

National Library of Canada Cataloguing in Publication Data

British Columbia. Ministry of Human Resources

Service Plan. — 2002/2003/2004/2005/2006/2007 —

Annual.

Also available on the Internet.

Continues: British Columbia. Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security. Performance plan.

ISSN 1705-4346 = Service plan — British Columbia.
Ministry of Human Resources

1. British Columbia. Ministry of Human Resources —
Periodicals. 2. Public Welfare — British Columbia —
Periodicals. 3. Social Service — British Columbia —
Periodicals. I. Title. II. Title: Ministry of Human Resources
service plan.

HV109.B7B74

353.5'09711'05

C2003-960029-7

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Ministry of Human Resources

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Published by the Ministry of Human Resources

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Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement

As Minister, it is my responsibility to provide an income assistance system that is fair, affordable and accountable — a system that will be there for British Columbians if they need it. Our government continues to be committed to providing assistance to those most in need, and helping people who are able to work to find and keep jobs.

The ministry is committed to improving the quality of life for British Columbians with disabilities. Through the Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities, we are drawing together business and community leaders to remove barriers to employment and promote people with disabilities as highly skilled and motivated members of the workforce. For persons with disabilities for whom employment is not a possibility, we will continue to provide our highest levels of assistance and support.

While we will always provide assistance to those most in need, our objective remains to support and encourage clients who are able to work to achieve sustainable employment. We will continue to deliver employment programs to meet the changing needs of our clients so they can develop skills, access training and find employment. By helping our clients achieve independence, they are building brighter futures for themselves and their families.

In addition to the ministry's core services, we will continue to manage the province's highly respected Emergency Social Services (ESS) program. With 5,000 trained ESS volunteers in 150 communities across the province, the government is able to deliver essential services in times of crisis — from floods, apartment fires or catastrophic forest fires. I am proud of the dedication and work British Columbia's volunteers perform each year.

I look forward to working together with ministry staff to meet our goals and initiatives for the upcoming year and would also like to take this opportunity to thank them for their ongoing dedication and professionalism.

The 2005/06 – 2007/08 Ministry of Human Resources 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, 2005, have been considered in preparing the plan and I am accountable for achieving the specific objectives in the plan.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Brice".

Honourable Susan Brice
Minister of Human Resources

January 31, 2005

Ministry Overview and Core Business Areas

The mission of the Ministry of Human Resources is to provide services that move people toward sustainable employment and assist individuals and families in need. Ministry services are provided 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*.

For clients who can work, the ministry encourages personal responsibility and self-reliance through employment planning. This planning process identifies client job activities and may identify any individual specialized job search needs. The ministry will then provide clients with appropriate tools and supports to find employment, including specialized programs for clients who face additional challenges to obtaining and sustaining employment.

Some clients, particularly persons with disabilities, may be unable to obtain a level of employment that will move them to independence from income assistance. These individuals are provided with ongoing financial assistance. Additional supports may be available to address essential disability-related needs and assist these clients to participate in their communities.

To ensure that individual eligibility decisions are consistent, transparent, fair and equitable, clients have access to an impartial and responsive appeal system.

The ministry delivers BCEA programs and services through six core business areas:

Employment Programs are available to assist clients to find and sustain employment. Individualized employment plans that are signed by clients may include directed job search or referral to job placement services.

Temporary Assistance is available to clients who are capable of financial independence through employment, or who are unable to seek work because of a short-term condition, as described in the *Employment and Assistance Act*. Persons with persistent multiple barriers to employment are included in this group.

Disability Assistance is available to 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 is available to eligible people, providing health and other supports such as health services for persons with disabilities, emergency shelters, bus passes, user fees for continuing care and for alcohol and drug facilities and Emergency Social Services (ESS) to people affected by disaster.

The Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal provides clients with timely decisions through a single-level, regionally based appeal system that is available for individuals who wish to appeal decisions of the ministry. The tribunal acts independently of the ministry.

Executive and Support Services provides salaries, benefits, allowances and operating expenses of the Minister's office, ministry corporate services and program management.

