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Employment and
Income Assistance

2008/09 – 2010/11
Service Plan

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Published by the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance



Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement

As Minister of Employment and Income Assistance, I am pleased to present our goals and objectives in the Service Plan for 2008/09–2010/11. Our government remains committed to providing a fair, caring and sustainable income assistance system for British Columbians most in need.

First, I would like to thank our community partners and, importantly, ministry employees for their ongoing dedication to our mutual clients. With your help, we will continue to find innovative ways to build on our supports and services for those most in need. We are already on our way — as we are simplifying many of our policies and procedures and working with other ministries to make access to our programs easier for clients and the public.

As the lead ministry on the Government's Disability Strategy, we are working to achieve a citizen-centred and integrated system of support for persons with disabilities. This work builds on the Government's current investment of over \$4.3 billion in approximately 80 programs across 17 different ministries. The next few years will see the Disability Strategy realized as communities across the province become more inclusive and accessible for British Columbians with disabilities.

The Province is excited about the unprecedented opportunity to work with the Government of Canada to develop new labour market development initiatives. We will take a B.C. approach to employment services that best meet the province's unique labour market priorities and local training needs.

Research shows that our programs are working. Almost 90 per cent of our clients who left income assistance between 2002 and 2003 left because of work, other sources of income or education. We will build on our past achievements — creating welcoming and accessible communities for persons with disabilities and ensuring all British Columbians have the necessary supports to work as they are able.

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance 2008/09–2010/11 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 February 8, 2008, have been considered in preparing the plan and I am accountable for achieving the specific objectives in the plan.

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

Honourable Claude Richmond
Minister of Employment and Income Assistance

February 8, 2008

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Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance administers the BC Employment and Assistance program, which provides temporary assistance, disability assistance, supplementary assistance and employment programs for British Columbians in need. This program is guided by the *Employment and Assistance Act* and the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*.

The Ministry continues its leadership role developing the cross ministry Disability Strategy to support the Government's Great Goal to "build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities". It provides for a citizen-centred system of support and services for persons with disabilities to enable them to participate fully in their communities.

In delivering services to those in need, the Ministry is focusing on the customer by transforming the way we deliver services in employment and assistance, using effective and outcome based practices, and working in collaboration with ministries, other levels of government and service agencies.

Clients We Serve

The Ministry delivers a variety of assistance programs and services to approximately 140,000 individuals who have diverse needs as reflected by the Ministry's various client groups:

- **Expected to Work:** Employable clients in need of short-term income assistance and supports, as well as those who are temporarily excused from employment obligations or have limited employment obligations, due to a medical condition or family situation.
- **Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers:** Clients with a medical condition and significant barriers to employment who are not expected to gain complete independence through employment.
- **Persons with Disabilities:** Clients with a severe physical or mental impairment who require assistance as a result of significant restrictions in their ability to perform daily living activities.
- **Child in the Home of a Relative:** Minor children whose parents have placed them in the care of a relative to whom the Ministry provides financial assistance for the child.

