled with internal candidates. Given the number of projected retirements in the next few years, this practice is not sustainable and does not facilitate the addition of new influences and approaches for the future. The average age of newly hired staff has decreased from 38.1 years to 36.5 in 2007/08. Currently the proportion of B.C. public service employees under the age of 30 is 11.4 per cent, smaller than the proportion of the B.C. labour force that is under the age of 30; there is an opportunity for the B.C. public service to increase its market share in this segment of the labour force.
- Encouraging mature employees to work longer - The first of the Baby Boom generation in Canada turned age 60 in 2006. This is leading to an overall aging population and within the B.C. public service in particular. There is an upcoming wave of expected retirements; over the next ten years the annual number of retirements will increase, resulting in 35 per cent of the current public service retiring over ten years. At the same time, the average retirement age has gradually declined over time (ten years ago, the average retirement age from the B.C. public service was 59.1 years; in 2007/08, the average retirement age dropped to 57.9 years). This, together with the elimination of

mandatory retirement at age 65, has significant implications for the B.C. public service in terms of succession planning and knowledge management.

- Projected skills for the future are shifting - The competencies and skill sets needed from employees in the future will shift with the economic, social, physical, environmental and demographic changes of B.C.'s communities. Employees require dynamic support and visioning from its employer now and into the future. Providing advancement options through career planning and unique educational and growth opportunities will assist in the attraction and development of future resources. The B.C. public service needs to be an agile and creative employer to respond to the changing needs of the workforce.

### **External Factors**

- The private sector now expects that B.C. will experience slower economic growth in 2009 and 2010 than it has in previous years. Risks to B.C.'s economic outlook include a prolonged U.S. recession, continued turmoil in global financial markets, slower global demand for B.C. products, volatile commodity prices and further moderation of domestic demand in B.C.
- Competition for talent - The search for talent has become a global competition. The B.C. public service needs to look locally, nationally and globally for talent and continue to develop effective retention strategies as other employers actively seek its top talent.
- Work environment satisfiers are shifting as younger workers enter the workforce. Based on the demand for skilled resources, current and potential employees can afford to be more selective and choose organizations that provide an engaging work environment, good career growth, learning and development opportunities, and competitive salaries and benefits.
- Demographic shift - In British Columbia, falling birth rates lead to increased competition for labour in all sectors of the province. This has been intensified by our aging population that is causing the labour force to shrink; 15 per cent of the population in B.C. is over the age of 65.
- Awareness of public service career opportunities - Many eligible employees were previously unaware of career opportunities within the B.C. public service. The "Where Ideas Work" brand has helped to raise the profile of the B.C. public service and compete successfully for talent against the private sector and other public sector jurisdictions.
- In 2007, the province's employed population grew faster than its labour force. By 2009, the annual growth rate of the overall B.C. population will exceed the growth rate of B.C.'s working age population and continue to outpace it for at least the next twenty years.
- The current global economic influences are easing the demand for labour; however, the labour market is expected to remain tight in the long run. The Conference Board of Canada forecasts that there may be a near term easing on compensation increases but concludes that attracting and retaining talent remains a key priority for employers.
- Over the next ten years, B.C. is expected to have one million job openings — 350,000 more openings than people graduating from high school.



# Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

The 2009/10 - 2011/12 service plan goals for the BC Public Service Agency have been updated to align with Government's Corporate Human Resource Plan, *Being the Best*. The BC Public Service Agency provides strategic support and delivery on initiatives related to the Corporate Human Resource Plan goals. The performance measures in this service plan have also been updated from broader corporate measures to measures linked directly to the BC Public Service Agency.

## Goal 1: Building our Internal Capacity

### Objective 1.1: The B.C. public service is a learning organization

Learning promotes perspective and innovation and is a key driver of change. Empirical studies in both public and private sector organizations have shown that learning investments produce substantial economic returns to the organizations through reduced costs, increased efficiencies and other direct and indirect benefits that improve the performance and competitiveness of the organization.

#### Strategies

Key strategies for this objective are:

- Increase training and learning opportunities outside Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland.
- Balance the focus of employee learning between formal and informal opportunities to learn job-related as well as transferable skills.
- Enhance learning by increasing the use of technology and e-learning strategies.
- Continue to promote the Pacific Leaders program (scholarships for public servants and their children, student loan forgiveness and graduate student fellowships).

### Objective 1.2: The B.C. public service is a versatile workforce that can adapt to meet changing needs

A public service striving for excellence and innovation requires a workforce that is engaged and flexible to adjust to emerging priorities and supported to get the right results. Government must ensure that critical positions vulnerable to pending staff retirements or normal turnover have been identified and that suitable candidates are available to fill the positions as people retire. By rapidly training, collaborating and developing a supply of qualified applicants, government will ensure that its business goals are met and organizational performance is enhanced.

