

**Ministry of
Municipal Affairs**

**2021/22 – 2023/24
SERVICE PLAN**

April 2021



For more information on the Ministry of Municipal Affairs contact:

PO Box 9056 Stn Prov Govt

Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Vancouver 604-660-2421 Victoria 250-387-6121

Or visit our website at

<https://www.gov.bc.ca/muni>

Published by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs

Minister's Accountability Statement



The *Ministry of Municipal Affairs 2021/22 – 2023/24 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 "Josie Osborne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Honourable Josie Osborne
Minister of Municipal Affairs
April 8, 2021

Table of Contents

Minister’s Accountability Statement	3
Purpose of the Ministry.....	5
Strategic Direction	5
Performance Planning.....	6
Financial Summary	14
Appendix A: Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Tribunals.....	15

Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs helps make B.C. communities great places to live by taking leadership in supporting local governments, not-for-profit organizations and residents to build vibrant and healthy communities that are well governed, liveable, safe and diverse as well as economically, socially and environmentally resilient.

The Ministry supports newcomers to settle and integrate into the province, facilitates economic immigration to address B.C.'s labour market needs and attracts international entrepreneurs.

The Ministry also oversees the University Endowment Lands and works with public library partners to sustain the public library system.

The effective delivery of the Ministry's mandate relies on key legislation, including: the *Community Charter*, the *Vancouver Charter*, the *Local Government Act*, the *Municipal Aid Act*, the *Municipal Finance Authority Act*, part six of the *Gaming Control Act*, the *Islands Trust Act*, the *Immigration Programs Act*, the *Ministry of International Business and Immigration Act*, and the *Library Act*.

Strategic Direction

In 2021/22 British Columbians continue to face significant challenges as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic. The Government of B.C. is continually evolving to meet the changing needs of people in this province. Government has identified five foundational principles that will inform each ministry's work and contribute to COVID-19 recovery: putting people first, lasting and meaningful reconciliation, equity and anti-racism, a better future through fighting climate change and meeting our greenhouse gas reduction commitments, and a strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone.

This 2021/22 service plan outlines how the Ministry of Municipal Affairs will support the government's priorities including the foundational principles listed above and selected action items identified in the November 2020 [Minister's Mandate Letter](#).

Performance Planning

With the transfer of the Housing portfolio to the Ministry of Attorney General the 2021/22 Service Plan has been reorganized to reflect our updated mandate. As a result, Goals 1 and 2 have been removed and the 2020/21 Goal 3 shifted to be Goal 1. Goal 2 is a new goal that displays our mandate letter commitment to support communities through the COVID-19 pandemic and Goal 3, while new, encompasses performance measures found in the 2020/2021 service plan of the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Competitiveness.

Goal 1: Strong Sustainable and Well Governed Communities

By cultivating strong partnerships and delivering services that support sustainable and well governed communities, the Ministry enables a local government framework that can support the financial, economic, environmental, social and infrastructure health of communities for all British Columbians.

Objective 1.1: Further a governance system that considers local government and provincial interests and builds strong relationships for the benefit of all people.

Key Strategies

- Work with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) and other local government partners, to ensure the annual UBCM Convention provides a comprehensive exchange of ideas and optimizes cooperation and collaboration among the Province, UBCM, individual local governments, and UBCM First Nations members.
- Consistent with government's Draft Principles that guide the Province's relationship with Indigenous Peoples, support local governments in building respectful relationships and fostering meaningful and lasting reconciliation with First Nations.
- Review and enhance the policy, legislative and education framework for local governments where needed, including working with key partners to implement lessons learned from the 2018 local government elections, to further responsible conduct among locally elected officials and to move forward on other requests that are provincial priorities.
- Provide advice, resolve problems and give targeted support and oversight on a range of local and regional governance matters of local government and provincial interest, both directly and in partnership with others.
- Work with public library partners to sustain a public library system that is effectively governed and accountable, where provincial funding helps extend local services and improve access throughout B.C.

Performance Measure(s)	2020/21 Forecast	2021/22 Target	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target
1.1a Actively engage with UBCM local governments and UBCM First Nations members with ongoing meetings between elected officials and staff, including: number of formal meetings held annually between UBCM Executives and the Minister of Municipal Affairs ¹	4+	4+	4+	4+
1.1b Actively engage with UBCM local governments and UBCM First Nations members with ongoing meetings between elected official and staff, including: number of meetings held annually between the Ministry, UBCM, individual local governments and UBCM First Nations members during UBCM Convention and throughout the year ¹	100+	100+	100+	100+

¹Data source: Meeting schedules (calendar meeting invites) and agendas for Senior staff and Minister’s meeting. Informal meetings with staff are not counted.

