

Ministry of Attorney General

2024/25 – 2026/27 Service Plan

February 2024



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Published by the Ministry of Attorney General

Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Attorney General 2024/25 – 2026/27 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, consisting of stylized initials and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Honourable Niki Sharma, K.C.
Attorney General
February 13, 2024

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Strategic Direction

In 2024/25, the Government of British Columbia will remain focused on providing the services and infrastructure that people depend on to build a good life. Government will continue delivering results that matter to British Columbians including helping people with costs, attainable and affordable housing, strengthened health care, safer communities, and a secure, clean, and fair economy. Government will continue working collaboratively with Indigenous Peoples as it implements the Action Plan for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and delivers initiatives that advance reconciliation in ways that make a difference in communities throughout the province.

This 2024/25 service plan outlines how the Ministry of Attorney General will support the government's priorities and selected action items identified in the [December 2022 Minister's Mandate Letter](#) and the [December 2022 Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives' Mandate Letter](#).

Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Attorney General and the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General work together as the justice and public safety sector to advance a shared vision of a safe, secure, just, and resilient British Columbia. The ministry works to keep communities safe and provide certainty, proportionality and, above all, fairness when dealing with criminal, civil, and family law matters and to protect people, especially those who are most vulnerable. The ministry, while dealing with these matters, is focused on promoting confidence in the integrity of the sector and ensuring continued public participation and support.

The ministry is responsible for sheriff and court administration services, legal aid, prosecution services, administrative tribunals, civil and family justice services, protection and promotion of human rights, providing legal advice to Government, and developing justice policy and justice reforms.

The ministry is also responsible for promoting multiculturalism and leading anti-racism initiatives through the Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives.

The recently established Indigenous Justice Secretariat, housed in the Ministry of Attorney General, is a unique commitment between the Province and the BC First Nations Justice Council to cement their relationship and commitment to decreasing the overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in the criminal justice system along two tracks of change: (1) Reform of the existing justice system; (2) Transformation through the rebuilding of Indigenous justice systems. The Indigenous Justice Secretariat was designed and implemented to build capacity toward an Indigenous-based justice system.

Operating Environment

In 2024/25, the Ministry of Attorney General will further modernize the justice system, through enhancing technology and supporting infrastructure that will facilitate increased access to justice. Modernization initiatives will increase Government's ability to provide timely access to justice, convenience to citizens, streamline processes, and support the Courts of British Columbia in continuous improvement of processes and services. Collectively, these efforts will respond to ongoing challenges resulting from case backlogs, delays resolving disputes and criminal cases, processes that are expensive for Government as well as for system users, and complex processes and procedures that act as a barrier to access. Many of today's justice processes developed incrementally, with an emphasis on the perspectives and capabilities of people working within the system. Modernization will shift the emphasis to also include the citizens attempting to access justice, in addition to those who have historically been unable to do so.

The ministry will build on previous work to make justice processes easier to navigate through increased access to modern, convenient, and reliable service options. The Traffic Court Online project offers an example of this work and could facilitate the modernization of other processes in the justice system. At the same time, where appropriate, it is necessary to continue to support and expand in-person services, as well as blended and hybrid services, such as those offered in our Family Justice Centres, Justice Access Centres, and Indigenous Justice Centres. The current and future success of these citizen-focused services can be influenced by a range of challenges, including technology procurement, the rapid aging of technology-based systems, the need for security and protection of sensitive information, and maintaining a high degree of skills and expertise to ensure access to the services, whether citizens interact digitally, or in-person.

Over the next fiscal year, the ministry will advance an array of legislative reform initiatives. Implementation of the Money Judgment Enforcement Act will significantly modernize and streamline the court order enforcement process, addressing current challenges faced by British Columbians who obtain a judgment from a court or tribunal saying they are owed money but where the other party refuses to pay voluntarily. The Family Law Act modernization project continues to engage citizens in looking at how the law can be modernized to respond to the needs of B.C.'s families, address divergent caselaw, and respond to gender-based violence. These initiatives contribute to the ministry's ongoing commitment to improving access to legal tools and public justice processes for citizens.