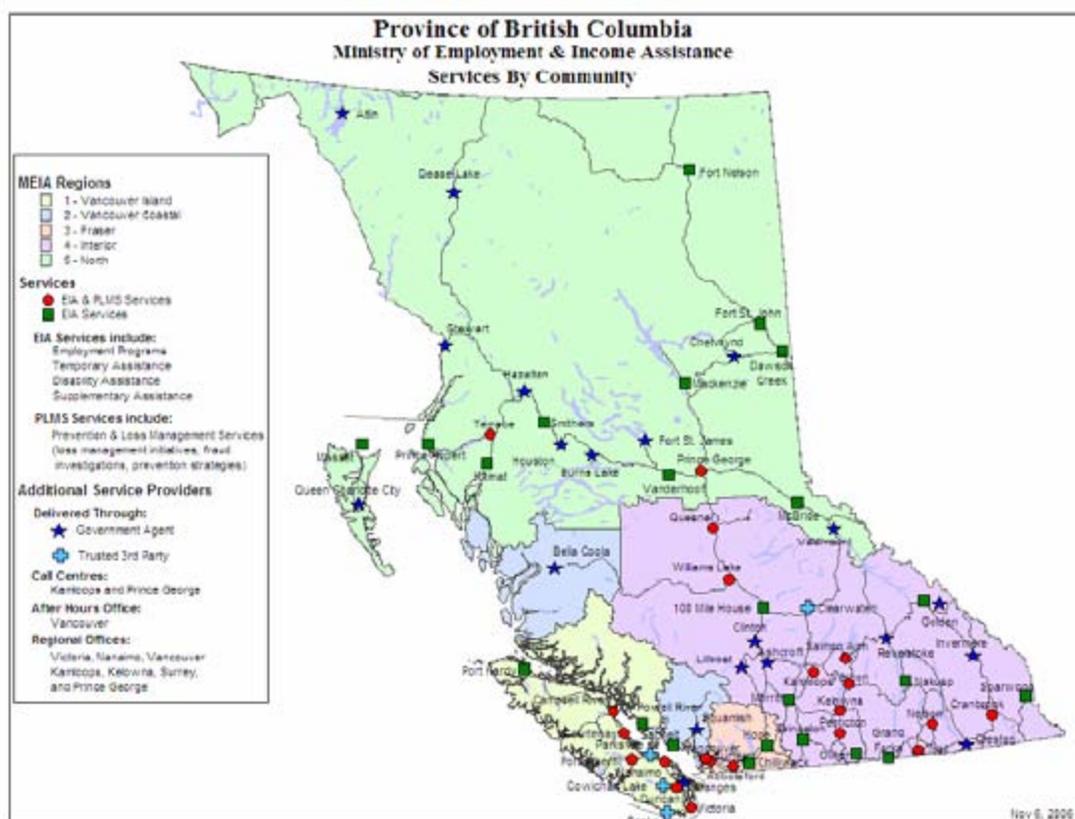
In addition to these client designations, the Ministry supports other targeted programs for:

- **Seniors:** Persons aged 65 years or older with low income who are eligible for the Senior's Supplement and subsidized bus passes.

- **Low and moderate-income families:** Families who are not direct clients of the Ministry but are eligible for the Healthy Kids Program, which provides dental and optical assistance for children based on the family's income.
- **Other persons with disabilities:** Persons with disabilities who do not receive disability assistance from the Ministry but receive some disability services, including specialized employment programming and information, access and referrals for personal supports.

Where We Deliver Our Services

Approximately 2,000 ministry staff deliver services across the province through 89 ministry offices, 19 Service BC branches and three Service Centres. In addition to these community-based offices, individuals also have the option of accessing some services online or contacting the Ministry's toll-free call centre to ask questions or apply for assistance. The Ministry also delivers employment and life-skills programs through contracts with external service providers in all regions of the province.



Strategic Context

Provincial economy and local labour markets

According to B.C.'s independent Economic Forecast Council, the B.C. economy grew 3.1 per cent in 2007, lower than the 3.4 per cent expected at the start of the year. British Columbia's economic growth is expected to moderate somewhat, with 2.8 per cent growth in 2008, followed by growth of 3.0 per cent in 2009 and average growth of 2.9 per cent for the 2010 through 2012 period.

The robust provincial economy, strong labour markets and ministry policies and programs that support employment and independence have resulted in historically low numbers of employable British Columbians receiving temporary income assistance. For these clients, employment provides the immediate benefit of a higher household income, while providing better outcomes for families and individuals in the longer term by breaking the inter-generational pattern of welfare-dependency.

Since the provincial economy is the largest single determinant of the Ministry's caseload and expenditures, economic fluctuations or unexpected shocks (e.g., mountain pine beetle, fire storms, trade disputes) that pose risks to the provincial economy and regional labour markets may also impact ministry operations as well as its fiscal and service targets. Natural population growth and migration into the province may also increase demand for the Ministry's programs and services.

The Ministry closely monitors these and other risks to align ministry assistance and employment programs to the changing needs of clients and their communities and local labour markets. The Ministry also monitors the caseload against forecasts to identify variances from the budget and to allocate resources to areas in need.

Demographic shifts and changes in the caseload

The number of Persons with Disabilities clients and other clients who face more serious barriers to employment and inclusion has steadily increased in recent years. This trend is expected to continue in the future due to an increasing proportion of the population more prone to illness as it ages, longer life expectancies for individuals experiencing significant health issues and the impact of serious conditions (such as HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis-C, and drug and alcohol dependencies).

In 2006/07, the Ministry's disability caseload represented 59 per cent of the overall caseload, up from 28 per cent in 2001/02. It is expected to grow to 64 per cent of the total caseload by 2010/11.

Persons with Disabilities clients have also left disability assistance for employment in record numbers in recent years. The shift towards strengthened client independence is due to the strong labour market, increases in the accessibility and availability of assistive technology, and Ministry programs and supports that enhance client's capacity to work.

