

Ministry of Municipal Affairs

2023/24 – 2025/26 Service Plan

February 2023



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Published by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs

Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Municipal Affairs 2023/24 – 2025/26 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 that reads "Anne Kang".

Honourable Anne Kang
Minister of Municipal Affairs
February 13, 2023

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Strategic Direction

In 2023/24, the Government of British Columbia will continue our work to make life better for people in B.C., improve the services we all rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations. Government will focus on building a secure, clean, and fair economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – whether in a rural area, in a city, or in an Indigenous community. B.C. will continue working toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in an inclusive and sustainable province. The policies, programs and projects developed over the course of this service plan period will focus on results that people can see and feel in four key areas: attainable and affordable housing, strengthened health care, safer communities, and a secure, clean and fair economy that can withstand global economic headwinds.

This 2023/24 service plan outlines how the Ministry of Municipal Affairs will support the government's priorities and selected action items identified in the [December 2022 Minister's Mandate Letter](#).

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](#), [Vancouver Charter](#), [Local Government Act](#), [Municipal Aid Act](#), [Municipal Finance Authority Act](#), [part six of the Gaming Control Act](#), [Islands Trust Act](#), [Provincial Immigration Programs Act](#), [Ministry of International Business and Immigration Act](#), and [Library Act](#).

Operating Environment

Demand for workers across British Columbia and the rest of Canada continues to increase. In response, the federal government has set ambitious national immigration targets in the coming years to help meet the labour needs of employers, including a target of 500,000 new permanent residents coming to Canada by 2025. In this context, British Columbia will welcome an increasing number of immigrants, and has requested the federal government allow the

B.C. Government to make more BC Provincial Nominee Program nominations to select immigrants with the skills that are needed by B.C. employers.

Local governments continue to be challenged by inflation, labour and supply chain markets impacting affordability as labour markets and material shortages escalate costs. These pressures are expected to continue driving up capital project costs. Climate-driven events like the atmospheric rivers and drought conditions continue to prioritize the need for resources to restore and rebuild local and provincial infrastructure. Housing supply and affordability continues to be a priority in every community around the province.

The importance of this issue is reflected in the establishment of the Ministry of Housing in December 2022, consolidation of policy resources that support housing policy, and assignment of responsibility for the Development Approvals Process Review to that ministry. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs will continue to support the renewed Housing Strategy, while maintaining responsibility for core local government land use regulation oversight.

The Ministry will approach these challenges by strengthening relationships with local governments individually and collectively through the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, by deepening understanding of the needs and realities of indigenous communities, by renewing partnerships with provincial agencies involved in development of urban and rural communities, and by seeking opportunities for increased partnerships with the federal government.

Economic Statement

B.C.'s economy has been resilient to pandemic, geopolitical and climate-related disruptions. However, higher interest rates are expected to weigh on the economy in the coming years. Following a rapid recovery from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, high inflation led to successive interest rate increases from the Bank of Canada in 2022. The impact of higher interest rates has been evident in housing markets and there is uncertainty over its transmission to the rest of the economy in B.C. and among our trading partners. B.C. is heading into this challenging period in relatively strong position, with a low unemployment rate. The Economic Forecast Council (EFC) estimates that B.C. real GDP expanded by 3.0 per cent in 2022 and expects growth of 0.5 per cent in 2023 and 1.6 per cent in 2024. Meanwhile for Canada, the EFC estimates growth of 3.4 per cent in 2022 and projects national real GDP growth of 0.5 per cent in 2023 and 1.5 per cent in 2024. As such, B.C.'s economic growth is expected to be broadly in line with the national average in the coming years. The risks to B.C.'s economic outlook center around interest rates and inflation, such as the risk of further inflationary supply chain disruptions, the potential for more interest rate increases than expected, and uncertainty around the depth and timing of the impact on housing markets. Further risks include ongoing uncertainty regarding global trade policies, the emergence of further COVID-19 variants of concern and lower commodity prices.

Performance Planning

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.

Provincial and local governments have responsibilities that often overlap, interact and intersect. Governments at both levels are, therefore, most effective when policies and services are coordinated to meet the needs of communities, regions, and the province.

