

Ministry of
Social Development
and Social Innovation

2014/15
Annual Service Plan Report



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Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

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Minister's Message and Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation has a broad mandate. We help British Columbians live independent lives, provide for their families and participate in B.C.'s growing economy.

Over the last year, government has announced significant policy changes to enhance supports for individuals and families on income and disability assistance. In January, we moved to annualized earning exemptions to provide more earning flexibility for people with disabilities. Beginning in September, we will make child support payments exempt for parents receiving assistance; double earning exemptions from \$200 to \$400 per month for all families with children, and increase them from \$300 to \$500 per month for families who have a child with disabilities. Finally, in March we announced the Single Parent

Employment Initiative, a \$24.5 million program to help single parents on income and disability assistance find in-demand jobs.

In June we launched Accessibility 2024, a 10-year plan to make B.C. the most progressive place to live for people with disabilities in Canada. To deliver on the commitments in the plan, the ministry worked with the Minister's Council, the Presidents' Group and the disability community.

Throughout the year, a key focus of the ministry was to deliver effective employment services to help people find meaningful work. In 2014/15, we invested \$317 million in employment and labour market programs, including 84 WorkBC Employment Services Centres across the province.

Over the past year we have made changes to deliver services in a more simplified, efficient and streamlined way to more than 175,000 people on income and disability assistance. Our modernized service delivery system has moved from a regional to a provincial based model and it has allowed us to provide additional service options including My Self Serve, an online portal for ministry clients.

The final phase of the Integrated Case Management project was implemented in November 2014. The cross-government computer system provides a safe and secure platform to manage information and deliver critical social programs to more than 200,000 British Columbians.

The ministry works closely with the BC Partners for Social Impact to support and raise awareness about B.C.'s expanding social enterprise sector. We also introduced social procurement guidelines in the ministry to encourage staff to make socially responsible purchasing decisions.

I am pleased that my ministry achieved the government's mandate of a balanced budget, while ensuring it is responding to the needs of people who need support. The Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation *2014/15 Annual Service Plan Report* compares the actual results to the expected results identified in the *2014/15 - 2016/17 Service Plan*. I am accountable for those results as reported.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Stilwell".

Honorable Michelle Stilwell
Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation

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Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation focuses on providing British Columbians in need with a system of supports to help them achieve their social and economic potential. The key responsibilities include providing income assistance for those in need, delivering employment programs and services to unemployed and underemployed individuals, funding and overseeing services delivered by Community Living BC that help adults with developmental disabilities and their families develop connections and inclusion with their community, and supporting B.C.'s social innovation sector. In addition, the ministry is responsible for leading the implementation of Accessibility 2024, Government's 10-year action plan to make B.C. the most progressive province in Canada for people with disabilities. Further details about the vision and goals of the ministry can be found on the [Ministry's website](#).

Strategic Direction and Context

Strategic Direction

Strategic direction is derived from the ministry's legislative framework and Government's corporate plans and priorities. There are three key pieces of legislation that guide the ministry: the [Employment and Assistance Act](#), the [Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act](#), and the [Community Living Authority Act](#). Government's priorities for the ministry are outlined in the Minister's Mandate Letter and emphasize job creation, strengthening the economy, ensuring a secure tomorrow, and finding better ways to address complex social problems through innovative public and private sector partnerships such as the [Community Contribution Companies](#). Specific direction for working with the ministry's service crown, [Community Living BC](#), is provided in the [Taxpayer Accountability Principles](#) which has a focus on prudent fiscal management, increased transparency and providing quality services for clients.

Clients and their families as well as advocates and service providers are critical stakeholders in determining the direction of the ministry; consultations over the past year with these groups have led to improvements in both service quality and policies. Access to services either over the phone, over the counter or through self-service options such as [My Self Serve](#) have all been improved through a redesign of the ministry's service delivery model which has created specialized streams. The ministry also initiated targeted policy changes, including changes to income tax exemptions, to help single parents and families with children to find employment and achieve financial independence.

Strategic Context

The ministry's activities are influenced by the external environment; this includes changing demographics, the economy, shifts in federal policies and new technologies. The ministry takes these external influences into account when developing budgets and service delivery forecasts. In 2014, B.C.'s economy continued to grow with real GDP increasing by 2.6 per cent according to preliminary industry data from Statistics Canada. As a result, employment increased modestly which positively impacted the temporary assistance caseload. However, reductions to the ministry's temporary assistance caseload were offset by growth in the disability assistance caseload; a predicted increase that is largely attributable to the province's aging population. The ministry will continue to closely monitor demographics and economic trends in the years to come.