Persons with disabilities still have high levels of unemployment and low levels of labour market participation — only 44 per cent of all adults with disabilities in B.C. aged 19-64 are working. Many persons with disabilities who are not currently working have the motivation, education and abilities to contribute meaningfully to the province's workforce. They represent a valuable pool of talent available to employers across the province who are struggling to hire staff.

The Ministry is leading Government's Disability Strategy, which will continue to develop the best system of support for persons with disabilities to assist them to participate in employment opportunities, both paid and voluntary, and promote greater accessibility and inclusion for persons with disabilities in communities across British Columbia.

Complex social problems and integrated partnerships and solutions

Many of the complex social problems affecting B.C.'s most vulnerable citizens, including homelessness, mental health and addictions, are common to jurisdictions across North America. These problems have significant costs for individuals and communities.

Complex social problems can not be addressed effectively when organizations operate in isolation. They require a co-ordinated approach with participation and commitment from all levels of government, ministries and stakeholder groups. That is why the Ministry is continuing to pursue strategic partnerships to develop integrated services and solutions that are citizen-centred.

In recent years, partnerships have led to better outcomes for many vulnerable individuals and society as a whole. The Ministry will continue to build on the success of collaborative projects, including the homelessness outreach projects, and will monitor activities toward achieving key deliverables and report on results as they are available.

Catastrophic events and emergency management

The potential for catastrophic events to occur in future years, such as an earthquake, tsunami or influenza pandemic, poses significant risks to ministry clients and to the continued delivery of mission critical services and programs that assist them. The Ministry has developed expertise in emergency management and business continuity, and continues to build on the lessons learned from previous emergency incidents like the Spring 2007 flooding event.

Organizational capacity and new technologies

The Ministry, along with the broader B.C. Public Service, is undergoing a significant transformation driven largely by an aging population that is bringing about a rapid rate of retirements and an increasingly competitive marketplace for skilled employees. Within this context, the Ministry is working to develop its staff capacity while adopting emerging technologies that will provide the opportunity for increased flexibility in the Ministry's service delivery model to offer more choice for clients accessing ministry programs and services.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

Goal 1: Clients in need receive responsive services

British Columbians can access ministry information and services through community-based offices, toll-free call centres and the Internet. The Ministry is simplifying its policies and processes so that clients can access all of the assistance for which they are eligible more easily and quickly.

Ministry clients may also receive benefits from other federal or provincial programs, including the B.C. Sales Tax Credit, GST Credit, Universal Child Care benefit, National Child Benefit and Child Care subsidy — thereby substantially increasing their available income and financial independence.

Objective 1.1: Clients receive income and supplementary assistance supports that meet their changing needs

Income assistance, including a shelter and support allowance, is provided to Expected to Work clients on a temporary basis while they find employment. It is also provided to Persons with



Persistent Multiple Barriers. Individuals and families who receive income assistance may also be eligible for a variety of supplementary assistance based on individual need, including diet and natal supplements, school start-up supplements, crisis supplements, dental and optical services, security and utility deposits, and transportation supplements to access medical care or alcohol and drug treatment.

Strategies:

- Conduct regular reviews of rates, regulations, policies and processes to ensure ministry services are responsive to clients' changing needs.

- Implement the Multi-Channel Service Delivery project to provide clients with more choice in how they access ministry services and information while ensuring consistent service quality.
- Implement a shared caseload model so that clients receive timelier service from the first available worker rather than waiting for a particular worker to be available.
- Enhance the functionality of the Online Resource to provide the public with more accessible information about current policy and programs.

A single, employable client in B.C. receives the second highest rate of assistance of any province in Canada.

Performance Measure 1: Expected to work clients as a per cent of B.C. population

Performance Measure	2001/02 Baseline ¹	2007/08 Forecast ²	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
Per cent of B.C. population aged 19-64 receiving temporary assistance with employment-related obligations.	3.4%	0.9%	Less than 1%	Less than 1%	Less than 1%

Data Source: Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch, Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.

¹ Result for March 2002.

² Result for April 2007 to December 2007.

Discussion

Within the context of the strong provincial economy, the Ministry influences the achievement of this measure through its policy framework and employment programs that encourage independence and employment. Assisting clients to find employment is a critical aspect of the Ministry's work. The baseline reflects the Ministry's caseload for March 2002, the month prior to the introduction of the BC Employment and Assistance program. The Expected to Work caseload is not expected to decline further in the next three years. Future-year targets for this measure reflect this trend.