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.
- Support local governments in building respectful relationships and fostering meaningful and lasting reconciliation with First Nations, consistent with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act)*, as the Province's framework for reconciliation. Collaborate with UBCM on providing advice to local governments. Under the *Declaration Act*, continue to meet, engage, and collaborate with First Nation communities and Indigenous partners and organizations.
- Review and enhance the policy, legislative and education framework for local governments where needed, including working with key stakeholders and partners to move forward on 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.

Discussion

The general local elections held in October 2022 mark the beginning of a four-year term for local elected officials, and trigger appointments to related agencies and organizations, such as

public libraries. Establishing relationships and developing capacity and skills are critical in the first year of the term and achieved through meetings and other opportunities for dialogue as well as support for more structured educational initiatives like the Local Government Leadership Academy.

Evolving provincial initiatives under the *Declaration Act* impact the context of land use management, services and representation for local governments. As independent governments, municipalities and regional districts in British Columbia are engaged in implementing the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action](#), and look to the Province for guidance on implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to understand emerging obligations.

The province will continue to follow the principles of the local-provincial relationship that are enshrined in local government legislation. These principles serve all British Columbians and include acknowledgement and respect for each others' jurisdiction, fostering consultation in matters of mutual interest, and work towards harmonization of provincial and local government legislation.

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

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs supports local governments with their legislated financial responsibilities to promote the long-term sustainability of the local government system. This includes support for a system of joint borrowing that results in significant savings on interest costs, benefiting local governments of all sizes. The Ministry also recognizes the need to examine economic issues that currently impact local governments, and to consider the financial system in light of these issues.

Key Strategies

- Support ministries and other partners in reviewing the local government financial system, including pressures related to costs, revenues, and property tax impacts.
- Provide advice on local government finance and statutory approvals to support sound financial management practices and stewardship, ensuring 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.
- 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 oversight of the *Municipal Finance Authority Act*. Support includes 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.

- Work with UBCM through the established Memorandum of Understanding further to the province's commitment to the [Ensuring Local Government Financial Resiliency: Today's Recovery and Tomorrow's New Economy](#) report and recommendations.

Discussion

The emerging economic context of climate change impacts, housing affordability and increases in demand and cost for certain services have put some communities and their local governments under tremendous pressure for additional revenue.

Local governments are primarily reliant on property tax and fees to recover the costs of critical services. As costs of these services and related infrastructure have significantly increased, it has become apparent that communities throughout B.C. have varying levels of capacity to address these costs without impacting service levels.

Community growth and increased housing supply mean local governments will need to fund expanded services and infrastructure. This envisioned future will rely on cost recovery from developers that benefit from growing communities, in addition to property taxes, fees, and grants.

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

Local government responsibilities for community planning, building and maintaining community infrastructure and approving developments influence the shape of communities for decades, and shape the environmental, social, and economic context for future growth and health.

Key Strategies

- Encourage resilient, efficient and effective community planning and fiscal and asset management practices to support the development of sustainable communities.
- 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.
- Support the Ministries of Housing, and Transportation and Infrastructure, in advancing the refreshed provincial Housing Strategy and the elaboration of the Transit-oriented Development Framework by supporting local government implementation of measures to accelerate development approvals.
- Support the implementation of the [CleanBC Roadmap to 2030](#) and Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy by enabling local government land use planning and infrastructure projects through initiatives such as the CleanBC Communities Fund and development of the Complete Communities Program.

- 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, transit-oriented development, clean transportation, regional growth strategies, energy and the environment, and housing supply and affordability.

Discussion

Local governments face pressure to manage immediate concerns while also considering long-term impacts of development and infrastructure decisions. The choices local governments make in the form, quantity and location of development approvals and scale, placement and technology of infrastructure have impacts that last for decades, while also meeting urgent needs for affordable homes, a healthy and clean environment, community safety and an economy that supports local jobs.