Resource Summary

Core Business Areas	2004/05 Restated Estimates ¹	2005/06 Estimates	2006/07 Plan	2007/08 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Employment Programs	71,475	81,120	72,275	72,275
Temporary Assistance	391,176	358,687	346,412	341,461
Disability Assistance	483,158	579,503	610,059	640,860
Supplementary Assistance	165,180	178,406	180,960	183,663
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	2,422	1,819	1,819	1,819
Executive and Support Services	170,317	167,362	157,371	157,363
Total	1,283,728	1,366,897	1,368,896	1,397,441
Full-time Equivalents (Direct FTEs)				
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	14	14	14	14
Executive and Support Services	1,972	1,972	1,972	1,972
Total	1,986	1,986	1,986	1,986
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)				
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	35	35	31	31
Executive and Support Services	21,512	18,926	22,343	24,395
Total	21,547	18,961	22,374	24,426

¹ These amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with the presentation of the 2005/06 Estimates. Schedule A of the 2005/06 Estimates, presents a detailed reconciliation.

Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

The Ministry of Human Resources envisions a province in which those British Columbians in need are assisted to achieve their social and economic potential.

Mission

The Ministry of Human Resources provides services that move people toward sustainable employment and assist individuals and families in need.

Values

The Ministry of Human Resources' values are reflected in its work every day, and support the government's broader strategic plan and priorities. The government's core values are integrity, fiscal responsibility, accountability, respect and choice.

Personal responsibility — The ministry emphasizes personal responsibility by assisting clients who are able to work find employment and achieve independence. The ministry supports the efforts of clients who are working to enhance their self-reliance and involvement in their communities.

Active participation — Clients who are able to work are required to actively seek employment. The ministry supports these efforts with work search and job placement services, targeted employment training and tools such as employment plans. The ministry provides additional/specialized supports to persons with disabilities to maximize their self-reliance.

Dignity and Respect — The ministry is committed to treating all members of the public with equity and fairness, upholding the principles of dignity and respect. The ministry does this through open communication, building effective relationships and maintaining high ethical standards.

Innovative partnerships — The ministry is developing creative and innovative ways of working with a range of service providers and external agencies, as well as directly with clients.

Citizen confidence — Maintaining public confidence in ministry programs and services is fundamental to realizing the ministry's long-term objective of providing a sustainable income assistance system that provides for those most in need.

Fairness and transparency — The ministry functions under the principles of administrative fairness and transparency by informing clients of all reasons a decision is made and