Objective 1.2: Persons with disabilities who are unable to provide for their basic needs receive assistance and are supported in becoming as independent as possible

Disability assistance, including a shelter and support allowance, is provided to eligible clients with the Persons with Disabilities designation. These clients receive the highest rate of assistance available to income assistance clients in British Columbia. They are eligible for all of the supplemental supports available to regular income assistance clients, as well as additional supports, including low-cost annual bus passes, monthly nutritional supplements, enhanced dental and orthodontic services and access to a range of medical equipment and supplies and nutritional supplements.

The earnings exemption of \$500 per month, when combined with disability assistance, can result in a net monthly income of more than \$1,400 for a single person with the Persons with Disabilities designation.

The Ministry provides a continuum of services to help disability assistance recipients move toward employment or enhanced community involvement. Participation in employment or training programs is voluntary and does not affect a client's disability designation. Clients who volunteer may receive a community volunteer supplement of up to \$100 per month.

Strategies

- Enhance service delivery options to better accommodate the needs of Persons with Disabilities.
- Streamline the transition process for children with disabilities or special needs moving from the Ministry of Children and Family Development's At Home Program to the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance's disability assistance program.

Performance Measure 2: Time to process Persons with Disabilities applications

Performance Measure	2005/06 Baseline	2007/08 Forecast ¹	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
Average time to process Persons with Disabilities applications.	8.9 weeks	2.1 weeks	3.5 weeks	3.0 weeks	2.5 weeks

Data Source: Provincial Services Branch, Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.

¹ Result for April 2007 to December 2007.

Discussion

This measure evaluates the Ministry's performance in providing a timely and efficient review and adjudication process for applications for the Persons with Disabilities designation. The speed of adjudication has been identified by disability stakeholder groups as a critical indicator of service quality for persons with disabilities.

The baseline year is the first year this performance measure was

included in the Service Plan. The Ministry has achieved significant success in providing timelier decisions in 2007/08 and, as a result, has established more ambitious future-year targets than detailed in previous Service Plans.



Objective 1.3: Clients receive citizen-centred services that are consistent, respectful, innovative and accountable

In keeping with the Ministry's focus on citizen-centred service delivery, the Ministry is undertaking a comprehensive review to streamline the delivery of critical services. This initiative will simplify key programs and services to provide clients with more timely decisions, while identifying all of the services and supports they may be eligible to receive and, where appropriate, connecting them to services offered by other ministry partners.

The Ministry continues to develop the people, culture and technologies required to deliver critical services to the public. Building on the Ministry's Organizational Values and Service Code, the new Service Standards for core programs and service delivery channels clearly communicate what a citizen can expect when interacting with the Ministry.¹

Strategies

- Implement the Simplification Initiative, addressing the Immediate Needs Assessment, Application and Intake, Employment/Personal Plans and Financial Review processes.

¹ Additional information about the Service Code, Organizational Values and Service Standards can be found at: www.eia.gov.bc.ca/ministry/.

- Introduce a common complaint resolution process to provide clients with a forum to address service quality concerns at the local office level with options to escalate the issue if they are not satisfied.
- Implement the Service Standards and monitor the Ministry's performance in meeting its targets, while leveraging other opportunities to assess client satisfaction.
- Develop staff competencies and ability to deliver high quality and consistent service through standardized training and development curricula for front-line workers and Supervisors.
- Introduce debit cards to complement direct deposit and provide clients with safe access to funds, eliminate cheque cashing fees, and provide additional flexibility to issue funds in emergency situations and after business hours.

Performance Measure 3: Per cent of services that meet established standards

Performance Measure	2007/08 Baseline	2007/08 Forecast	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
Per cent of client services that meet or exceed established service standards.	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

Data Source: Corporate Planning and Operations Division, Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.

Discussion

This measure tracks the Ministry's success in meeting its Service Standards targets. A higher percentage for this measure indicates that citizens receive more consistent and timely service when interacting with the Ministry. Reporting ministry performance in meeting the Service Standards informs citizens, stakeholders and the Ministry of how well the Ministry is doing in providing key services to clients. The baseline year is the year of implementation of the Service Standards. Future-year targets will be set once the baseline information is available.