The ministry's Justice Services Branch (JSB) plays a critical role in the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (the "Declaration Act"), to ensure that the changes to the laws of B.C. within the ministry's mandate are aligned with the United Nations Declaration. JSB is uniquely placed, through its relationships with Indigenous partners and its expert knowledge of B.C.'s justice system to advance B.C.'s approach to legal pluralism, and to support the interface between Indigenous laws and legal institutions with B.C.'s laws and legal institutions. The diversity among Indigenous partners, ongoing changes to the law, the relative novelty of this new phase of collaboration, and the immense importance of this work

often combine to create an environment requiring extra time, resources, and responsiveness that is unique with respect to this area of work.

The ministry's Legal Services Branch (LSB) also plays a critical role in implementing the Declaration Act. This includes LSB internal training and facilitating cultural humility opportunities for staff, supporting interdisciplinary legal analysis, and participation in strategic meetings with external stakeholders. LSB supports training with clients, problem solving, and developing capacity within ministries to support their respective legislation and projects with respect to the Declaration Act. More recently, LSB created a team of bridging positions to help ensure a cross-branch and multidisciplinary approach to reconciliation. LSB also has an internal Indigenous Advisory Council to support Indigenous-led guidance and support to LSB operations. As the Province continues to emphasize achieving meaningful resolution to matters instead of litigation, LSB's role in facilitating that change is key.

With respect to the transformation of the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the justice system, the Indigenous Justice Secretariat leads the transformative work and implementation of the First Nations Justice Strategy ("the Strategy")¹ within Government, including influencing social sector areas that provide health and housing supports for individuals in the justice system. At the core of the Strategy is the rebuilding of First Nations justice systems as an expression of self determination. As such, the Indigenous Justice Secretariat has a vital role in supporting First Nations in that rebuilding work. This includes the Secretariat advancing changes within government to laws, policies, and practices that are directly responsive to what First Nations determine is needed for Strategy implementation and rebuilding of their justice systems. In addition, the Indigenous Justice Secretariat is responsible for cross-ministry implementation of the Strategy and operationalization of the identified priorities within Government. This includes implementation of the Declaration Act where it intersects with justice, as well as supporting relationships with the Province and Canada to advance jointly identified priorities, funding, and partnership opportunities where the Strategy aligns with provincial and federal mandates.

Following the announcement of the Safer Communities Action Plan, cross-sector collaboration resulted in the development and implementation of the Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative (ReVOII), with BC Prosecution Services (BCPS) assigning dedicated Crown Counsel and professional staff to its headquarters, high risk offender program, and five newly established regional ReVOII prosecution teams.² In 2024/25, BCPS personnel will continue to work in support of ReVOII, including participating in the overall program evaluation led by BC Corrections. Factors that may impact ministry work could include developments in the law; impacts of resource allocations to other Safer Communities Action Plan initiatives; willingness

¹ [BC First Nations Justice Strategy \(bcfnjc.com\)](https://bcfnjc.com)

² ReVOII serves as an enhanced case management model that is focused on prioritizing public safety through the coordinated management of risk a person presents to the community. Dedicated Crown Counsel and BCPS Professional Staff provide independent prosecutorial services and criminal law advice to local police agencies and the BC Corrections led ReVOII Community Hubs. ReVOII involves early intervention in cases involving prioritized individuals, along with enhanced information sharing from investigative agencies and BC Corrections that, in turn, allows Crown Counsel to make better informed decisions on charge assessment and prosecutions, including bail and sentencing.

of community stakeholders to participate and engage; resources constraints and delays within the Courts; stability of technology and use of virtual hearings; availability of resources within communities to assist offenders in breaking their offence cycle (i.e. housing, addictions treatment, mental health treatment); resources and delays in the forensic mental health system; and access to information from public safety partners.

Throughout 2024/25, the ministry will collaborate with internal and external partners and communities to advance core anti-racism initiatives, working to prevent racism and hate crime across the province. Within Government, the ministry will continue to develop cultural awareness, and encourage and foster a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion. This is in alignment with Call to Action #57 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, which calls upon governments to provide education and training to public servants on "skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism". Critical ministry work includes developing the anti-racism legislation and collaborating with the Ministry of Citizens' Services on implementation of the Anti-Racism Data Act. While the ministry remains steadfast in its vision of creating a fully inclusive society, this work is a long-term project that is subject to many factors outside of the ministry's control and will require commitment from all areas of British Columbia.