Linking Performance Measure to Objective

The number of formal interactions between the Minister and UBCM Executive is an important indicator that the relationship between local governments and the provincial government is being actively sustained. These meetings create a reciprocal opportunity to better understand the interests of local governments and to ensure policy and programs are meeting the needs of communities.

Objective 1.2: Maintain local governments’ financial sustainability so they can meet the service needs of their communities.

Key Strategies

- Support ministries and other partners in reviewing pressures in the local government financial system, including issues related to revenues and property tax impacts.
- Provide advice and statutory approvals on local government finance (revenues and expenditures) to support sound local government financial management practices and stewardship that ensure fiscal viability.

- Deliver stable, predictable and timely grant funding for professional administration to smaller and rural local governments throughout B.C. through the Small Community Grants and Regional District Grants as well as provide targeted funding to municipalities with over 5,000 people for community safety initiatives, through the Traffic Fine Revenue Sharing Program.
- Support the Municipal Finance Authority (MFA) in obtaining a high credit rating and low rates for borrowing through: overseeing the *Municipal Finance Authority Act*; setting local government borrowing limits; reviewing and approving loan authorization bylaws and setting financial reporting requirements; and ensuring local government financial data is available to the MFA and the broader public.

Performance Measure(s)	2020/21 Forecast	2021/22 Target	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target
1.2 Municipal Finance Authority's Credit Rating ¹	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA

¹Data source: [Municipal Finance Authority](#) Ratings provided by the Moody's, Standard & Poor's, and Fitch rating agencies

Linking Performance Measure to Objective

A strong credit rating of the MFA reflects the sustainability of the local government financial system. This strong credit rating gives local governments the freedom to engage in capital projects that touch the lives of people in B.C. every day.

Objective 1.3: Support improvement of community and regional infrastructure and local government planning to further the environmental, economic and social health of communities.

Key Strategies

- Encourage resilient, efficient and effective community planning, fiscal and asset management practices to support the development of sustainable communities, including continued progress on the Development Approvals Process Review to streamline and modernize development permitting and approvals.
- Work in partnership with UBCM to implement the Housing Needs Reports Program to assist local governments in meeting new legislative requirements to have housing needs reports in place by Spring 2022.
- Support local governments to make effective, integrated and collaborative choices, through problem solving, guidance and program support for delivery of local and regional services such as water, recreation and economic development, and integrated sustainable land use, resiliency and infrastructure planning.

- Under the CleanBC Communities Fund (CCF) collaborate with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy to support infrastructure projects in communities across the province that focus on the:
 - management of renewable energy,
 - access to clean-energy transportation,
 - improved energy efficiency of buildings, and
 - the generation of clean energy.
- Partner with the federal government and other ministries to develop and implement community capital funding programs for local governments and First Nations that build and upgrade local infrastructure including drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, clean energy, recreation facilities and community centres.
- Support ministries and other partners to develop initiatives related to integrated planning, transportation, regional growth strategies, energy and the environment, and housing and homelessness.

Performance Measure(s)	2020/21 Forecast	2021/22 Target	2022/23 Target
1.3 Number of local governments funded under the Housing Needs Reports Program ¹	30	10	N/A ²

¹Data source: Housing Needs Reports Program Evaluation Committee approval of funding applications.

²A 2022/23 target has not been included for measure 1.3, because the Housing Needs Reports Program is currently intended to run for three years and then be reviewed.

Linking Performance Measure to Objective

Legislative requirements for local governments to complete housing needs reports helps strengthen their ability to understand and provide for the kind of housing that is most needed at a local level. The three-year, application-based \$5 million Housing Needs Reports Program, administered by UBCM, supports local governments in B.C. to meet these requirements and is also open to Treaty First Nations. The number of local governments requiring financial support is decreasing over time as the majority of local governments have completed their reports ahead of the deadline to meet the legislative requirement.

Goal 2: Communities in ongoing/continued economic recovery beyond COVID-19

Working with other governments and partner organizations to enable local governments and non-profits to support people through economic recovery and the COVID-19 pandemic into a stronger and better future for our neighbourhoods and communities.

Objective 2.1: Support the governance, financial, planning and infrastructure resiliency of communities in extraordinary circumstances

This is a new objective that, as a result of the broad impacts of the pandemic on communities, focuses on the monitoring and support as they work to re-establish services, adjust financial plans, and ensure good governance.

Key Strategies

- Develop, deliver, and monitor targeted funding, including with the federal government, to respond to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on communities and their operations.
- Work with local governments, UBCM and other partners to share information, monitor local government system impacts and respond to issues that arise.
- Provide guidance, advice and problem solving for communities, including initiating actions when required (e.g. Minister’s orders; policy and legislative change).
- Ensure infrastructure projects approved through economic recovery funding meet reporting requirements and achieve completion.

