

**Ministry of
Social Development and Social Innovation**

**2015/16 – 2017/18
SERVICE PLAN**

February 2015



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Minister Accountability Statement



It is my pleasure to present the 2015/16 - 2017/18 Service Plan for the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation. In the coming months we are focused on creating a strong economy and a progressive, accessible province for all citizens as we continue to face many opportunities and challenges. As mandated by the Premier, we will respect our financial commitment to lower our debt for future generations by ensuring we meet fiscal targets established for both the Ministry and Community Living BC.

This Ministry is dedicated to helping British Columbians in need become more self-sufficient by supporting our most vulnerable citizens, giving families the tools to participate more fully in their communities and helping people become more independent. We believe that people

who are able to work want to be self-sufficient, support their families and contribute to their communities. The ministry helps British Columbians achieve greater independence by providing income and disability assistance, employment service through the Employment Program of BC and service for adults with developmental disabilities and their families through Community Living BC.

We are committed to making B.C. the most progressive jurisdiction in Canada for people with disabilities – where disabilities are never a barrier to living full lives, finding employment and contributing to communities. The Ministry is supporting this goal by leading Accessibility 2024, an action-oriented, 10-year plan developed as a result of a comprehensive consultation process.

The Ministry will continue to seek better ways to serve British Columbians. Solutions to British Columbia's most complex social problems will require new ideas and participation from all stakeholders in the social services sector, including clients, advocates, private and non-profit enterprises and all levels of government. We are excited to lead this social innovation initiative as we look for increasingly more effective and efficient ways to help all British Columbians.

The success of this Ministry would not be possible without the dedication and commitment of ministry staff and partners across the province. I am privileged to be a part of this team and share the commitment to embracing the goals and principles of Accessibility 2024 while encouraging social innovation to address complex social issues.

The Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation 2015/16 - 2017/18 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Stilwell'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Honourable Michelle Stilwell
Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation
February 17, 2014

Table of Contents

Minister Accountability Statement	3
Purpose of the Ministry	5
Strategic Direction and Context	5
Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures	7
Resource Summary	13
Appendices	14
Appendix A: Ministry Contact Information	14

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 of the ministry include:

- Provision of income assistance to those in need;
- Delivery of employment programs and services to unemployed or underemployed individuals;
- Support for community living services that help adults with developmental disabilities and their families develop connections and inclusion with their community; and
- Support and encouragement for social innovation and social entrepreneurship to improve social outcomes for all British Columbians.

The ministry is also 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. The ministry is guided by three key pieces of legislation: the [Employment and Assistance Act](#), the [Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act](#), and the [Community Living Authority Act](#). Further details about the vision and goals of the ministry can be found [here](#).

Strategic Direction and Context

Economic Forecast

The Economic Forecast Council expects British Columbia's real GDP to grow by 2.6 per cent in 2015 and 2.8 per cent in 2016. Downside risks to BC's economic outlook include the potential for a slowdown in domestic and US activity, ongoing fragility in Europe, and slower than anticipated Asian demand. Additional risks include a fluctuating Canadian dollar and weak inflation, in part due to lower oil prices.

Strategic Direction

The ministry is undertaking several initiatives in the coming year to support government's priorities and to achieve the targets set out in the Minister's [Mandate Letter](#). This work includes ensuring the ministry continues to support a balanced provincial budget and the [Taxpayer Accountability Principles](#) through prudent fiscal management of ministry operations and oversight of Community Living BC. The ministry is leading work on the [Accessibility 2024](#) Action Plan and continues to support the [BC Jobs Plan](#) and the [Skill's for Jobs Blueprint](#) through the provision of an effective employment program. In addition, the ministry will continue to enhance services for clients and lead government's efforts to support and encourage [social innovation](#) across the province.

Strategic Context

Ministry programs and services are designed to help citizens build a solid connection with communities and the labour market to secure their future and in support of government's view that people who are able to work want to be self-sufficient, support their families and contribute to their communities. By providing temporary help to those who can work, and longer-term aid to those who, through disability or other barriers, have a more difficult time working or who cannot work, the ministry is ensuring the needs of British Columbians are being respected. A good paying, stable and secure job is one of the most important contributions to a healthy, happy and strong family.