Report on Performance

The Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation achieved several important milestones in 2014/15. The ministry completed all of the priorities identified in the Minister's Mandate Letter and met the requirements set out in the [Budget Transparency and Accountability Act](#) and the [Taxpayer Accountability Principles](#). Highlights from the previous year include:

- Leading the formulation of Accessibility 2024, a 10-year blueprint of coordination and partnership to help British Columbians with disabilities;
- Piloting five Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities Early Implementation Sites that help clients navigate government services;
- Meeting all financial targets established by the Ministry of Finance and ensuring sound fiscal management and operational efficiency;
- Strengthening the relationship with Community Living BC through a renewed accountability framework that emphasizes communication and transparency; and
- Completing the implementation of the Integrated Case Management System.

As a learning organization the ministry is continuously looking at new and innovative ways to enhance services and programs for clients. While this year has included several successes the ministry remains committed to improve through the use of Lean and through consultation with clients, stakeholders and the broader community.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Results

Goal 1: Eligible British Columbians in need have access to income assistance and supports in a timely manner.

Objective 1.1: Basic income assistance is available to British Columbians to assist with shelter and support costs.

Strategies

- Provide clients with supports for which they are eligible.
- Assist clients to access other potential income sources to improve their independence and self-reliance, including Employment Insurance benefits, and Canada Pension Plan early retirement and disability benefits.
- Ensure administrative fairness through the provision of an effective and efficient reconsideration and appeal system.

Objective 1.2: Supplementary supports are available and delivered through accessible channels to assist the changing individual needs of British Columbians.

Strategies

- Provide eligible clients with supplemental assistance such as subsidized bus passes, dental and optical assistance.
- Provide eligible low income seniors with the Senior’s Supplement.
- Provide eligible low and moderate income families that have children with dental and optical assistance through the Healthy Kids Program.

Performance Measure 1: Percent of Reconsideration decisions that are made within legislated time frames.

Performance Measure	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Percent of Reconsiderations Decisions Made Within Legislated Time Frame	63%	88%	97%	100%	97%	100%	100%

Data Source: Integrated Case Management and Corporate Data Warehouse, Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation.

Discussion

To ensure that all eligible clients receive the income assistance and support they are entitled to, the ministry has a two-stage process for clients to request a reconsideration of an eligibility decision. The process is managed by the Reconsideration Unit, which is part of the Litigation and Appeals Branch. The unit is separate and independent from the work unit that made the original decision. The Reconsideration Unit reviews the file and makes a final decision for the ministry. This stage is a client's last opportunity to submit new evidence. If unsatisfied with the reconsideration decision, a client may file an appeal with the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal which is a quasi-judicial agency independent of the ministry.

The measure indicates if the ministry is responding to clients in a transparent and timely manner. A higher percentage for this measure indicates the ministry is doing a better job of meeting legislated time limits. The performance variance is attributable to delays in receiving the initial reconsideration request, administrative errors, and/or the need for legal advice on certain cases. Bottlenecks in the process are being addressed with a goal of reducing, and if possible, eliminating administrative errors and delays.

Goal 2: Eligible British Columbians in need have access to services that support increased independence and sustainable employment.

Objective 2.1: The resilience of families and youth in British Columbia is enhanced so that they can achieve increasingly positive economic outcomes and greater well-being.

Strategies

- Reduce unnecessary dependency on income assistance by ensuring that the ministry’s programs and initiatives support people to work.
- Engage relevant government and community partnerships in discussions on reducing intergenerational dependency.
- Use client needs assessment to align employment services with individual client needs.

Performance Measure 2: Expected to Work caseload as a percentage of the population aged 19-64.

Performance Measure	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Expected to Work Caseload As a Percentage of the Population Aged 19-64	1.4%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%

Data Source: Research, Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation.

Discussion

Clients who are considered employable and are deemed expected to work must participate in employment-related activities for the purpose of achieving financial independence. The measure tracks the percentage of British Columbia’s working age population receiving temporary assistance with employment-related obligations. It provides insights on how effective the strategies are in achieving the goal of financial independence among the employable group. The performance measure is sensitive to the state of the economy.

The ministry has achieved its target due to a decline in caseloads which, in turn, was due to a decline in the employment-obligated caseload as the economy improved. Research has found that, in a recession, caseload declines occur at a slower rate than caseload increases, suggesting that the caseload is more sensitive to increases in unemployment than to declines in unemployment. It is expected that the reduction in the ministry’s employment-obligated caseload will continue to decline but it will lag behind improvements in the economy.