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

The Employment and Assistance reconsideration and appeal system provides unbiased, fair, timely and transparent decision-making for clients. Ministry staff are required to inform all clients of their right to request a reconsideration of any decision that affects their eligibility for assistance. A reconsideration decision is a new and final Ministry decision made by a Ministry reconsideration adjudicator who was not involved in the original decision.

Clients who disagree with a reconsideration decision can appeal to the independent Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal. The Tribunal holds hearings throughout the province. Hearings may also occur by teleconference, or, if both parties agree, through written submissions to the Tribunal. This flexibility ensures clients have access to the appeal process, regardless of where they reside.

Strategy

- Collaborate with legal advocates to address issues, improve service delivery and establish processes for ongoing dialogue to benefit clients.

Performance Measure 4: Per cent of reconsideration decisions made within 10 business days

Performance Measure	2003/04 Baseline	2007/08 Forecast ¹	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
Per cent of reconsideration decisions that are made within 10 business days.	82%	78%	90%	90%	90%

Data Source: Legislation and Legal Services Branch, Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.

¹ Result for April 2007 to December 2007.

Discussion

This measure tracks the percentage of reconsideration decisions that are made within the Ministry's 10-day statutory time limit. A higher percentage for this measure indicates the Ministry is doing a better job of providing timely and efficient reconsideration decisions to clients. The baseline year is the year preceding the introduction of this performance measure.

Goal 2: British Columbians with disabilities have access to the best system of support in Canada

The Ministry continues to develop the cross ministry Disability Strategy to provide for a flexible, comprehensive, and integrated system of support for all British Columbians with disabilities to allow them to participate more fully in the province's social and economic life. A key focus of the Strategy is to ensure that Government's annual investment of \$4.3 billion in disability spending provides supports and services that are citizen-centred.



Objective 2.1: Persons with disabilities are supported to seek employment or volunteer opportunities

Delivered throughout the province by community based service providers, the Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities provides a range of specialized employment programs to help persons with disabilities realize their goals of part-time and full-time paid employment, self-employment, voluntary employment and greater community involvement. Participation in the Program is voluntary and is available to ministry clients and members of the general public with disabilities. Complementing these services, the Ministry also provides an earnings exemption for those who receive disability assistance, which provides the opportunity for these clients to receive a total monthly income of more than \$1,400.

Strategies

- Support the Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities' governance model and leverage additional opportunities for dialogue with contracted service providers and other stakeholders.
- Encourage increased participation by persons with disabilities in the Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities and, ultimately, increased participation in the labour force.

Performance Measure 5: Per cent of disability assistance cases with income

Performance Measure	2002/03 Baseline ¹	2007/08 Forecast ²	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
Per cent of disability assistance cases with income from working or a volunteer supplement.	13.6%	20.8%	21.4%	22.1%	22.9%

Data Source: Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch, Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.

¹ Result for March 2003.

² Result for April 2007 to December 2007.

Discussion

Providing support to assist clients with the Persons with Disabilities designation in pursuing employment and volunteer opportunities is a high priority for the Ministry. This measure tracks the Ministry's success in assisting persons with disabilities to realize their goals of employment or volunteering. Employment and volunteering increase community participation, self-reliance and employability among persons with disabilities and, as a result, reduce levels of social isolation. The baseline reflects the Ministry's caseload for March 2003. Future-year targets include steady increases in this measure. Between 2005/06 and 2010/11, the percentage of disability assistance cases with income from employment or a volunteer supplement is targeted to increase from 15.7 per cent to 22.9 per cent, an increase of almost 46 per cent over a five year period.

Objective 2.2: Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities removes barriers to employment for persons with disabilities through partnerships with business and industry throughout B.C.

The Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities, with representation from the business community and public, private and education/training sectors, is designed to engage employers in finding concrete solutions to increase employment, employability and independence of persons with disabilities in British Columbia.

The 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games provide a unique opportunity to enrich the lives of persons with disabilities through access to world class sporting and arts events, as well as emerging direct and indirect employment opportunities. The Ministry will continue to work with the Minister's Council and employment programming service providers in communities across the province to fully engage persons with disabilities in this unique opportunity.