Provincial and federal resources have traditionally been accessible for major capital projects that support the current scale of population, to make renewal more affordable. Development and growth has been expected to cover the cost of meeting the additional demand placed on services. In response to the urgency of the housing crisis, approaches to fine-tune development finance and provincial investment in infrastructure for anticipated housing is being explored.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
1.1 Minister of Municipal Affairs meetings with UBCM Executive, and UBCM member local governments and First Nations, and regional meetings with local government leaders.	155+	155+	155+	155+

Data source: Meeting schedules (calendar meeting invites) and agendas for senior staff and Minister’s meeting. Meetings with Ministry staff that occur at UBCM Convention are included, but other meetings are not counted.

Discussion

The ministry meets with local governments on a wide variety of topics throughout the year to hear their experiences and perspectives and look for opportunities to align interests and priorities and resolve pressing concerns.

The relationship between the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the UBCM Executive highlights the role of the Minister as a conduit of communication between local governments collectively and the provincial Cabinet. The Minister typically joins the UBCM Executive for a portion of

their meetings quarterly, and collaborates with them on bringing together local and provincial government leaders for the annual UBCM Convention.

The UBCM represents 196 municipalities, regional districts, First Nations and the Islands Trust, and is a key partner in the province’s relationship building with local governments. The UBCM provides a common voice for local government elected officials. In addition to advocating policy positions of its members, the UBCM represents the local government perspective in consultations on changes to key provincial legislation and policies, and delivers grant programs and other services to local governments on behalf of the province.

As the host Minister for the UBCM Convention, the Minister of Municipal Affairs meets directly with over a quarter of the UBCM members local governments and First Nations in discussions on local matters. The ministry also manages over 250 meeting requests and scheduling for other ministries and agencies at UBCM Convention, assisting local governments with pathfinding to ensure they meet with the right agency to discuss the topics they wish to raise.

Meetings with individual local governments and with regional local leaders also occur throughout the year as interest and issues arise, with both the Minister and with senior executives and program staff. These meetings create a reciprocal opportunity to better understand the interests of UBCM members and to ensure policy and programs are meeting the needs of communities.

Performance Measure	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
1.2 Municipal Finance Authority's Credit Rating	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA

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

Discussion

A strong credit rating of the MFA results in more affordable borrowing for major projects and reflects the sustainability of the local government financial system which gives local governments the freedom to engage in capital projects that touch the lives of people in B.C. every day.

The impact of the strong MFA credit rating increases as interest rates rise, allowing infrastructure that is financed over a 30-year term to be significantly more affordable for local governments. This measure reflects both the effectiveness of provincial financial oversight and the design of the financing model that ensures regional and provincial-scale support to make payments in the unlikely event that an individual local government is unable to raise sufficient revenues to service its debt.

Goal 2: Communities and regions are resilient, with economies that work for British Columbians

Communities and regions in British Columbia are in the midst of cultural, social, environmental and economic shifts. Changing contexts for community and regional governance require both near-term adaptation and long-term thinking about a desirable future state.

Objective 2.1: Local governments are implementing strategies to improve community sustainability and affordability

Key Strategies:

- Continue to leverage ministry infrastructure funding programs to encourage local governments to innovate, and to prioritize projects that deliver environmental, economic and/or social benefits.
- Partner with other ministries and other levels of government to support opportunities for local governments that improve their social and economic development. This could include urban/rural economic development, First Nations' relationships, emergency preparedness, viable transit options and reducing homelessness, as well as addressing mental health and addictions, childcare and poverty reduction.
- In collaboration with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and the Climate Action Secretariat, renew the work of the joint Provincial-UBCM Green Communities Committee to support local governments in achieving local and provincial climate objectives.
- Support and work with local governments to advance integrated and sustainable land use, infrastructure and transportation planning.
- In partnership with the federal government and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, continue to implement the Canada Community Building Fund that came into effect on April 1, 2014. Engage in effective negotiations to establish the next agreement to ensure continuity of the Fund from 2024 onward.
- Promote the effective development, adoption, and implementation of Regional Growth Strategies.

Discussion

Local governments can make significant impacts on community sustainability and affordability through sustainable land use decisions to create complete, compact and energy efficient communities and regions, with more diverse housing, greenspace and renewable energy and transportation. Investing in efficient and innovative infrastructure reduces borrowing and operating costs into the future, leaving more resources and flexibility to respond to emerging community needs.