The target and baseline for this performance measure has shifted since the release of the Revised 2013/14 to 2015/16 Service Plan due to retroactive revisions to the population numbers from BC Stats. As a result, the base population used in the calculation for the performance measure changes each year which can result in a change in the measure. To allow for comparability over time the ministry revises the measure for all years.

Performance Measure 3: Median length of time clients who have employment obligations receive Income Assistance (in months).

Performance Measure	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Median Length of Time Clients Who Have Employment Obligations Receive Income Assistance	6.1	7.4	7.3	6.7	6.9	6.7	6.6

Data Source: Research Branch, Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation. Since median durations measure the number of months it takes for half of a cohort of new employment-obligated clients to stop receiving assistance, it can only be done retrospectively so there is a reporting lag.

Discussion

Median durations measure the number of months it takes for half of starting employment-obligated cases to stop receiving assistance. High durations signify new employment-obligated clients are having more difficulty becoming independent and are at greater risk of becoming long-term clients. Duration of assistance can rise if economic opportunities are limited and/or because clients have more barriers to employment. And as the economy recovers and job opportunities increase, it is expected that median durations will begin to decline.

While the ministry did not meet its target, there was improvement over the previous year. As the economy continues to recover and job opportunities increase, it is expected that median durations will continue to decline. The performance target for this measure has been revised since the release of the Revised 2013/14-2015/16 Service Plan to reflect the impact of the economy’s performance.

Objective 2.2: Ensure effectiveness of the new Employment Program of BC.

Strategies

- Ensure access to Employment Program of BC services via a network of WorkBC Employment Service Centres operated by service providers located across the province.
- Reduce barriers for all clients of employment and labour market services, including persons with disabilities, immigrants, youth and other specialized populations.
- Create opportunities for partnerships and innovation at the community and employer level.
- Assist vulnerable youth and adults to move towards independence and self-reliance by providing employment services and supports.

Performance Measure 4: Percent of active claimants served with the Employment Program of BC.

Performance Measure	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Percent of active claimants of Employment Program of BC that receive case management services	40%	38%	44%	35%	N/A	N/A

Data Source: Employment and Labour Market Service Division, Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation. Note: 2012/13 is the baseline year.

Discussion

This measure is intended to show the number of case-managed Employment Insurance clients served by the Employment Program of BC (EPBC) as a percentage of the total number of case-managed EPBC clients. The measure is highly sensitive to changes in the economy and the labour market. The negative variance of nine percent between the 2014/15 target and actual result is primarily due to improvements in the labour market. As economic conditions in B.C. improved the number of case-managed Employment Insurance clients decreased at a faster rate than the total number of case-managed EPBC clients which led to the ministry missing the performance target.

This has demonstrated a flaw in the measure as decreases to both the Employment Insurance and overall EPBC caseloads should be viewed as positive outcomes as this indicates that clients are finding employment. As a result the ministry is closing this measure and has introduced a new performance measure related to the effectiveness of the ministry’s employment programs in the [2015/16 – 2017/18 Service Plan](#). The ministry will continue to monitor the number of Employment Insurance claimants served by the program and will publish this data through the [Employment Program of BC Monthly Reports](#) and the [BC Labour Market Development Agreement Annual Plans](#).

Performance Measure 5: Percent of Employment Program BC clients obtaining outcomes (employment and/or community attachment).

Performance Measure	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Percent of Employment Program BC case-managed clients who received employment and/or community attachment.	45%	40%	49%	42%	51%	53%

Data Source: Employment and Labour Market Services Division, Ministry of Social Development and Innovation. Note: 2012/3 is the baseline year.

Discussion

The foremost objective of the EPBC is to support clients in achieving sustainable employment as quickly as possible. This measure reflects the percent of case-managed clients who successfully obtain employment or establish connections to their community. The measure reflects the immediate link between strategies and activities with the goals of increased financial independence and sustainable employment.

The ministry has achieved modest improvements over the previous year but has missed the target percentage. The negative variance is partially attributable to change in client composition with an increase in the proportion of clients with employment barriers who required more intensive and long-term services and supports. This performance measure has been revised slightly for future years to focus exclusively on employment, the primary objective of the Employment Program of BC.

Goal 3: Support British Columbians in need who have disabilities by providing an effective system of support to gain and maintain meaningful independence and inclusion in their community.