Strategies

- Develop additional tools and resources to support the Minister's Council's 10 by 10 Challenge to increase employment for persons with disabilities by 10 per cent by 2010, and expand the Challenge beyond the current 47 participating communities.
- Promote participation in the WorkAble Solutions website², which offers employers an exclusive site to post employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, search through lists of job-seekers with disabilities and access specialized human resource tool kits.
- Assist 2010 Legacies Now in developing sustainable, community-based initiatives focused on sport and recreation, arts, literacy, employment, and volunteerism for persons with disabilities, including participation in the opportunities created by the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

Objective 2.3: Persons with disabilities benefit from a comprehensive and integrated system of supports and services

The Government has made the development of a comprehensive and integrated system of support and services for persons with disabilities a key priority. Through the Disability Strategy, the Ministry will provide new and simplified solutions to ensure that disability supports and services are citizen-centred — easier to deal with, more accessible and more responsive to those who need them.

Strategies

- Align the eligibility criteria to access disability supports and services across multiple ministries in collaboration with other government partners.
- Simplify the Persons with Disabilities designation application and adjudication processes.
- Build upon the success of the toll-free Personal Supports Information Line by introducing a website and storefront demonstration sites that will provide access and referrals to equipment and devices offered across six provincial ministries, as well as information and referrals to additional supports that may be available from community organizations and the private sector.



² The WorkAble Solutions website and resources can be found at: www.workablesolutionsbc.ca.

Goal 3: Disadvantaged British Columbians receive integrated cross ministry social supports

The Ministry plays an important role in the collaborative effort of ministries, other levels of government and community organizations to successfully integrate income support, housing, health, education and employment services for disadvantaged British Columbians.

Objective 3.1: Vulnerable individuals receive integrated services that assist them to transition to greater independence

The Ministry is investing \$3 million annually to support integrated community partnerships to deliver more responsive services for at-risk individuals. Integration initiatives provide stability to individuals during periods of transition when they may be more vulnerable and require more support. This may include assistance with securing housing or re-entering communities after incarceration or drug and alcohol treatment. Integration strategies bridge potential service gaps and create linkages between programs to improve the continuum of services available to citizens who are in need of assistance.

Strategies

- Work with the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority's Mental Health and Addictions Services as a member of the Urgent Response Team to provide Ministry services starting at the point of crisis (e.g., at a hospital or an alcohol and drug detox facility) and continuing as the individual transitions to stable membership in the community.
- Work with correctional facilities on projects to initiate supports and establish connections for inmates who are scheduled for release and those completing drug and alcohol treatment.
- Build on the success of the expanded Housing Integrated Task Team targeting unscrupulous landlord practices in Vancouver, Surrey/Fraser Valley (Fraser Region), Victoria and Nanaimo while increasing capacity to provide comparable services in additional communities.
- Work with the Residential Tenancy Office by providing a dedicated Ministry resource to inform clients of tenants' rights and processes for landlord/tenant dispute resolution.

Objective 3.2: Homeless British Columbians receive community-based support services

As a member of the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions, the Ministry is a partner in developing a comprehensive approach to homelessness in British Columbia. Outreach programs continue to be expanded in communities across the province to connect homeless individuals with income assistance and safe shelter, often on the same day. Efforts are not limited to urban areas where the majority of visibly homeless individuals are concentrated. Instead, outreach services are adapted to suit particular community circumstances in rural and urban areas.

Strategies

- Support the development and implementation of recommendations from the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions.
- Expand outreach programs in communities across the province in collaboration with BC Housing, the Solicitor General, Health Authorities, local governments and other potential partners to assist potential clients that are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Explore alternative approaches for assisting dual diagnosis clients with the Solicitor General, BC Housing and the Ministry of Health.

Objective 3.3: British Columbians receive integrated social services through cross ministry information sharing

Ministry clients often require the services and supports provided by other ministries, including Health, Children and Family Development, and Education. Government's ability to share, manage and protect client information is a foundational aspect of providing responsive and individualized services to clients. Ultimately, new inter-ministry data sharing processes that respect the confidential nature of personal information and comply with information and privacy legislation are critical for developing effectively integrated programs and ensuring that clients receive better service from Government.

Strategies

- Monitor information and systems to ensure proper safeguards and appropriate usage of personal information as well as strict adherence to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- Work with the Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services and Ministry of Children and Family Development on a shared Case Management System that will facilitate an integrated and citizen-centred approach to service delivery.
- Work with Statistics Canada to assess long-term outcomes for clients who leave the caseload through links with the federal tax database.
- Partner with the Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addiction to evaluate client outcomes associated with the Drug Treatment Court of Vancouver.