## Strategies

Key strategies for this objective are:

- Support new learning programs to fast-track learning for at-risk job streams.
- Develop people for key roles across the B.C. public service by accelerating targeted development to areas of highest need.
- Strategically invest in priority career streams where an ongoing demand for expertise can be demonstrated.
- Reduce corporate learning duplication and overlap with ministries.
- Provide tools and resources to support innovation and cross-government collaboration.
- Continue the expansion of programs and services to support managers and supervisors.
- Continue to streamline hiring processes.

### **Performance Measure 1:      Number of participants in corporate learning and development programs**

Performance Measure	2008/09 Forecast	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Number of participants in corporate learning	17,000	17,300	17,300	18,700

Data source: Learning Services Branch, BC Public Service Agency

## Discussion

Corporate learning is an integral part of any retention strategy in a competitive job market and plays a significant role towards meeting the goals of the Corporate Human Resource Plan. In challenging economic times, investing in human capital is a smart investment. With the addition of an orientation program for new employees joining the B.C. public service and the establishment of the Pacific Leaders Scholarship for employees, more employees are accessing training and education programs to increase their knowledge, skills and abilities to deliver on the Government’s objectives. Developing learning opportunities regionally allows for greater participation and decreased travel costs. Increasing learning opportunities within corporate focused program areas, such as supervisory skills, procurement, and project management, allows for targeted development of needed skill sets. The use of technology, including courses provided to supervisors and managers, will continue to increase. The projection for participants is based on maintaining targets in light of the economic forecast for the next two years.

**Performance Measure 2: Average time to hire**

Performance Measure	2008/09 Forecast	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Average time to hire in calendar days	60	55	50	45

Data source: Performance Measurement and Corporate Reporting, BC Public Service Agency

**Discussion**

Average time to hire is most useful for organizations that wish to measure the efficiency and timeliness of their recruiting processes (Infoform Group Inc., 2006). Reducing the average time to hire provides better service to the public, less effort managing vacancies and greater operational efficiency. Generally, this performance measure refers to the average length of time that elapses from the date a hiring manager submits a job posting (commonly known as a job requisition), to the date a candidate is offered the position. The BC Public Service Agency has now undertaken a number of hiring initiatives to provide better support in the process.

**Goal 2: Improving Our Competitiveness**

**Objective 2.1: The B.C. public service is recognized as an attractive career choice**

As the working population in Canada ages, birth rates fall, and positive economic growth is anticipated in western Canada in the long term, it is expected that an increasingly competitive labour market will be the outcome. The B.C. public service needs to be able to compete with other public sector employers and the private sector for talented people to meet its workforce needs now and in the future. A higher profile in the marketplace through marketing and recruitment efforts will form one part of a larger, multi-faceted human resource strategy to address the projected workforce challenges.

**Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective are:

- Focus recruitment efforts on at risk job streams (for example financial and policy professionals) and untapped markets (for example, high performing mature workers).
- Develop additional employee wellness initiatives and flexible work options as employee health and flexibility leads to improved productivity.
- Establish a green team to focus on development of innovative work arrangements to meet Government's environmental objectives.
- Continue building the relationship with co-operative education programs and purposefully develop outreach initiatives with colleges and universities within B.C. and Canada.

- Continue with the partnership created through the Aboriginal Youth Internship program to encourage Aboriginal youth to consider the B.C. public service as an attractive employer.
- Continue to build a satisfying workplace environment that appeals to job seekers of today.

**Objective 2.2: The recruitment policy, process and tools in the B.C. public service facilitate hiring of highly competent people**

The B.C. public service is focused on improving public access to job opportunities and the development of programs that will attract future employees to a career with the public service.

**Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective are:

- Highlight to the public and the B.C. public service the assistance the BC Public Service Agency provides through its corporate recruiters and career advisors.
- Expand the existing candidate referral service to accommodate more job streams. This means the applicant can submit one application but be considered for various available positions within that job stream. This greatly simplifies the process for the applicant, provides B.C. public service clients with candidates that have been assessed and pre-qualified, and results in the ability to fill positions more quickly.
- Provide training, tools, and where needed, actual resources to support managers to make sound hiring decisions and to facilitate the hiring process.
- Refine the BC Public Service Agency's workforce forecast model to predict future areas of job expertise that are at risk.