Objective 3.1: Support a comprehensive and integrated system of supports and services for Persons with Disabilities.

Strategies

- Provide adults with disabilities access to high quality, responsive supports and services that enable them to meet their needs, participate as full citizens and have improved outcomes.
- Facilitate access to all supports outside of income assistance for families who provide support to family members with a disability.
- Work collaboratively with other ministries and local, regional and provincial partners to continue the integration and alignment of innovative and inclusive disability supports and services to improve outcomes for Persons with Disabilities and their families.
- Monitor and refine the transition process for special needs youth who are entering adulthood to ensure they access the ministry’s disability assistance program as well as adult community living services offered through Community Living BC.

Performance Measure 6: Meeting timelines for processing Persons with Disabilities applications

Performance Measure	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Percent of application for PWD Designation Completed Within Ministry Timelines.	99.2%	99.4%	99.8%	100%	99.8%	100%	100%

Data Source: ICM Service Request Data, Ministry of Social Development and Innovation, with the number of adjudication days being the SLA date to SR closed date.

Discussion

The measure gauges the ministry’s performance in the review and adjudication of applications for designations as persons with disabilities. The process is time-intensive, requiring the review of detailed medical evidence and a close examination of all case materials which includes detailed information from an applicant’s physician and other health professionals on diagnosis, health history, degree of impairment and its impact on the applicant’s daily activities. The length of the adjudication process

reflects the ministry’s commitment to speedy, fair, and consistent decisions that comply with administrative fairness and the principles of administrative fairness.

The measure reflects the percent of Person with Disabilities that are adjudicated within the service standard of 90 days which is similar to comparable jurisdiction in Canada and thus, allow the provision of timely and effective system of supports in pursuit of Goal 3. The sooner eligible clients’ applications are adjudicated the sooner they have access to system of supports. Hence, the higher the performance in this measure is the better.

The ministry’s performance of 99.8 percent in this measure substantially met the target. The performance was due to efforts to continuously improve the process, realigning staff duties to facilitate triage process which allows the identification of cases involving urgent medical situations or children with disabilities which require expedited adjudication, increasing the number of adjudicators, and reallocating resources on a limited basis until new adjudicators were fully trained.

Objective 3.2: Engage British Columbians across sectors to promote programs and services that enhance community inclusion for Persons with Disabilities.

Strategies

- Continue to work with business, community organizations, citizens with disabilities and their families to develop and implement initiatives to enhance community inclusion for Person with Disabilities.
- Support the mandate of the Minister’s Council on Employment and Accessibility to develop solutions and strategies that improve the lives of British Columbians with disabilities and their families, particularly through partnership with sector partners.
- Identify opportunities for inclusion for increasing persons with disabilities’ employment outcomes by engaging with stakeholders and the public to identify barriers and solutions to improving employment outcomes.
- Lead Disability White Paper consultation focused on finding ways to reduce barriers and increase accessibility for people with disabilities.

Performance Measure 7: Percent of Persons with Disabilities cases with declared earnings.

Performance Measure	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Percent of Persons with Disabilities Cases with Declared Earnings	14.4%	14.3%	15.6%	16.2%	16.2%	16.3%	16.4%

Data Source: Research Branch, Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation.

Discussion

The measure tracks the percentage of Persons with Disability clients declaring earnings. The ministry provides incentives, supports, and programs to Persons with Disabilities to work, including earnings exemptions and employment programs, for them to gain meaningful independence and community inclusion. The performance measure gives a sense of clients' efforts to move towards financial independence. The higher the percentage the better as more Persons with Disabilities are engaged in gainful activities which is a step towards the goal of financial independence and community inclusion.

The ministry achieved its target of 16.2 percent. An upward trend in the measure is expected due to expected improvement of the economy, increases in income exemptions, implementation of Accessibility 2014 Plan, programs like the Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities (STADD), and partnerships with business sector to address social concerns. The measure has been revised upwards due to recent policy changes which include increase in earnings exemption limits and annualized earning exemption. British Columbia is the second jurisdiction to offer the option of annual earnings exemption, after Yukon.

Financial Report

Management Discussion and Analysis

Report on Performance

For 2014/15, the ministry met the financial targets set out by the Ministry of Finance. The majority of the ministry's allocated budget is expended through [Income Assistance](#) totaling \$1.71 billion in 2014/15. Income Assistance falls into four categories:

- \$340 million for Temporary Assistance;
- \$944 million for Disability Assistance;
- \$286 million for supplementary assistance which includes supplements for low income seniors, travel assistance and dental and optical care; and,
- \$140 million for program management.