The BC Employment and Assistance caseload is divided into two groups: temporary assistance for individuals who are unemployed or underemployed; and disability assistance for individuals who have a disability designation. Both caseloads are impacted by the economy and changing demographics. Improvements in the province's economy have resulted in a continued decline in the temporary assistance caseload. However, demographic shifts resulting from longer life expectancies and an aging population have resulted in continued growth in the disability assistance caseload.

Building and maintaining good relationships with other levels of government, businesses, communities, advocates and service organizations are critical to the ministry's work. These partnerships help provide responsive programs and support innovative service delivery solutions to increase community inclusion, accessibility and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities that cannot be solved by a single organization. The [Community Social Services Sector Innovation and Sustainability Roundtable](#) has identified several initiatives that the ministry and CLBC are involved in that are aimed at building long-term sustainability for the social service sector.

The ministry is the lead for [Accessibility 2024](#), a 10-year action plan to make B.C. the most accessible province in Canada for people living with disabilities. The plan is designed around 12 building blocks – ranging from employment to accessible service delivery – which reflect themes that emerged from public consultation. Key areas of work in the coming year include continuing consultation on options for a made-in-B.C. approach to accessibility legislation, addressing income-assistance issues raised in the disability consultation through policy reforms, and improving supports leading to increased employment opportunities.

The ministry is committed to providing quality service that is consistent and responsive no matter where or how it is delivered. The public may access ministry services through traditional channels such as by phone, face-to-face, mail, online and fax, and more recently by providing additional self-serve options. The diverse geography of the province and the needs of the people served have guided how the ministry develops its service delivery strategy. The ministry regularly engages with clients through public consultations to shape ongoing improvements to services; these discussions support the ministry's development and integration of both new and traditional modes of service delivery.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

The ministry's performance management framework, which includes the goals, objectives, strategies and measures below, has been streamlined to align with government's direction. In addition, information for three performance measures included in the previous year's [service plan](#) is being released through [DataBC](#). These measures include: the percent of reconsideration decision made within legislated time frames; the percent of employment program clients who receive case management services; and, the percent of applications for a Person with a Disability designation that are completed within ministry timelines.

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 federal 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 to assist the changing and 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 children from eligible low and moderate income families with dental and optical assistance through the Healthy Kids Program.

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 in B.C. is enhanced so they can achieve increasingly positive economic outcomes and greater well-being.

Strategies

- Support people to work by ensuring ministry programs and initiatives reduce unnecessary dependency on income assistance.
- Work with the Ministry of Children and Family Development to identify opportunities that will provide single parents with enhanced services and supports that secure employment and independence.
- Consider individual client needs in delivering employment programs and services.

Performance Measure 1: Expected to Work caseload as a percentage of the population aged 19-64.

Performance Measure	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Forecast	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Expected to Work caseload as a percentage of the population aged 19-64.	1.2%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%	0.8%

Data Source: Research Branch, 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 to achieve financial independence. This measure tracks the percent of British Columbia’s working age population receiving temporary assistance with employment related obligations. As the temporary assistance caseload continues to fall, it is expected that the number of employment obligated clients as a percent of the working age population will decline.

Performance Measure 2: Median length of time clients who have employment obligations receive Income Assistance.

Performance Measure	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Forecast	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Median length of time clients with employment obligations receive assistance (months).	7.3	6.9	6.8	6.8	6.7

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

Discussion

Median durations measure the number of months it takes for half of new starting employment obligated cases to stop receiving assistance. High durations signify new employment obligated cases are having more difficulty becoming independent and are at greater risk of becoming a long-term client. Durations on assistance can rise if economic opportunities are limited, as during the recent downturn, or because new clients have more barriers to employment. As the economy continues to slowly recover and job opportunities increase, it is expected that median durations will begin to decline.

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

Strategies

- Reduce barriers and provide employment service and supports to all clients including Persons with Disabilities, immigrants, Aboriginal people and other specialized populations, so they move towards independence and self-reliance.
- Work collaboratively with partner ministries through the Labour Market Priorities Board to ensure ministry employment programs and supports align with the priorities of the BC Jobs Plan and the Skill's for Jobs Blueprint.
- Create opportunities for partnerships and innovation at the community and employer level.