**Performance Measure 3: Number of partnership Memorandums of Understanding entered into with post-secondary institutions**

Performance Measure	2008/09 Forecast	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Number of partnership Memorandums of Understanding entered into with post-secondary institutions	5 Provincial	4 Provincial, 2 National	2 National	2 National

Data source: Hiring Strategies Branch, BC Public Service Agency

**Discussion**

The development of partnership agreements with post-secondary institutions allows the promotion of public service career opportunities to university students and graduates, provides co-op placement options for post-secondary institutions, and helps lead students to various career paths within the public service. Through these agreements the Province commits to providing co-operative terms, internships, work placements, consulting engagements and funded research opportunities.

**Performance Measure 4: Number of Aboriginal Internship opportunities filled**

Performance Measure	2008/09 Forecast	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Number of Aboriginal Internship opportunities filled	25	50	100	100

Data source: Hiring Strategies Branch, BC Public Service Agency

**Discussion**

The Aboriginal Youth Internship Program is an innovative 12 month internship program, incorporating cultural elements and community support, designed to build the leadership capacity of Aboriginal youth across B.C. The program has served to strengthen relationships between Government and Aboriginal communities and consists of nine months work experience in a provincial ministry followed by three months in a selected Aboriginal organization with several structured program activities throughout. This partnership is designed to support Aboriginal youth in developing their leadership skills and encourage them to consider the B.C. public service or Aboriginal organizations as a place to pursue a rewarding career. In addition, Aboriginal leaders in the province have cited this program as an example of the New Relationship at work. It is important to continue to support this initiative throughout the current economic climate.

**Goal 3: Managing for Results**

**Objective 3.1: The BC Public Service Agency provides service that is valued by its clients and customers**

The BC Public Service Agency is committed to providing outstanding service and human resource leadership, founded upon trusted business partnerships with its clients and customers and recognized business acumen. The agency works with its ministry human resource partners to build and maintain a highly functioning and collaborative human resource community.

## Strategies

Key strategies for this objective are:

- Facilitate streamlining of services through availability of e-tools and on-line resources.
- Continuously improve client established service standards and report out on achievements to clients monthly.

### **Objective 3.2: Employee engagement is measured, addressed and improved**

Research shows that organizations with more engaged employees outperform organizations with less engaged employees. Organizations with highly engaged employees tend to be more productive and profitable, experience less turnover and absenteeism, and retain more employees. By measuring employee engagement in the B.C. public service and developing specific, targeted strategies to improve annual results, senior executive hopes to strengthen the work environment. The ultimate aim is to make the B.C. public service a more productive workforce - one that results in providing better public services to the public.

## Strategies

Key strategies for this objective are:

- Administer the annual Work Environment Survey which measures employee engagement for the B.C. public service.
- Continue to work with ministries and agencies across the B.C. public service to create strategies to improve the overall level of employee engagement.
- Increase opportunities for employee feedback and involvement.

### **Objective 3.3: The B.C. public service provides a healthy and productive work environment**

Government is committed to creating and maintaining a work environment that is safe for all its employees all of the time. There is strong commitment to improving workplace health and the health of employees. Every ministry is promoting and providing employees with opportunities to learn more about their health and take steps towards healthy living. Policies and practices for supporting the return of employees who are recovering from illness and injury reflect industry best practices and are making a difference. The B.C. public service compares well with other jurisdictions across Canada and within B.C. Health related absence costs as a percentage of payroll decreased from 5.2 per cent in 2002/03 to 4.4 per cent in 2006/07, a positive trend that needs to continue. The Quittin' Time smoking cessation program, corporate flu vaccine programs and ActNow BC are all strategies pursued by ministries. It is expected that these strategies have been successful in having more employees focused on their health and on improving health in the workplace.

## **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective are:

- Expand health and wellness programs to help reduce health risks.
- Continue to provide specialized expertise to assist with safe and timely returns to work for employees who are recovering from illness or injury.

## **Objective 3.4: Facilitation of performance management best practices**

The new corporate performance values, developed with input from employees across the B.C. public service, will increasingly become part of how the B.C. public service works, strengthening corporate culture. Further to incorporating these values, performance management is a process through which a manager and employee have a conversation about the results needed to achieve business goals and the behaviours needed to demonstrate the values of the organization. The BC Public Service Agency is helping to support better organizational performance by providing new performance management tools and training to managers and employees across the B.C. public service.

## **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective are:

- Refine online tools and provide focused training and education for both employees and supervisors to improve how government manages employee performance.
- Continue to develop recognition opportunities and improved tools to recognize employee innovation.
- Integrate new performance values throughout current human resource practices.