As a major component of the Declaration Act Action Plan, it was announced on April 22, 2022, that the ministry has implemented new Directives on Civil Litigation involving Indigenous Peoples. Developed collaboratively, these directives intend to better recognize the rights of Indigenous Peoples by reducing the number of lengthy court proceedings and enabling more negotiated resolutions, guided by recognizing and respecting Indigenous human rights, and implementing Aboriginal Rights. In this new approach to litigation involving Indigenous Peoples, factors that may impact ministry work could include developments in the law from the courts; impacts on negotiated resolutions from progress in the implementation of the UN Declaration; whether a party in litigation wants a court decision rather than a negotiated outcome; costs and timeliness of negotiating resolutions as opposed to proceeding through the court process; obtaining mandates for offers in negotiations; the number of new court proceedings commenced or dormant proceedings moving forward; the extent to which costs and complexity can be minimized by parties if proceedings do not settle; and legal counsel's cultural competency, understanding of Indigenous human rights and standards affirmed under the UN Declaration, s.35 rights, Crown obligations and the constitutional imperative of reconciliation.

Performance Planning

Goal 1: The justice sector is fair and accessible

A foundational underpinning of British Columbia's justice system is to be fair, navigable, and accessible for all.

Objective 1.1: Enhance the user experience and modernize the justice system

In ensuring the justice system is fair and accessible, the ministry will continually look to improve the experience of British Columbians interfacing with the justice system through service-design and offerings that are a part of the delivery of justice.

Key Strategies

- Advance the Courthouse Capital Asset Management Plan, including courthouse replacement and renovations, infrastructure remediation, WiFi expansion and facility enhancements across the province.
- Modernize the justice system for British Columbians through leveraging technology and user-centred design to assist users in navigating legal matters.
- Continue to improve early resolution services offered to families remotely and in-person at Family Justice Centres and Justice Access Centres.
- Support the 20 boards and tribunals accountable to the ministry with business operations, transformation, innovation, and modernization, including the Civil Resolution Tribunal, Mental Health Review Board, and BC Human Rights Tribunal, among others.
- Streamline the collection process for those who have obtained a court judgment or tribunal order for the payment of money, by continuing work to implement the Money Judgment Enforcement Act, which is expected to come into force in early 2025.

Discussion

Objective 1.1 reflects the ongoing efforts to orient justice system interactions around the experience of citizens who use it. While the ministry continues to explore increased reliance on technology and build on the lessons learned throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, considerable attention is also being directed toward simplifying or improving underlying processes and procedures. In some areas, new processes are being introduced to resolve issues without the emotional and monetary costs traditionally associated with the justice system. In addition to improving system efficiency, these new approaches are part of a strategic shift toward a modern justice system that will provide better outcomes and better serve British Columbians from all backgrounds.

Building on the successes from 2023/24, the ministry will continue to move forward in 2024/25 to improve the user experience, focusing on modernizing applications, continuous improvement, and innovation that supports virtual proceedings and virtual services,

enhancements to e-filing, online guided pathways, plain language, smart forms to help navigate the court system, system process improvements, online booking, online resolution of violation ticket disputes (Traffic Court Online), justice system process improvements, a Digital Evidence and Disclosure Management System, and technology deployment to support the Virtual Bail Initiative.

Objective 1.2: Increase access to justice

The ministry will continue to advance systemic regulatory and policy initiatives that serve to enhance the public's access to justice.

Key Strategies

- Advance the Legal Profession Act reform initiative, including implementation work, to create a single and modernized regulator for all legal service providers in the province, including lawyers, notaries public, and licensed paralegals.
- Further family justice reform initiatives, including support for those experiencing intimate partner violence, resolving disputes out of court, modernizing the Family Law Act, promoting the Child Support Recalculation Service, and working toward implementation of the 2007 Hague Child Support Convention.
- Continue to implement the Comprehensive Bail Program to expand access to justice through an improved bail hearing process for all justice participants.
- Support the delivery of legal aid services for low-income British Columbians through Legal Aid BC.
- In partnership with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, and the Ministry of Children and Family Development, implement the Rights Advice Service for patients who are involuntarily detained under the Mental Health Act.
- Work with Indigenous nations to increase their access to justice, including through implementation of Treaty Nation violation tickets in Spring 2024 and implementation of Cowichan Tribes' child welfare law in Spring 2024.