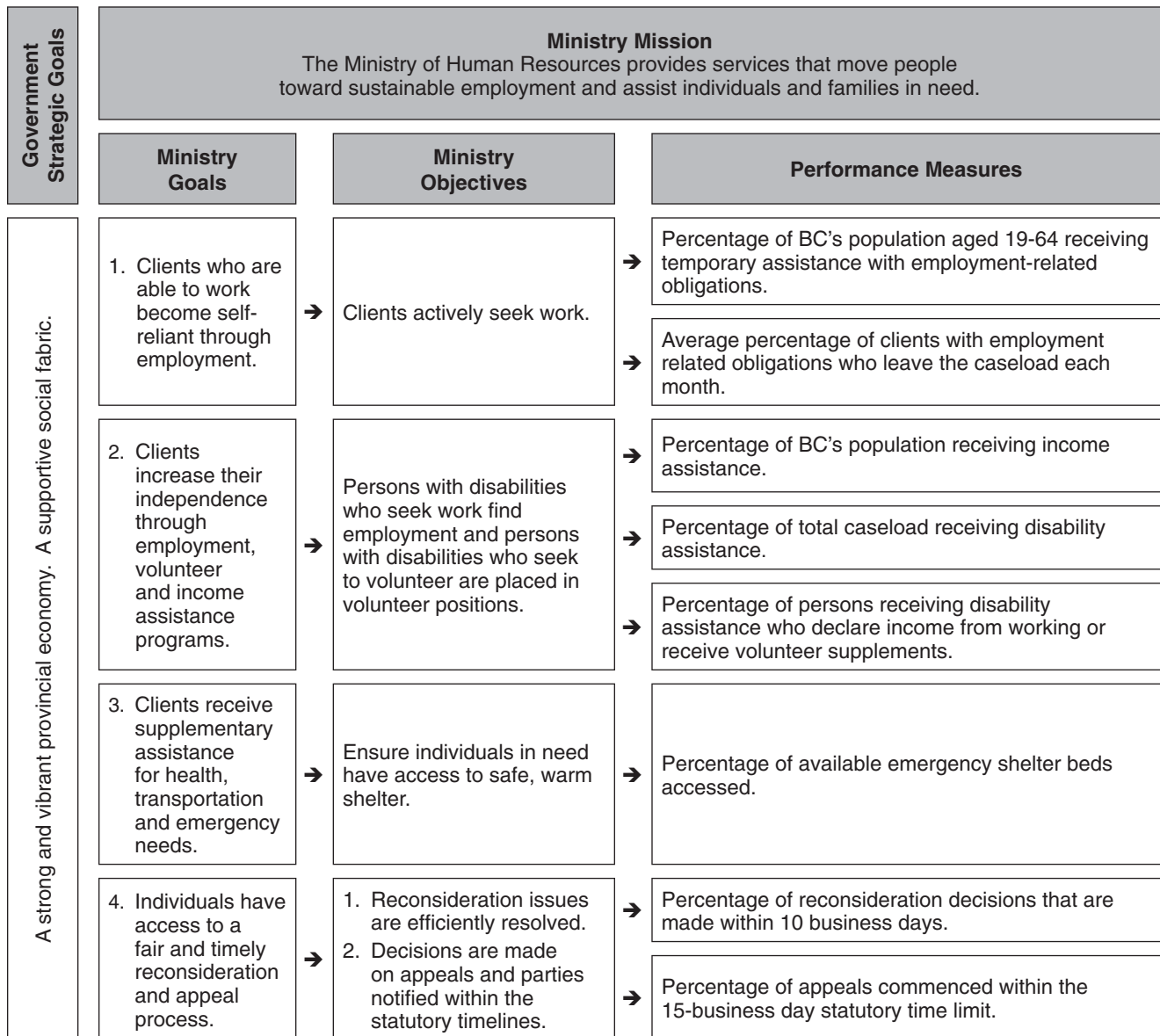
providing access to a fair and impartial review of the original decision, through reconsiderations and appeals.

Clear outcomes — The ministry sets clear outcomes, whether in the form of clearly defined goals as outlined in this Service Plan or responsibilities of clients outlined in their employment plans.

Accountability for results — The ministry is accountable to government and all British Columbians for results through performance management systems.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Results

This section presents the ministry’s goals and outlines how specific objectives, strategies and performance measures are helping to achieve these goals. The diagram below displays the linkages between government strategic goals, ministry mission, ministry goals, key objectives and performance measures.



Goal 1: *Clients who are able to work become self-reliant through employment.*

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

The Ministry of Human Resources supports income assistance clients in their efforts to achieve self-reliance and greater community participation. To fulfill this mandate, the ministry will continue to assist those clients who are able to work to find and maintain employment.

Clients who leave income assistance for jobs tend to have higher incomes and their children are less likely to receive income assistance when they become adults. Children whose parents work are also more likely to complete high school, attain higher levels of training and education and be actively involved in the labour market when they reach adulthood.

Performance Measure:

Goal 1 Performance Measure	2001/02 Baseline	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target
1.1 Percentage of BC's population aged 19-64 receiving temporary assistance with employment-related obligations.	3.4%	0.9%	0.87%	0.84%	0.80%
2004/05 year-to-date results as of December 31, 2004.		1.1%			

Assisting clients to find employment continues to be a critical aspect of the ministry's mission. Measure 1.1 tracks the percentage of the British Columbia working age population receiving temporary assistance. A lower percentage indicates that fewer people are in need of assistance and more are contributing to a strong and vibrant provincial economy. Temporary assistance is provided to people who have employment-related obligations, and for those who are excused from seeking work (e.g., parents of a young child, temporary illness or injury requiring medical treatment).

The percentage of British Columbia's population receiving income assistance who are able to work has been significantly reduced since 2001/02. The ministry anticipates this percentage will continue to decline as more people do not require assistance or leave income assistance.