**Performance Measure 5: Overall customer/client satisfaction with the services provided by the BC Public Service Agency**

Performance Measure	2008/09 Forecast <sup>1</sup>	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Overall customer/client satisfaction with the services provided by the BC Public Service Agency	60 points	63 points	66 points	69 points

<sup>1</sup>Data source: Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey administered by BC Stats, Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services on behalf of the BC Public Service Agency

**Discussion**

The BC Public Service Agency Customer Satisfaction Survey consists of two surveys with two sets of questions reaching two different audiences. One audience is the public service executive (usually deputy and assistant deputy ministers) who are asked to answer a shorter survey from the perspective of their ministry. There are usually about 150 executive and senior leaders surveyed. The second audience is customers, namely managers and supervisors. They are asked to answer questions based on their own experience with the BC Public Service Agency. Approximately 5,000 managers are surveyed each year. The survey is conducted annually by BC Stats on behalf of the BC Public Service Agency.

The 2008 Customer Satisfaction Survey has been substantially modified to capture lines of service in a more defined way. A common methodology and set of service attributes is being adapted within the surveys so that performance can be compared by service lines and against other ministries and public sector organizations.

The above forecast and targets reflect the results for both survey audiences included in the BC Public Service Agency's 2008 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

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<sup>1</sup> A two-stage process is used to calculate points: (1) converting the 5-point agreement scale to points - in increments of 25 points starting with 0 points for those who answered "strongly disagreed" and 100 points for those who answered "strongly agreed" and (2) adding up all the points divided by the number of people in the group.



**Performance Measure 6: Meeting of service standards (out of 15 standards measured)**

Performance Measure	2008/09 Forecast	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Success in meeting 15 service standards	10 out of 15 service standards met 90% of the time	12 out of 15 service standards met 90% of the time	14 out of 15 service standards met 90% of the time	15 out of 15 service standards met 95% of the time

Data source: Client Services Division, BC Public Service Agency

**Discussion**

In many service industry organizations, service standards are commonly used to provide customers reassurance that their requests and concerns will be answered within established time frames. Service standards were introduced by the BC Public Service Agency in 2008. It is the BC Public Service Agency's commitment to providing timely service to ministry employees and the public. Service standards are a way for the agency to monitor its own performance for service improvements. Performance reporting can be improved by increasing the percentage of the requests where standards are met and by improving the standard of service. The BC Public Service Agency is committed to continuous improvement across all service offerings.

## Resource Summary Table

Core Business Area	2008/09 <sup>1</sup> Restated Estimates	2009/10 Estimates	2010/11 Plan	2011/12 Plan
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>				
<b>Business Performance</b> .....	30	464	419	384
<b>Client Services</b> .....	3,341	7,189	6,544	5,913
<b>Talent Management</b> .....	5,965	52,712	28,585	4,416
<b>Employee Relations</b> .....	486	1,694	1,591	1,464
<b>Benefits</b> .....	1	1	1	1
<b>Executive and Support Services</b> .....	1,713	1,531	1,414	1,317
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>11,536</b>	<b>63,591</b>	<b>38,554</b>	<b>13,495</b>
<b>Full-time Equivalents (Direct FTEs)</b>				
<b>Business Performance</b> .....	14	14	13	12
<b>Client Services</b> .....	197	199	189	178
<b>Talent Management</b> .....	48	49	46	43
<b>Employee Relations</b> .....	30	36	34	32
<b>Benefits</b> .....	63	70	70	70
<b>Executive and Support Services</b> .....	33	27	26	25

<b>Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)</b>				
<b>Business Performance</b> .....	1,299	1,250	0,000	0,000
<b>Client Services</b> .....	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
<b>Talent Management</b> .....	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
<b>Employee Relations</b> .....	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
<b>Benefits</b> .....	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
<b>Executive and Support Services</b> .....	270	69	69	69
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>1,569</b>	<b>1,319</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>69</b>

<sup>1</sup> The 2008/09 Restated Estimates have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with Schedule A of the 2009/10 Estimates.

# Agency Contact Information

For more information please visit our website:  
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## Hyperlinks to Additional Information

For more information about job opportunities in the BC Public Service please visit:  
[www.employment.gov.bc.ca/](http://www.employment.gov.bc.ca/)

For more information about the Pacific Leaders program please visit: [www.pacificleaders.gov.bc.ca/](http://www.pacificleaders.gov.bc.ca/)

For more information about Quittin'Time, the smoking cessation program for employees of the B.C. public service, their spouses and dependents please visit:  
[www.quittintime.gov.bc.ca/](http://www.quittintime.gov.bc.ca/)

For more information about Being the Best: the Corporate Human Resources Plan for the B.C. public service please visit: [www.employment.gov.bc.ca/documents/HRPlan\\_2008.pdf](http://www.employment.gov.bc.ca/documents/HRPlan_2008.pdf)

For Agency locations and contact information please visit: [www.bcpublicserviceagency.gov.bc.ca](http://www.bcpublicserviceagency.gov.bc.ca)