Objective 2.2: Communities have the water and waste management infrastructure to thrive

Local and regional economies rely on homes and businesses having access to clean, safe drinking water and adequate waste management. This critical infrastructure provides a basis for affordable communities, public health and environmental protection, and is a priority for creating effective recovery conditions in the wake of natural disasters.

Key Strategies:

- Administer funding for local governments to help them achieve provincial water and waste management objectives (for example, the joint federal/provincial Environmental Quality Program helps communities to fund essential infrastructure).
- Monitor approved projects and advise on strategies to ensure project completion.
- Provide tools and resources to local governments to assist them in conserving and protecting water resources.
- Encourage local governments to use liquid and solid waste as a resource and maximize the recovery value.
- Promote the use of effective life-cycle cost approaches to support local government land use and infrastructure planning resulting in sustainable service delivery.

Discussion

Funding water and waste management projects supports communities with achieving senior-government initiated health or environmental standards. They assist in driving best practice in infrastructure management in line with provincial objectives, including efficient use of resources, environmental protection, and responsible infrastructure management practices for sustainable service delivery. These policies influence local government practice beyond those projects that are directly funded. Water and waste management are core community services that support all other services, businesses, and the public health of residents.

Objective 2.3: Communities impacted by extraordinary emergencies are resilient and their governance, financial, planning and infrastructure are supported to recover

Given the broad impacts of the pandemic and natural disasters such as extreme heat, wildfires, and floods on communities, this area of focus is on monitoring and supporting as communities work to re-establish services, adjust financial plans, and ensure good governance.

Key Strategies

- 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), and collaborate with the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness in the development of modernized emergency management legislation.
- Ensure infrastructure projects approved through economic recovery funding meet reporting requirements and achieve completion.
- Support specific communities impacted by emergencies, to coordinate governance, infrastructure, operations, finances, and planning activities to bridge from response into recovery and beyond from events with severe environmental and economic impacts.

Discussion

The layering of widespread and regional or local emergencies leads to differing degrees of disruption and challenges for communities and their civic institutions. Developing resiliency and collaborating on recovery require partnership among multiple orders of government and across sectors to bring communities back from extraordinary emergencies.

The Ministry is continuing to consolidate the learning and experience of supporting local governments through the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent extraordinary emergencies into its ongoing program and policy work.

Performance Measures

Performance Measures	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
2.1a Funded water and wastewater projects reaching completion. ¹	7	29	28	31
2.1b Funded community, culture, or recreation projects reaching completion. ²	28	47	26	5
2.1c Funded energy efficiency projects reaching completion. ³	4	11	20	12
2.1d Funded community recovery infrastructure projects reaching completion. ⁴	41	82	1	0

Data source: Program applications and approvals.

¹Water and wastewater infrastructure may be funded under the ICIP Green Infrastructure (Environmental Quality program) or Rural and Northern Communities streams.

²Community, culture and recreation infrastructure may be funded under the ICIP Community, Culture and Recreation, or Rural and Northern Communities streams.

³Community infrastructure that reduces greenhouse gas emissions using clean or renewable energy or that improve energy efficiency may be funded under the ICIP Green Infrastructure (CleanBC Communities Fund) stream.

⁴ICIP COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure stream projects must be substantially completed by December 31, 2023, or by December 31, 2024, for projects in designated remote communities. Project scope may include retrofits/repairs/upgrades to local government and Indigenous buildings, health or educational infrastructure, COVID-19 resilience infrastructure, active transportation, and disaster mitigation and adaptation infrastructure projects.

Discussion

The Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) cost-shares infrastructure investments between the governments of Canada and British Columbia, local governments and other partners over 10 years. Ministry of Municipal Affairs administers four of the five infrastructure funding streams: COVID-19 Resilience; Community, Culture and Recreation; Rural and Northern Communities; and Green Infrastructure (CleanBC Communities, Environmental Quality, and Adaptation, Resilience and Disaster Mitigation). Although application intakes have closed, construction of funded projects is expected to continue through 2027.

Projects typically take multiple years for planning, design and construction to be completed, with outcomes occurring after work has been completed. In the interim, the Ministry monitors funding and ensures accountability of projects through the review of regular progress reports, budget forecast reports and claims.