Discussion

This objective reflects work that will be undertaken in 2024/25 to reduce barriers for British Columbians who engage with the law or have their legal rights engaged, improving overall access to justice for those living at home and in the community. It also reflects steps being taken in the reconciliation process aimed at creating space in the justice system for Indigenous justice processes. Implementing Indigenous justice processes requires Indigenous law and B.C. law to work collaboratively.

Through ongoing initiatives like the Comprehensive Bail Program and the implementation of cross-ministry partnerships on the new Rights Advice Service, the ministry is working to expand access to justice across the province, while improving fairness and effectiveness. Much of the key strategies under this objective are focused on a broad spectrum of the population, including reforms aimed at increasing access to legal services. Through passing and implementing the Legal Profession Act reform initiative, the ministry will provide improved

access to legal services for British Columbians, through having a greater variety of options to assist with legal matters.

The ministry will build on its ongoing work of increasing access to justice for British Columbian families through an array of family justice reform initiatives. The ministry will continue supporting families in resolving their disputes out of court through parenting education, assessment, and mediation. The ministry will advance work on modernizing the Family Law Act, including undertaking engagement and policy development on issues pertaining to parenting, child centred decision-making, family violence, and protection orders. The ministry will also continue work on a potential prototype to support those experiencing intimate partner violence in navigating the court process.

The ministry will maintain momentum on facilitating access to child support, through further promotion of the Child Support Recalculation Service, an administrative service parties can enroll in to annually review and recalculate their child support obligations, in the event of a change in income, without having to return to court. Recent expansion of this initiative allows provincewide access. Furthermore, the ministry will work towards implementing the 2007 Hague Child Support Convention, an international treaty that applies to setting, changing, and enforcing child support duties when parents live in different countries. Ratification will increase the number of jurisdictions B.C. can work with regarding cross-border child support matters, making it easier to enforce and collect child support payments.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2019/20 Baseline	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target
[1a] Percentage of respondents who agreed that the Parenting After Separation program gave them a better understanding of the family justice system, including its relevant laws and services ¹	74%	91%	85%	85%	85%
[1b] Percentage of respondents who agreed that the program gave them a better understanding of alternatives to court ¹	75%	90%	85%	85%	85%
[1c] Percentage of respondents who agreed that the program gave them a better understanding of making decisions in the best interests of the children ¹	77%	94%	85%	85%	85%

Data source: [Parenting After Separation \(English and Punjabi\)](#) and [Parenting After Separation for Indigenous Families](#).

Participant evaluation surveys, conducted by Family Justice Services Division, with results compiled by Business Research and Diagnostics Group, Ministry of Attorney General

¹All information is presented in aggregate form to ensure respondent anonymity pursuant to provincial and federal legislation and research ethical guidelines. All data for this survey was collected and managed under PIA PSSG19023 and is consistent with the Tri Council Policy Statement on the Ethical Conduct of Research.

Discussion

The Parenting After Separation Programs are free online courses for B.C. parents and other family members who are dealing with separation or divorce and facing decisions about guardianship, parenting arrangements, contact, child support, and spousal support. Most parents complete the course as an early step in a provincial court matter. The Programs assist parents in making informed decisions around separation, ensuring decisions are in the best interests of their children, while improving access to justice for participants by providing them with information about the justice system and alternatives to court.

The online Parenting After Separation program was introduced in 2011 and revised in 2021. Online Parenting After Separation for Indigenous Families began in 2019, and online Parenting After Separation became available in Punjabi in 2023. As of January 4, 2022, the Provincial Court Family Rules require that parties to Family Law Matter applications complete a Parenting After Separation course before a family management conference with a judge can be scheduled. Parents who complete the online courses are invited to complete an anonymous online course evaluation form and results are compiled quarterly by the Business Research and Diagnostics Group of the Ministry of Attorney General.

This performance measure reflects how the Parenting After Separation Program facilitates user understanding of navigating the justice system. A target of 85 per cent agreement with these statements is a strong indicator that the program has been successful with a large majority of users. Targets reflect the expectation that there will be some fluctuation in results from year to year, but results should not fall below the stated levels.

Performance Measure	2019/20 Baseline	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target
[1d] Percentage of eFiled Court Documents ^{1,2,3}	35.7%	45.0%	46.0%	47.0%	48.0%

Data source: Strategic Information and Business Applications, Court Services Branch. Extracted on October 11, 2023.