Performance Measure 3: Percent of Employment Program of BC clients obtaining employment.

Performance Measure	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Forecast	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Percent of Employment Program of BC case-managed clients who achieve employment	34%	40%	41%	42%	44%

Data Source: Employment and Labour Market Services Division, Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation.

Discussion

This performance measure reflects the percentage of case-managed Employment Program of BC clients achieving employment. The baseline represents current data and trends in obtaining employment outcomes. The program is expected to reach a steady state with an outcome rate of 40 percent and record modest gains in employment outcomes through 2017/18.

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 responsive services to support them to participate as full citizens and have improved outcomes consistent with the goals outlined in Accessibility 2024.
- 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 support 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.

Objective 3.2: Engage British Columbians across sectors to enhance community inclusion for Persons with Disabilities.

Strategies

- Continue to work with business, community organizations, citizens with disabilities and their families to implement Accessibility 2024.
- Support the Minister’s Council on Employment and Accessibility and the Presidents’ Group to develop solutions and strategies that improve the lives of British Columbians with disabilities and their families.
- Engage stakeholders and the public to identify barriers and solutions to improving employment outcomes for Persons with Disabilities.

Performance Measure 4: Percent of Persons with Disabilities with declared earnings.

Performance Measure	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Forecast	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Percent of Persons with Disabilities with declared earnings.	15.6%	16.2%	16.3%	16.4%	16.5%

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

Discussion

The ministry provides supports and programs to Persons with Disabilities to work, including earnings exemptions and employment programming and services. This measure tracks the percentage of Persons with Disabilities declaring earnings. As the economy improves and the full impact of recent improvements to earnings exemptions are realized, it is expected that the percentage of Persons with Disabilities with declared earnings will rise.

Goal 4: Promote a culture of social innovation in British Columbia.

Objective 4.1: Support British Columbia's capacity for social innovation.

Strategies

- Develop and maintain strong, productive and sustainable relationships with partners in the public, private and non-profit sectors (including the BC Partners for Social Impact) to support the growth and sustainability of British Columbia's social innovation and social enterprise sectors.
- Support British Columbian innovators and entrepreneurs in the identification, implementation and enhancing innovative, community-based solutions.
- Facilitate, develop and implement social finance tools to create new opportunities for innovation.

Performance Measures: Impact of Social Enterprise in British Columbia.

Government involvement in the fast growing social innovation sector is relatively new. The ministry is supporting this growth through a series of initiatives and is developing complementary baseline line measures to gauge and monitor success. This includes quantifying the number of social enterprises in British Columbia as well as developing metrics to calculate the impact of new finance tools such as contract policies. The ministry is also exploring options for evaluating public knowledge and support for social innovation and social enterprises.

Resource Summary

Core Business Area	2014/15 Estimates ¹	2015/16 Estimates	2016/17 Plan	2017/18 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Income Assistance	1,682,338	1,708,937	1,730,300	1,712,492
Employment	29,988	30,000	30,006	30,024
Community Living Services	799,777	837,447	868,337	899,297
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	1,751	1,756	1,760	1,767
Executive and Support Services	15,965	15,435	15,472	15,555
Total	2,529,819	2,593,575	2,645,875	2,659,135

Core Business Area	2014/15 Estimates ¹	2015/16 Estimates	2016/17 Plan	2017/18 Plan
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)				
Executive and Support Services ²	29,517	2,938	3,640	1,776
Total	29,517	2,938	3,640	1,776

- For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2014/15 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2015/16 Estimates.
- Ministry Capital Expenditures in 2014/15 include funding to complete the Integrated Case Management (ICM) system.

Appendix A: Ministry Contact Information

Employment and Income Assistance

The ministry has 53 Employment and Income Assistance offices and 30 partnerships with Service BC locations throughout British Columbia. To find the office that provides services for a specific community, go to: www.hsd.gov.bc.ca/contacts/city.htm, or contact the ministry toll free by telephone from anywhere in the province at 1 866 866-0800.

Service BC refers members of the public to the appropriate ministry office and transfers calls and forwards e-mails free of charge. Hours of operation for Service BC are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through 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
- E-mail address: ServiceBC@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 Labour Market Services

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