Performance Measure	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
2.2 Funded projects from local governments, indigenous communities, and non-profits funded under the Northern Healthy Communities Fund.	37	28	24	20

Data source: 1.3 Northern Development Initiative Trust (Deliver Agency) Program Tracking Documentation, Program Budget Allocation and LNG Canada/Coastal Gas Link Construction Schedule.

Discussion

The application-based \$25 million Northern Healthy Communities Fund (NHCF), administered by the Northern Development Initiative Trust, supports initiatives that assist communities to remain healthy, sustainable, and resilient in the face of rapid and large-scale economic development and associated need for enhanced social service readiness. Given the immediacy of the current economic development activities, the NHCF is focusing on communities adjacent to the LNG Canada and Coastal GasLink projects.

The Northern Healthy Communities Fund has recently funded an Indigenous Liaison Officer to work directly with Indigenous Communities that have previously not applied for or received funds from the program. The appointment of this position, as well as the implementation of a more formalized outreach program has resulted in an increase in the forecast number of projects.

Performance Measure	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
2.3 Funded Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program, Community Economic Resilience stream (CERIP-CER) projects that attain completion of community recovery-targeted infrastructure within program timeframe	20	10	N/A ¹	N/A ¹

Data source: Program applications and approvals

¹The Targets for 2024/25 and 2025/26 24/25-25/26 are N/A as this program was designed to respond to COVID-19 pandemic and only run from 2020/21, completed by March 31, 2024.

Discussion

While the overall number of CERIP projects remains consistent with the 2021/22-2023/24 Service Plan, targets were adjusted as project progress has been impacted by external factors (supply chain delays; labour issues; unexpected 3rd & 4th waves of pandemic; natural disasters) which have compromised proponents' ability to meet forecasted completion dates. Due to these factors, the program committee sought to give extension to projects with rationale; this year's (23/24) performance metric wraps up projects. Projects are still operating within the established program parameters. Prior to completion, the Ministry monitors funding and ensures accountability of projects through the review of regular progress reports, budget forecast reports and claims.

The ICIP COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream (CVRIS) funding is focused on building infrastructure that will help British Columbians with the significant health and socio-economic challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic by responding to the specific needs of communities. Once approved projects are completed, the new infrastructure will provide community members with expanded or improved services, as well as increased public safety. This will be achieved by encouraging outdoor activities through improvements to active transportation networks and recreation sites, and by completing upgrades to local government buildings to increase the ability to provide services while socially distancing during the pandemic.

Following completion of CERIP projects, the performance measure will be replaced with another metric supporting Goal 2, that communities and regions are resilient, with economies that work for British Columbians.

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

Objective 3.1: International talent helps to address B.C.'s skills need and support sustainable economic development in communities across the province.

Key Strategies

- Align immigration policies and programs to provincial priorities and community needs.
- Work with the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills to identify how immigration can best meet the skills needs of B.C.'s economy.
- Use B.C.'s Provincial Nominee Program (BC PNP) to help build a sustainable economy that creates opportunities for everyone by supplementing the workforce in occupations that the domestic workforce cannot fully supply by itself.
- Use the BC PNP to select nominees who will encourage regional development by settling in communities outside of major urban centers.
- 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.

Discussion

The BC PNP is the only tool available to the Province to directly select economic immigrants who will be coming to live and work in B.C. and create economic benefit.

The Province has prioritized applications from tech sector workers for the BC PNP since 2017. In 2022, this practice was expanded to support other sectors with skill shortages, such as workers in "care economy" (health care and early childhood education) occupations.

Historically, immigrants are attracted to major urban centres, but their skills and talents are needed across the province. Recent changes to the BC PNP enable the Province to focus more on meeting B.C.'s labour market needs in areas outside of the Metro Vancouver Regional District.

In addition, the BC PNP Entrepreneur Regional Pilot supports the attraction of foreign entrepreneurs proposing a new business in areas with less than 75,000 population. Communities from across the province are participating in this initiative, which will be in operation as a pilot program to March 2024.