Objective 1: Clients actively seek work.

Strategies:

1. *Pre-applicants are required to undertake a three-week self-directed work search as a condition of eligibility.*
2. *Clients with employment-related obligations are required to complete and comply with employment plans as a condition of eligibility.*

Performance Measure:

Goal 1 Performance Measures	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target
1.2 Average percentage of clients with employment related obligations who leave the caseload each month.	11.3%	9.9%	8.7%	7.2%
2004/05 year-to-date results as of December 31, 2004.	11.2%			

Assisting clients who are able to work in finding sustained employment remains the highest priority of the ministry. The ministry provides pre-employment and job placement services, as well as employment supports, to assist clients achieve independence from income assistance through employment. Clients who leave income assistance for employment have higher incomes and achieve a better standard of living.

Measure 1.2 gauges the success of clients achieving financial independence. As clients with employment obligations continue to find alternatives to income assistance through their own actions and participation in ministry programs, this percentage will continue to decrease.

Goal 2: Clients increase their independence through employment, volunteer and income assistance programs.

Core Business Areas: Employment Programs, Temporary Assistance and Disability Assistance.

The ministry will continue to provide income assistance and a range of programs to support clients as they work to increase their independence. The ministry recognizes a combination of supports may be required for clients who experience barriers to employment. Some clients may benefit from services that support life-skill development or volunteer opportunities as they increase their employability and potential for more independence. The ministry will continue to fund employment programs specifically to support persons with disabilities to find sustainable employment or enhance their participation in the community.

Performance Measure:

Goal 2 Performance Measures	2001/02 Baseline	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target
2.1 Percentage of BC's population receiving income assistance.	6%	4.3%	3.7%	3.5%	3.5%
2004/05 year-to-date results as of December 31, 2004.		3.6%			

Measure 2.1 shows the overall percentage of the provincial population that is receiving income assistance. This includes clients receiving temporary assistance, as well as those receiving disability assistance. A lower percentage indicates a decreasing proportion of the provincial population is dependent on income assistance. Results from the first half of 2004/05 show the percentage of the provincial population receiving income assistance is lower than had been expected. A number of factors have contributed to this result and the ministry anticipates the continued growth in BC's economy and the delivery of programs that move clients towards independence will further reduce this number in future years.

Goal 2 Performance Measures	2001/02 Baseline	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target
2.2 Percentage of total caseload receiving disability assistance.	29.6%	46.0%	53.6%	56.4%	58.4%
2004/05 year-to-date results as of December 31, 2004.		49.3%			

Measure 2.2 tracks the percentage of the total caseload receiving disability assistance. Results from the first half of 2004/05 indicate a continued growth in this percentage. As the number of clients receiving temporary assistance declines (i.e., demonstrating success in finding employment) the proportion receiving disability assistance will grow.

Objective 1: *Persons with disabilities who seek work find employment and persons with disabilities who seek to volunteer are placed in volunteer positions.*

Strategies:

- 1. Employment services and related supports are provided to persons with disabilities to enhance their self-reliance.*

Performance Measure:

Goal 2 Performance Measures	2002/03 Baseline	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target
2.3 Percentage of persons receiving disability assistance who declare income from working or receive volunteer supplements.	13.6%	14.7%	15.0%	15.2%	15.5%
2004/05 year-to-date results as of December 31, 2004.		15.1%			

In April 2002, the ministry introduced the Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (ESPD). The strategy includes the Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities (EPPD) as well as the Minister’s Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities. Both of these initiatives support persons with disabilities as they enhance their employability and engage in employment to the greatest degree possible; this may include full or part-time work, or volunteering.

The ministry will continue to provide pre-employment services, assisted job search, job coaching, job placement, follow-up services, employment crisis services and assistance with starting a business for disabled clients.

Volunteering is a valuable activity for many clients who are receiving disability assistance and are not able to fully support themselves through employment. Volunteer work may lead to employment, as it often provides valuable skills and experience. Volunteering is an opportunity for clients to contribute to their communities, thereby enhancing their participation.