1. Data are preliminary and subject to change - small fluctuations in previously reported totals and percentages are expected due to continuing improvements in data quality.
2. Documents in scope are those that are eligible for electronic filing (eFile) through Court Services Online.
3. This dataset excludes Supreme Motor Vehicle and Provincial Family documents. Supreme Court Motor Vehicle documents filed are expected to decline over the next three fiscal years after the implementation of ICBC Enhance Care Coverage and Provincial Family documents may be included once the audience for Provincial Family eFiling expands.

Discussion

The Court Services Branch and the three levels of Courts provide additional virtual mechanisms for users to interact with the Courts. This includes provisions for users to electronically file court documents through Court Services Online. The Percentage of eFiled Court Documents metric reflects the proportion of documents that are eligible for electronic filing that are eFiled through Court Services Online.

This performance measure demonstrates clear progress in the ministry’s focus on modernizing processes or court forms to enhance user experience when interfacing with the justice system. An uptake in the use of eFiling demonstrates that citizens are utilizing

alternative means offered by the ministry for advancing their court proceedings. The development or modernization of SmartForms, guided pathways within online applications using plain language, authentication methods, and document size capacity made the process easier for citizens to file electronically and continues to be a significant component in making court processes more accessible and navigable for British Columbians. The ministry recognizes, however, the role in-person filing will continue to play for some British Columbians, for those with different abilities, no access to technology, or the desire to access in-person services.

The forecast for 2023/24 suggests a slight increase over the previous fiscal year with an expected rate of 45 per cent of eligible documents eFiled.

Goal 2: British Columbian communities are protected and resilient

The justice sector plays a critical role in initiatives that help protect all British Columbians, including communities, vulnerable sectors, families, and racialized groups.

Objective 2.1: Improved community and public safety for all British Columbians

The ministry will contribute to a multi-faceted and cross-sectoral approach to protecting communities and individuals throughout the province. This will include addressing concerns about repeat violent offending, advancing legislation that protects vulnerable British Columbians, and implementing safe supports for family justice.

Key Strategies

- Dedicated BC Prosecution Service prosecutors and professional staff will continue to participate in the Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative.
- Implement new federally-funded pilot programs to support those experiencing intimate partner violence as they navigate the family justice system.
- Contribute to the implementation of the Province's gender-based violence action plan.

Discussion

Objective 2.1 reflects initiatives being taken across the ministry to enhance the safety of British Columbians in their communities. The ministry will support the Safer Communities Action Plan with dedicated Crown Counsel and staff working with police and corrections to make sure repeat offenders are dealt with according to law. As described in the Butler-LePard Report³, the factors that lead to repeat offending are complex and multifaceted, with personal and

³ In May 2022, the Province hired experts in mental health and policing, Amanda Butler and Doug LePard, to conduct a rapid investigation into the challenges of repeat offending and unprovoked, violent stranger attacks that some communities were facing, and recommend evidence-based solutions to keep people and communities safe. In September 2022, 28 recommendations were made in a full report. The report and recommendations can be viewed here: [Prolific Offender Report BCFNJC submission.pdf \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

social determinants playing a significant role in crime. The ministry acknowledges that federal criminal law and an independent judiciary determine whether accused persons should and will be detained in custody before trial.

Other key strategies in Objective 2.1 reflect the efforts being taken to ensure that everyone in British Columbia feels safe and secure in their home and community. The ministry is working to align its intimate partner violence legislation to better protect those that are vulnerable, while also taking steps regarding gender-based violence. This is being accomplished by ensuring that changes reflect the province's advocacy for a broad definition of violence, better protections when intimate partner violence is involved, and an increased ability for community impact to be considered in bail hearings. While some of this work is oriented toward a broad spectrum of people, other initiatives take a more specific focus on vulnerable populations, including efforts to address intimate partner violence and a provincial response to complement the federal ban on conversion therapy.

Objective 2.2: Address systemic racism and support Indigenous and other racialized communities to respond to public incidents of racism and hate

Advancing equity and social justice is the cornerstone of new strategies to combat racism, reduce systemic barriers, and build understanding and respect for one another across British Columbia's diverse society.

