

**Ministry of
Social Development
and Poverty Reduction**

**2017/18 – 2019/20
SERVICE PLAN**

September 2017



For more information on the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction see Ministry Contact Information page 8 or contact:

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<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/ministries/social-development-poverty-reduction>

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Minister Accountability Statement



The *Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction 2017/18 - 2019/20 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.

This Service Plan is transitional following the July 2017 change in government. The Plan sets out immediate priorities like raising income assistance rates and increasing earnings exemptions in 2017/18, and it provides a framework to guide the development of additional strategies and performance measures that support government's key commitments. I look forward to sharing these in our 2018/19 Service Plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shane Simpson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Honourable Shane Simpson
Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
August 31, 2017

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Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction focuses on providing British Columbians in need with services that they count on. The fundamental purpose of the ministry is to tackle poverty and inequality, to deliver quality services that meet people's needs, and to ensure people from every background have the opportunity to reach their full potential. The mandate of the ministry includes developing a poverty reduction strategy and our challenge is to create a plan that helps break the cycle of poverty. This purpose shapes both our immediate actions to put more assistance in the hands of those in need, as well as the new plans and strategies we develop under this Service Plan.

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](#). The Minister is responsible for Community Living BC (CLBC) and supports the Parliamentary Secretary for Poverty Reduction. The ministry's key responsibilities include:

- Providing income and disability assistance to those in need;
- Delivering employment programs and services to unemployed and underemployed individuals;
- Supporting community living services that help adults with developmental disabilities and their families develop connections and inclusion with their community; and
- Designing and implementing a province-wide poverty-reduction strategy.

Further details about the ministry can be found at the [Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction](#) home page.

Ministry Goals, Objectives and Performance Measures

The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction's goals are to help government achieve the following three commitments to British Columbians:

- The first commitment is to make life more affordable. British Columbians are counting on government to make their lives easier by containing costs and service fees.
- The second commitment is to deliver the services that people count on. Government services touch the lives of British Columbians every day, and there is so much more that we can – and must – do to provide these services where and when people need them. Additionally, in many cases, critical programs and services are delivered by Crown Corporations, and our Ministry will work with Board Chairs to improve levels of service to citizens.
- The third commitment is to build a strong, sustainable, innovative economy that works for everyone. Our government believes that all ministries and public sector organizations have a role to play in supporting broad-based economic growth, developing poverty reduction strategies, and helping create good-paying jobs in every region of the province.

Integrating with these priorities is government's commitment to true, lasting reconciliation with First Nations in British Columbia, as we move towards fully adopting and implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Beyond our work in supporting these commitments, the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction has been tasked in the [mandate letter](#) to achieve the following specific objectives and performance targets:

- As a first step, immediately raise all income assistance and disability rates by \$100 per month.
- Encourage and support assistance recipients as they re-enter the workforce by allowing them to keep an additional \$200 a month in earnings exemptions.
- Further support those on disability assistance by fully restoring the BC Bus Pass program.
- Develop a basic-income pilot to test whether giving people a basic income is an effective way to reduce poverty, improve health, housing and employment.
- Design and implement a province-wide poverty-reduction strategy with legislated targets and timelines.
- Work in partnership to develop a homelessness action plan to reduce the homeless population through permanent housing and services. As part of the plan, conduct a province-wide homelessness count.

Our Ministry will continue to develop specific objectives and performance measures for inclusion in our 2018/19 Service Plan, which will be released with *Budget 2018*.

Resource Summary

| Core Business Area* | 2016/17 Restated Estimates ¹ | 2017/18 Estimates | 2018/19 Plan | 2019/20 Plan |
|--|---|----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Operating Expenses (\$000) | | | | |
| Income Assistance | 1,815,138 | 2,123,527 | 2,249,629 | 2,279,869 |
| Employment | 29,000 | 29,014 | 29,014 | 29,023 |
| Community Living Services | 881,781 | 940,619 | 976,751 | 993,793 |
| Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal | 1,796 | 1,797 | 1,800 | 1,800 |
| Executive and Support Services | 10,487 | 10,503 | 10,588 | 10,588 |
| Total | 2,738,202 | 3,105,460 | 3,267,782 | 3,315,073 |
| Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000) | | | | |
| Executive and Support Services | 4,034 | 4,228 | 3,200 | 200 |
| Total | 4,034 | 4,228 | 3,200 | 200 |

¹ For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2016/17 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2017/18 Estimates.

* Further information on program funding and vote recoveries is available in the [Estimates and Supplement to the Estimates](#).

Appendix A: Ministry Contact Information

Employment and Income Assistance

The ministry has 48 Employment and Income Assistance offices and 35 partnerships with Service BC locations throughout British Columbia. To find the office that provides services for a specific community, go to <http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/contacts/offices.html>, 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: WorkBC Official Website – [WorkBC Centres](#).