Objective 3.4: Aboriginal clients achieve improved social, employment and education outcomes

In support of the B.C. Government's New Relationship with Aboriginal people and the goals identified in the Transformative Change Accord, the Ministry continues to liaise with First Nations organizations to identify social, education and economic opportunities for Aboriginal citizens. The Ministry, in co-operation with First Nations organizations, is also seeking to better understand its Aboriginal clients and how it can better meet their needs.

Strategies

- Collect data about Aboriginal status on a voluntary basis from people who receive income assistance as a basis for enhancing service delivery and providing more effective programs for Aboriginal clients.



- Work with the First Nations Social Development Society to provide band-employed social development workers with information and training on ministry policy and practice to encourage mutual understanding and smoother transitions for Aboriginal persons moving on and off reserve.
- Work with Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement holders to provide Aboriginal persons with targeted employment programming.
- Map the personal supports programs and services delivered or funded by the provincial, federal and First Nations governments and Aboriginal organizations and determine options for integration.

Objective 3.5: Ministry clients benefit from the ActNow BC initiative

The Ministry plays an important role in supporting the ActNow BC initiative, a comprehensive health promotion program designed to support individuals and communities in protecting and improving their wellness. The Ministry provides a range of supports to low- and moderate-income families with children at risk. The Ministry also provides clients with supports that promote good nutrition and a physically active lifestyle, including natal nutritional supplements and camp fees for children.

Strategies

- Increase participation in the Healthy Kids program, which offers basic dental and optical care to low- and moderate-income families, in order to improve health outcomes for children.
- Explore opportunities to improve the well-being of clients building upon earlier initiatives such as the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Conference and the “Quit Smoking Now!” nicotine replacement therapy initiative.
- Support community initiatives to improve access to healthy, nutritious food through hands-on cooking and nutritional skill building programs for adults and families living on limited incomes.



Goal 4: Clients achieve sustainable employment through flexible and individualized employment programming

Employment is the key to improving short- and long-term outcomes for many clients. Ministry employment programs, including the BC Employment Program, Community Assistance Program, Bridging Employment Program and Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities, assist clients to move along the employment continuum. These programs are designed to ensure there is a high degree of flexibility available to tailor services to meet the needs of individual clients.

Clients benefit from the Ministry's employment focus — 50 per cent leave assistance for employment within four months. Since 2001, over 54,000 clients have found employment through employment programs (particularly in the hospitality and construction industries). Clients who obtained employment through the BC Employment Program in 2007 had an average starting wage of \$13 per hour.

Objective 4.1: Job ready clients become independent as quickly as possible

Expected to Work clients are supported to achieve financial independence through the BC Employment Program, which offers flexible and individualized programming to meet the unique needs of clients. The program is delivered by three prime contractors in nine service delivery bundles across the province, with 82 sub-contractors, forming an extensive service delivery network with in-depth knowledge of community labour markets. Contractors receive compensation through a fee-for-service model with performance incentives. The BC Employment Program is expected to serve 15,000 clients in communities throughout British Columbia. It has annual expenditures of up to \$35 million.

The BC Employment Program has three main components: Client Intake, Directed Work Search and Individualized Services and Supports, which provides a range of service options, including life-skills coaching, short-term certificate training and employment services.



The Ministry generally encourages employable clients to further their education part-time or at night so as to not interfere with job search activities.

Strategies

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

Performance Measure 6: Per cent of BC Employment Program clients who find employment

Performance Measure	2006/07 Baseline ¹	2007/08 Forecast ²	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
Per cent of BC Employment Program clients who achieve \$560 or 70 hours of work per month	23%	38%	25%	25%	25%

Data Source: Employment Division, Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.

¹ Results from July 2006 (program inception) to March 2007.

² Results from April 2007 to December 2007.

Discussion

The Ministry's focus on assisting clients to find employment is reflected by this performance measure, which indicates the degree to which the BC Employment Program is successful in assisting clients to move to sustainable employment. The baseline year is the year that the BC Employment Program was introduced. Future year targets are currently reflective of external service providers' contractual obligations. As additional performance information becomes available, the Ministry will review and adjust targets where appropriate.

Objective 4.2: Clients with barriers to employment progress towards greater independence

For clients who face significant barriers to employment, the Community Assistance Program offers strategies for enhancing participants' quality of life and participation in their communities. Program services include personal counseling and coaching, core and supplementary life-skills programming, and connections to external community services. Although it is not an employment program, employment may be an outcome for some clients. The program is delivered by 33 community-based service providers and is expected to serve approximately 5,000 clients annually.