This measure provides a conservative count of volunteer activity, as it only tracks those who report receiving supplements for volunteering. There is a substantial amount of additional volunteer activity that the ministry is unable to measure. Results for the first half of 2004/05 show an increase in the percentage of disability assistance clients who either had employment income or received volunteer supplements.

Goal 3: *Clients receive supplementary assistance for health, transportation and emergency needs.*

Core Business Area: *Supplementary Assistance.*

The ministry provides a range of supplementary social services designed to meet the health and transportation needs of clients and emergency needs of all British Columbians. These services include confirmed job supplements, health assistance, bus passes and travel assistance, user fees for continuing care and alcohol and drug facilities, emergency shelters and emergency social services.

Objective 1: *Ensure individuals in need have access to safe, warm shelter.*

The ministry recognizes that homelessness is a serious issue faced by some British Columbians. As a first step in addressing the needs of the homeless, the ministry provides emergency shelter bed funding to community agencies for individuals who are temporarily without accommodation. Funding provides for year-round beds and is maximized during the winter months, when beds are needed most. The ministry is working with its partner ministries to provide additional supports to assist clients to move beyond temporary shelter to more stable housing, greater self-reliance and long-term employment.

Performance Measure:

Goal 3 Performance Measures	2004/05 Baseline	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target
3.1 Percentage of available emergency shelter beds accessed.	Establish	TBD	TBD	TBD

Measure 3.1 allows the ministry to track emergency shelter bed usage. This information allows the ministry to ensure that resources are allocated where they are needed. A baseline will be established in 2004/05.

Goal 4: *Individuals have access to a fair and timely reconsideration and appeal process.*

Core Business Area: *Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal.*

Objective 1: *Reconsideration issues are efficiently resolved.*

Strategies:

1. *Meet regulatory requirements for reconsideration.*

Performance Measure:

Goal 4 Performance Measures	2003/04 Baseline	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target
4.1 Percentage of reconsideration decisions that are made within ten business days.	81.9%	86%	87%	88%	90%
2004/05 year-to-date results as of December 31, 2004.		76.5%			

Clients have the right to request a reconsideration of ministry decisions. This is an internal ministry process — a ‘second look’ — that is separate from the external appeal process. Clients can apply to Reconsideration Adjudicators to review the ministry’s decision. If unsatisfied with this decision, a client may appeal further to the Employment and Assistance Tribunal office.

A higher percentage for this measure indicates the ministry is doing a better job of meeting regulatory requirements and of providing timely and efficient service to clients. A baseline was established in 2003/04 and targets for subsequent years call for a steady increase in this measure.

Objective 2: *Decisions are made on appeals and parties notified within the statutory timelines.*

Strategies:

- 1. The efficient processing of appeals is monitored and procedures are amended, when required, to ensure appeal timelines are within statutory requirements.*

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*. The tribunal operates independently of the ministry, administering its appeal process through a central office based in Victoria. The appeal process begins after a client has gone through the reconsideration process and is still unsatisfied with the outcome. The tribunal is composed of a full-time tribunal chair and one or more part-time vice-chairs appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, approximately 200 regionally-based panel members appointed by the Minister, and staff appointed under the *Public Service Act*.

Performance Measure:

Goal 4 Performance Measures	2002/03 Baseline	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target
4.2 Percentage of appeals commenced within the 15-business day statutory time limit.	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2004/05 year-to-date results as of Decembers 31, 2004.		100%			

Measure 4.2 tracks the percentage of appeals held within the 15-day statutory time limit as set out in the Employment and Assistance Regulations and the Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Regulations. Future year targets for this measure are also set at 100 per cent, reflecting the ministry’s commitment to ensuring fair and timely access to the decision-making process.

Discontinued Performance Measures:

The following table provides a summary of discontinued performance measures.