Fully integrating newcomers into B.C.'s economy is essential for meeting the labour market needs over the coming decade. The Ministry supports the integration of newcomers through

settlement programs that help immigrants contribute their full potential to the province (see Objective 3.2).

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 organizations throughout B.C. to support their delivery of ongoing programs and services that meet the needs of their communities.
- 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.

Discussion

The Community Gaming Grants branch monitors its progress in distributing grant funds requested by not-for-profit organizations that have demonstrated community support over the course of the fiscal year so that all eligible applicants may benefit wherever they are located in the province. Past grant expenditures are reviewed for compliance with the terms and conditions as well as the intended use under which it was supplied.

Newcomers can face barriers when they first arrive in BC, ranging from labour market entry to connecting with their local communities. Services provided by the BC Settlement and Integration Services program support newcomers across the province to overcome these hurdles, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable newcomers such as refugee claimants and temporary workers. The Career Paths for Skilled Immigrants program seeks to address the issue of underemployment for skilled immigrants, ensuring that their pre-arrival skills and experience are utilized and key labour market occupations are targeted.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2021/22 Baseline	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
3.1 Percentage of BC Provincial Nominee Program nominees living and working in regional communities outside Metro Vancouver	24%	24%	26%	28%	30%

Data source: Internal Ministry of Municipal Affairs tracking

Discussion

The Province is planning for a long-term increase in the proportion of immigrants who live and work outside of Metro Vancouver.

An increase in the overall number of BC PNP nominations is anticipated over the next few years. Therefore, the absolute number of regional immigrants will increase even if the percentage share does not. For example, in the 2021-22 Fiscal Year, 1556 out of 6506 nominations made up the 24% regional share. In the 2022-23 Fiscal Year, the total number of nominations is expected to be approximately 6800, so a 24% regional share will amount to about 1632 nominations.

Performance Measure	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
3.2 Percentage of Career Paths Clients employed in their field upon program completion	70%	70%	70%	70%

Data source: Internal Ministry of Municipal Affairs tracking

Discussion

The impacts of COVID-19 on the immigration system began to stabilize in 2022, along with strong labour market growth but increased cost of living in BC. This impacted enrollment in the Career Paths for Skilled Immigrant program as some clients focused on immediate higher wage employment opportunities rather pursuing sometimes lengthy recredentialing processes. New, five-year contracts were put in place for the program in April 2022 and it is anticipated that this long-term stability will allow service providers delivering the program to build strong expertise to support clients. Through the changing landscape, the program continues to show strong client outcomes as outlined in the performance metric.

Financial Summary

Core Business Area	2022/23 Restated Estimates ¹	2023/24 Estimates	2024/25 Plan	2025/26 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Local Government ²	218,302	220,673	219,058	219,058
Immigration Services and Strategic Planning ³	17,780	25,717	38,706	40,065
Executive and Support Services	8,066	9,321	9,535	9,535
University Endowment Lands Administration Account	12,269	13,565	14,579	14,579
Total	256,417	269,276	281,878	283,237
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)				
Executive and Support Services	69	2	2	2
University Endowment Lands Administration Account	2,285	833	0	0
Total	2,354	835	2	2

¹ For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2022/23 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2023/24 Estimates.

² Local Government includes University Endowment Lands (UEL)

³ Immigration Services and Strategic Planning includes Strategic Planning, Immigration programs, Provincial Nominee Program and Community Gaming Grants

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

Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations

As of February 10, 2023 the Minister of Municipal Affairs is responsible and accountable for the following organizations:

Islands Trust Conservancy

The Islands Trust is a federated body established in 1974 under the *Islands Trust Act*. The Trust is responsible for planning and regulating land use and protecting special places throughout the Islands Trust Area. The Islands Trust Conservancy Board consists of three Islands Trust trustees and up to three members of the public appointed by the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Board of Examiners

The principal goal of the provincial Board of Examiners is to improve the professional skills of local government employees throughout British Columbia. The Board is responsible for awarding scholarships and certificates to local government employees who meet the standards of qualification in local government administration. The Board is appointed by the Lieutenant Governor on the recommendation of the Minister, based on the nomination of one member by each of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, the Local Government Management Association and the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