Key Strategies

- Introduce anti-racism legislation that better serves everyone in British Columbia.
- Work with the Ministry of Citizens' Services to implement the Anti-Racism Data Act, paving way for race-based data collection that is essential in dismantling systemic racism and improving public services and programs.
- Engage communities through the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network, multiculturalism grants, and related initiatives, to provide them with the information, supports, and training needed to respond to and prevent future incidents of racism.
- Address hate incidents in B.C. by creating a Racist Incident Helpline to report, track and provide supports to individuals harmed by racist incidents.
- Continue to address historical wrongs with formal apology to Sons of Freedom Doukhobor community and ongoing work with the National Association of Japanese Canadians.

Discussion

In 2024/25, the ministry will introduce anti-racism legislation. This legislation has been developed through close cooperation and consultation with Indigenous partners and communities to address Indigenous-specific racism and fulfils the commitment to Action 3.6 of the Declaration Act Action Plan. This work has also involved continuous collaboration with racialized communities and key partners such as the B.C. Human Rights Commissioner.

The ministry will also maintain ongoing community engagement through initiatives like the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network and the Racist Incident Helpline, ensuring robust support is available in training, prevention, and response to incidents of racism affecting Indigenous and racialized individuals.

Efforts are ongoing to provide support where possible to the Ministry of Citizens' Services in the implementation of the Anti-Racism Data Act. It is anticipated these endeavours will contribute to enhancing the ministry and province's capacity to identify potential areas for improvement and assess performance in addressing systemic racism.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2017/18 Baseline	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target
[2a] Number of B.C. communities engaged in projects that build intercultural trust and understanding, and reduce racism and systemic barriers	45	50	50	50	50

Data source: Internally compiled data from the BC Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Grants Program, and the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network.

Discussion

This performance measure reflects provincial support towards collaborative initiatives led by communities affected by racism. Community-led engagements build intercultural trust and understanding, combat racism, and promote diversity and inclusion in B.C. This is a core component of supporting Indigenous and racialized communities throughout B.C.

In 2022/2023, the ministry worked with communities affected by racism in the development of the Anti-Racism Data Act. As a result of this purposeful and direct contact with communities affected by racism to ensure their input in the development of the Anti-Racism Data Act, there was a significant increase from the baseline target of 45 to 60 in 2022/2023 until introduction of the Anti-Racism Data Act in June 2022. Targets have been readjusted back to 50 communities for future years.

Following the implementation of the Anti-Racism Data Act, the ministry will be able to leverage captured disaggregated race-based data to develop new performance measures that demonstrate progress in addressing systemic racism in Government.

Goal 3: The justice sector is safe and responsive to Indigenous Peoples

The justice sector will continue to contribute to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples through partnerships, facilitating restoration of traditional justice systems, and taking a more collaborative approach to litigation with Indigenous groups.

Objective 3.1: Facilitate self-determination and restoration of traditional Indigenous justice systems in partnership with Indigenous leadership and communities

Government has made commitments to reconciliation through the Declaration Act Action Plan and annual reporting processes. The ministry's actions in that plan aim to make the justice system safer and more responsive to Indigenous Peoples. This includes advancing the [BC First Nations Justice Strategy](#) which aims to reduce the overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in the justice system and restore and revitalize First Nations legal institutions. Further, advancing the Métis Justice Strategy will make the justice system safer and more culturally relevant for Métis people in B.C.

Key Strategies

- In partnership with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, the Federal Government, and Indigenous communities, continue work with the BC First Nations Justice Council to advance the B.C. First Nations Justice Strategy and work with the Métis Nation BC to develop, endorse, and advance the Métis Justice Strategy.
- Improve access to culturally appropriate justice services, including expanding the network of Indigenous Justice Centres to 15 centres by the end of 2024/25, in alignment with the BC First Nations Justice Strategy and the Safer Communities Action Plan.
- Continue the design of a new legal aid model for Indigenous Peoples and develop a comprehensive work plan to transfer control of legal aid services to the BC First Nations Justice Council.
- Reduce Indigenous over-representation in the criminal justice system through ongoing policy review and changes, justice sector employee education, expansion of Indigenous courts (new locations or additional dates at existing locations), and outreach and partnerships with Indigenous communities.
- In consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, continue reviewing and ensuring alignment of B.C. laws with UNDRIP for all statutes within the ministry's mandate including new and amending bills.
- Support the interface between Indigenous laws and legal institutions and B.C.'s laws and legal institutions. Work collaboratively with Nations to assist them in the enforcement of their laws in multiple areas including child welfare, offences, education, and debts.