Funding for employment programs is partially provided by the federal government through the [Labour Market Development Agreement](#). Federal contributions in 2014/15 totaled \$296 million while the province allocated \$21 million for employment programs and services. Services to adults with developmental disabilities are provided by the ministry's service delivery crown agency, Community Living BC, which was allocated close to \$800 million. In line with government's goal of prudent fiscal management, expenditures for executive and support services were limited to \$14.5 million, a reduction of almost \$1 million from the previous year.

Outlook for the Coming Year

Changes to the economic environment have an impact on ministry caseloads. Expected improvement to the economy and labour market conditions are forecasted to result in a modest decrease to the Temporary Assistance caseload as ministry clients secure employment. However, these saving will be offset by demographic shifts, in particular the aging of the province's population, which will result in growth in the Disability Assistance caseload. Demand for services is also forecasted to grow for Community Living BC. As the primary funder, the ministry will be working closely with Community Living BC to ensure strategies are in place to manage these demands.

Financial Report Summary Table

	Estimated	Other Authorizations	Total Estimated	Actual	Variance ¹
Operating Expenses (\$000)					
Income Assistance²	1,682,338	18,002	1,700,340	1,711,420	11,080
Employment³	29,988		29,988	21,000	(8,988)
Community Living British Columbia⁴	799,777		799,777	799,419	(358)
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	1,751		1,751	1,529	(222)
Executive and Support Services	15,965		15,965	14,453	(1,512)
Sub-Total	2,529,819	18,002	2,547,821	2,547,821	0
Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual				(368)	368
Total	2,529,819	18,002	2,547,821	2,547,453	368
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)					
Executive and Support Services⁴	29,517		29,517	24,792	(4,725)
Total	29,517	0	29,517	24,792	(4,725)

1. Variance represents "Actual" minus "Total Estimates". If "Actual" is greater than "Total Estimates" the variance will be positive.
2. Other Authorizations' refers to contingency access which was used to offset caseload pressures.
3. Reflects BC Employment Program costs, net of federal recoveries. Total spending was \$317 million, which included \$21 million provincial and \$296 million recovered federally.
4. Includes direct transfers to CLBC and the Ministry's STADD program (\$2.742M).
5. Capital expenditures for Executive Support and Services were primarily for Integrated Case Management (ICM).

Annual Service Plan Report Appendices

Appendix A: Contact Information and Hyperlinks

Service BC refers members of the public to the appropriate ministry office and transfers calls and forwards emails free of charge. Hours of operation for Service BC are 7:30 AM to 5 PM, Monday to Friday, excluding statutory holidays.

-  In Victoria, call: 250-387-6121
-  In the Lower Mainland, call: 604-660-2421
-  Elsewhere in British Columbia, call: 1-800-663-7867
-  Outside British Columbia, call: 1-604-660-2421
-  Email address: EnquiryBC@gov.bc.ca
-  Telephone device for the deaf and hearing impaired (TDD):
 - In the lower Mainland, call: 604-775-0303
 - Elsewhere in British Columbia, call: 1-800-661-8773

Employment and Income Assistance

As of March 31, 2014, the ministry has 57 Employment and Income Assistance Offices and 29 partnerships with Services BC locations throughout British Columbia. To find the office that provides services for a specific community go to: www.mhr.gov.bc.ca/contacts/city.htm or contact the ministry toll free by telephone anywhere in the province at 1-866-866-0800. To apply for income assistance or if you are a client wanting to know about your file status, you can visit myselfserve.gov.bc.ca/ online.

Employment and Labour Market Services

The Employment Program of BC helps people find work through a wide range of integrated employment services and supports. For more information on services provided for specific community, go to: www.workbc.ca/Work-BC-Centres/Pages/Work-BC-Centres.aspx

Hyperlinks to Additional Information

-  Advocate for Service Quality: www.eia.gov.bc.ca/advocate/
-  Accessibility 2024: <http://bconthemove.com/gov>
-  BC Partners for Social Impact: www.hubcapbc.ca/
-  Community Contribution Companies: www.fin.gov.bc.ca/prs/ccc/
-  Community Living British Columbia: www.communitylivingbc.ca/home/
-  Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal: www.gov.bc.ca/eaat/
-  Integrated Case Management: www.integratedcasemanagement.gov.bc.ca/
-  Personal Supports: www.personalsupports.bc.ca/
-  Self-Serve Assessment and Application Tool: www.iaselfserve.gov.bc.ca/