The Ministry also offers the Bridging Employment Program to assist clients who have experienced violence or abuse to move towards greater independence. Service providers offer a combination of classroom training, counseling and other supports to assist participants in developing life skills and pre-employment skills to prepare them for participation in the BC Employment Program.

Strategies

- Continue to monitor outcomes from the revised Community Assistance Program.
- Review the Bridging Employment Program to provide survivors of violence and abuse the services they require.

Resource Summary

Resource Summary Table

Core Business Area	2007/08 Restated Estimates ¹	2008/09 Estimates	2009/10 Plan	2010/11 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Employment Programs	97,829	97,930	100,961	100,966
Temporary Assistance	358,111	351,785	347,032	347,041
Disability Assistance	741,947	765,382	793,413	797,825
Supplementary Assistance	269,766	284,388	296,576	296,582
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	2,070	2,070	2,070	2,070
Executive and Support Services	24,685	25,457	25,956	25,964
Total	1,494,408	1,527,012	1,566,008	1,570,448
Full-time Equivalents (Direct FTEs)				
Employment Programs	302	302	302	302
Temporary Assistance	514	514	514	514
Disability Assistance	592	592	592	592
Supplementary Assistance	312	312	312	312
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	14	14	14	14
Executive and Support Services	239	239	239	239
Total	1,973	1,973	1,973	1,973
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)				
Executive and Support Services	17,595	22,725	22,725	22,725
Total	17,595	22,725	22,725	22,725

¹ Amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with Schedule A of the 2008/09 Estimates.

Ministry Contact Information

To find the local Ministry office that provides services for a particular community, go to:
www.eia.gov.bc.ca/contacts/index.htm.

Service BC can also refer callers to the appropriate Ministry office and transfer callers free of charge. Hours of operation for Service BC are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 pm — Monday through Friday, excluding statutory holidays.

In Victoria call: 250 387-6121

In Vancouver call: 604 660-2421

Elsewhere in BC call: 1 800 663-7867

Outside British Columbia call: 1 604 660-2421

E-mail address: EnquiryBC@gov.bc.ca

Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD)

In Vancouver call: 604 775-0303

Elsewhere in BC call: 1 800 661-8773

Regional Service Delivery Offices

Region 1, Vancouver Island

100 - Vancouver Island Regional Office, Victoria
East Wing, 4th Floor, 908 Pandora Avenue
PO Box 9956 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8V 3P3
Telephone: 250 387-9606
Facsimile: 250 387-9566
E-mail: OFF100@gov.bc.ca

100 - Vancouver Island Regional Office, Nanaimo
2nd Floor, 6475 Metral Drive
Nanaimo BC V9T 2L9
Telephone: 250 390-6254
Facsimile: 250 390-6260
E-mail: OFF199@gov.bc.ca

Region 2, Vancouver Coastal

200 - Vancouver Coastal Regional Office
910, 360 West Georgia Street
Vancouver BC V6B 6B2
Telephone: 604 660-3224
Facsimile: 604 660-2503
E-mail: OFF200@gov.bc.ca

Region 3, Fraser

300 - Fraser Regional Office
1800, 13450 — 102nd Avenue
Surrey BC V3T 5X3
Telephone: 604 586-2992
Facsimile: 604 586-2681
E-mail: OFF300@gov.bc.ca

Region 4, Interior

400 - Kelowna Interior Regional Office
301, 1726 Dolphin Avenue
Kelowna BC V1Y 9R9
Telephone: 250 717-2040
Facsimile: 250 717-2038
E-mail: OFF400@gov.bc.ca

400 - Kamloops Interior Regional Office
300, 619 Victoria Street
Kamloops BC V2C 6W7
Telephone: 250 828-4600
Facsimile: 250 828-4614
E-mail: OFF400@gov.bc.ca

Region 5, North

500 - North Regional Office
404, 299 Victoria Street
Prince George BC V2L 5B8
Telephone: 250 565-6220
Facsimile: 250 565-6366
E-mail: OFF500@gov.bc.ca

Hyperlinks to Additional Information

The following resources support the Ministry's 2008/09 – 2010/11 Service Plan and are available at: www.eia.gov.bc.ca/sp/addinfo2008-09.pdf.

- Appendix 1: Services Map
- Appendix 2: Service Code and Organizational Values
- Appendix 3: Service Standards
- Appendix 4: Glossary of Terms
- Appendix 5: What Benefits Do Clients Retain When They Leave Income Assistance For Work?
- Appendix 6: Performance Measure Methodologies