2004/05 Discontinued Performance Measures	Explanation
1.3 Percentage of Job Placement clients who remain independent of income assistance for at least six months.	This measure focuses on one client group within the expected to work client category and is included as part of measure 1.2 (Average percentage of clients with employment related obligations who leave the caseload each month) by reporting on the results of all ministry programs rather than focussing on one particular program.
2.4 Percentage of persons with persistent multiple barriers who participate in a ministry program.	Measure 2.3 (Percentage of persons receiving disability assistance who declare income from working or receive volunteer supplements) provides a picture of those clients who are increasing their independence. Participation in a ministry program contributes to clients' ability to seek independence, but does not measure their independence.
4.1 Percentage of appeals processed from initial intake to final decisions within statutory timelines.	This measure refines measure 3.2 (Percentage of appeals commenced within the 15-business day statutory time limit) by including both the appeal process and the final decision in the result.
5.1 Percentage of clients using electronic fund transfers.	The ministry will continue to promote the use of electronic fund transfers.
5.2 Comprehensive strategic risk profile completed.	The ministry will continue to enhance enterprise-wide risk management.
5.4 Percentage of employees with a performance and development plan.	The completion of employee performance and development plans (EPDP) is an ongoing task and once completed plans are continually updated. Fluctuations in this measure primarily result from staff movement between jobs and classifications.
5.5 Percentage of employees with a personal learning plan.	Personal learning plans are a component of employee performance and development plans. The completion of personal learning plans is an ongoing task and once completed plans are continually updated. Fluctuations in this measure primarily result from staff movement between jobs and classifications or completion of training.

Related Initiatives and Planning Processes

Deregulation and Regulatory Reform

As reported in the 2003/04 Annual Service Plan Report, the ministry exceeded its three-year target of a 33 per cent regulatory reduction by achieving 34.3 per cent in June 2004. The legislative framework for British Columbia's income assistance system is now simpler and more understandable. The ministry's target for the duration of this service plan is to maintain the current level (0 per cent net increase) and continue to reduce the regulatory burden where possible.

Overviews of Human Resource Plan and Information Resource Management Plan

Human Resource Plan

The ministry Human Resource Plan overview is available on the ministry website at:

<http://www.mhr.gov.bc.ca/sp/>.

Information Resource Management Plan

The ministry Information Resource Management Plan overview is available on the ministry website at:

<http://www.mhr.gov.bc.ca/sp/>.

Appendix

Glossary

Caseload — Number of family units receiving temporary, disability or supplementary assistance.

Disability Assistance — Financial assistance provided to eligible persons who have been designated as meeting the criteria of a Person with Disabilities, as defined in the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*.

Earned income — Any money or value received in exchange for work or the provision of a service (this includes stipends provided to clients for their participation in volunteer positions designed to build employment skills).

Employment-related Obligations — The ministry's expectation that a client will seek work, based upon individual ability.

Employment Plan — A document that initiates discussion between the client and the ministry and supports employment planning and successful client outcomes. This is a mandatory requirement for most clients with employment-related obligations.

Employment Programs — Programs targeted toward employment and job readiness established or funded under the *Employment and Assistance Act* and the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*.

Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal — Agency that administers the appeal panel process. Its role begins when a Notice of Appeal is received from the appellant. At that point, the ministry operates at 'arms length' from the tribunal process, and is simply one of the parties to the appeal.

Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (ESPD) — A strategy designed to assist persons with disabilities to participate in employment-related activities to the best of their ability. The strategy recognizes that individuals experience disabilities in varying degrees, at different stages of their lives, and provides flexibility for those who want to volunteer or work full-time, part-time, or be self-employed.

Persons with Disabilities — People meeting the criteria as set out in the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*.

Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers — People with multiple barriers to employment are those who meet the criteria as set out in the Employment and Assistance Regulations. Examples of multiple barriers are literacy issues, limited education and work experience,

long-term dependence on assistance and medical conditions that preclude or impede employment.

No Employment-related Obligations — Clients not expected to become completely independent of assistance through employment have no employment-related obligations.

Pre-application — Prior to receiving income assistance, applicants must meet certain requirements, including a three-week employment search. Information about, and verification of, the work search is required.

Reconsideration — When a client disagrees with a ministry decision, the client may request a review of the decision. The process involves a written request, which is reviewed by a Reconsideration Adjudicator who makes a new decision. If the client does not agree with that decision, the matter may proceed to the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal.

Supplementary Assistance — Supplementary assistance addresses pressing needs, such as health assistance, emergency social services, bus passes and emergency shelters.

Temporary Assistance — Financial assistance provided to eligible persons who are expected to achieve independence through employment.