Performance Measure(s)	2020/21 Forecast	2021/22 Target	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target
2.1 Number of approved Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program, Community Economic Resilience stream (CERIP-CER) projects that attain completion within program timeframe ¹	0 ²	35	25	N/A ³

¹Data source: Program applications and approvals

²[Forecast for 20/21 is zero as projects are being approved in February 2021.]

³[Forecast in 23/24 is zero as program requires projects to complete by March 31, 2023.]

Linking Performance Measure to Objective

Accelerated funding program specifically designed to respond to the impacts of the pandemic assists to further community resilience overall, with the short approval and completion timelines that are essential to help communities recover economically from COVID-19 impacts.

Goal 3: Communities are vibrant, inclusive, and enriched by the contributions of newcomers

Objective 3.1: Businesses and communities can access international talent to address identified labour needs and support sustainable economic development

Key Strategies

- Align immigration policies and programs to provincial priorities and community needs.
- Work with the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training to identify how immigration can best meet the labour market needs of B.C.'s industries and regions.
- Use B.C.'s Provincial Nominee Program (BC PNP) to attract international talent to communities throughout the province, helping B.C. businesses fill regional labour needs and enhance innovation.
- Through B.C.'s PNP Entrepreneur Immigration Regional Pilot, support regional communities to grow their economies and create jobs by attracting international entrepreneurs.
- Employ targeted initiatives to enhance attraction and retention of newcomers in communities throughout B.C.

Performance Measure(s)	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Target	2021/22 Target	2022/23 Target
3.1 Percentage of BC PNP applications processed within service standard commitment ¹	84%	80%	80%	80%
3.1a - Skills applications: 3 months ¹				
3.1b - Entrepreneur Regional Pilot applications: 4 months ¹	93%	80%	80%	80%

¹Data source: Internal Ministry of Municipal Affairs tracking

Linking Performance Measure to Objective

The BC PNP is the province’s only direct immigration selection tool to identify and facilitate the arrival of international workers and entrepreneurs. Expeditious processing is critical to addressing urgent labour needs across B.C. The Entrepreneur Immigration Regional Pilot, launched in March 2019, has seen successful applicants moving to and establishing new businesses, supporting sustainable economic development in smaller centres.

Discussion

Processing times refer to the provincial role in making a decision (approval or refusal) on a BC PNP file at the application stage; 80 per cent is considered a reasonable target for a service standard commitment given there will always be a certain percentage of files that will take longer to process (e.g., incomplete application, complexity, delays related to international travel).

Objective 3.2: Provide grants and services to help communities thrive and to support newcomers to settle and integrate.

Key Strategies

- Distribute \$140 million in Community Gaming Grants to not-for-profit organization throughout B.C. to support their delivery of ongoing programs and services that meet the needs of their communities.
- Build upon government’s efforts to streamline and support fair, efficient and transparent foreign credential recognition by occupational regulators, including with continued investments through the Credential Assessment Improvement Fund.
- Help skilled newcomers achieve employment in their field through the Career Paths for Skilled Immigrants program.
- Support newcomers to integrate into communities and workplaces through the BC Settlement and Integration Services Program.

Performance Measure(s)	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Forecast	2020/21 Target	2021/22 Target	2022/23 Target
3.2 Percentage of Career Paths Clients employed in their field upon program completion ¹	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%

¹Data source: Internal Ministry of Municipal Affairs tracking

Linking Performance Measure to Objective

The [Career Paths for Skilled Immigrants](#) program assists skilled immigrants and refugees in B.C. find work that utilizes their pre-arrival skills, education and experience. As a result, the program helps to maximize the human capital benefits of immigration and address the province's labour needs, which in turn improves economic growth in the province and raises the standard of living for all British Columbians.

Discussion

The Career Paths program was launched in January 2017. Participants typically remain active in the program for up to 22 months. As the program develops future adjustments to targets may occur.

Financial Summary

Core Business Area	2020/21 Restated Budget ¹	2021/22 Estimate	2022/23 Plan	2023/24 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Local Government²	112,741	270,950	209,990	209,990
Immigration Services and Strategic Planning³	16,603	18,977	18,977	18,977
Executive and Support Services	8,641	7,603	7,010	7,019
University Endowment Lands Administration Account	10,593	10,668	10,688	10,688
Total	148,578	308,198	246,665	246,674
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)				
Executive and Support Services	361	316	2	2
University Endowment Lands Administration Account	3,900	2,285	0	0
Total	4,261	2,601	2	2

¹ For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2020/21 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2021/22 Estimates.

² Local Government includes University Endowment Lands (UEL).

³ Immigration Services and Strategic Planning includes Community Gaming Grants, Strategic Planning and Workforce and Immigration.

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

Appendix A: Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Tribunals

As of April 8, 2021, the Minister of Municipal Affairs is responsible and accountable for the following:

[Board of Examiners](#)

[Islands Trust Conservancy](#)