Discussion

In partnership with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and the BC First Nations Justice Council, the Indigenous Justice Secretariat will continue work to advance the BC First Nations Justice Strategy.

Track 1 of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy works to reform the existing justice system to be safer and more responsive to Indigenous Peoples. This will be accomplished through opening additional Indigenous Justice Centres in 2024/25, continued delivery of Gladue Reports through the BC First Nations Justice Council, and progressing work to transition Indigenous legal aid services to the BC First Nations Justice Council from Legal Aid BC.

Track 2 of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy focuses on transformation through the rebuilding of Indigenous Justice Systems, consistent with the standards of the UN Declaration, through coordinated action to support the development of First Nations justice systems, and in particular, reflect the right of self-determination and the inherent right of self-government. In March 2023, through funding provided to the BC First Nations Justice Council, B.C. provided \$10 million in funding to support First Nations' community-based justice programs.

The ministries will also continue to work with Métis Nation BC to advance the Métis Justice Strategy to Provincial endorsement.

The BC First Nations Justice Strategy and Métis Justice Strategy are Indigenous-led and require ongoing collaboration with Indigenous partners.

The ministry will also continue to support and advance projects that recognize legal pluralism is fundamental to the jurisdiction and self-determination of Indigenous Peoples. Integration of Indigenous laws and legal institutions into British Columbia's legal system will improve access to justice for Indigenous Peoples and provide tools for and responses to legal issues in ways not adequately addressed through the existing British Columbian and Canadian legal system.

Objective 3.2: Advance reconciliation through use of the Directives on Civil Litigation involving Indigenous Peoples

While Indigenous claims can be pursued through litigation, negotiation is a preferable way of reconciling the complex and competing interests at stake. The core objectives are to prioritize and promote resolution, innovation, and negotiated settlement, in efforts to reduce the potential for litigation.

Key Strategies

- Continue to work with Indigenous Peoples on implementation of the Directives.
- Review active litigation to ensure the Directives are being implemented as intended, which may include making pleadings amendments.
- Work with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation on identifying potential avenues for negotiation of the dispute, such as forms of alternative dispute resolution.

- Seek early internal government meetings to discuss the possible effects of litigation on the work of reconciliation and try to identify collaborative ways to resolve all or part of the potential or newly filed legal proceedings.
- When litigation has concluded, meet with clients to discuss preventing similar litigation in the future; as well as debriefing with counsel for the Indigenous parties to identify potential areas for improvement.

Discussion

This objective reflects a major component of the ministry’s reconciliation commitments. On April 22, 2022, formal direction was issued to legal counsel working for the province on civil litigation involving Indigenous Peoples and their interests. The Directives were co-developed with the First Nations Leadership Council. The Directives are consistent with the 10 Draft Principles that Guide the Province of British Columbia’s Relationship with Indigenous People⁴, which reflect a desire to achieve government-to-government relationships based on respect, recognition and exercise of Aboriginal title and rights, and reconciliation of Aboriginal and Crown titles and jurisdictions.

The Directives are in response to the need to shift from patterns of lengthy and expensive litigation to cooperative implementation through effective relationships and negotiations, consistent with the articles of the UN Declaration. The court process is generally adversarial for the parties involved and provides limited capacity to deal with these complex issues. This often drives the parties further apart rather than advancing reconciliation. Traditional court processes can also be very damaging to the relationship between Indigenous and Crown parties. While some specific legal issues may get resolved (and the court process may be necessary for those purposes), the broader relationship may be significantly damaged, and the process of lasting reconciliation may not be advanced to any great degree. The Directives prioritize and promote resolution, innovation and negotiated settlement, and reduce the potential for traditional litigation.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2020/21 Baseline	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target
[3a] Number of cases from Indigenous Clients supported at Indigenous Justice Centres ^{1,2}	254	500	720	1000	1000
[3b] Number of Indigenous Clients served by Indigenous Justice Centres.	N/A	182	600	820	820

Data source: BC First Nations Justice Council

¹2023/2024 forecast based on based on year-to-date BCFNJC client, and case volume as of November 30, 2023.

² Future years forecast based on year-to-date BCFNJC client and case volume as of November 30, 2023, extrapolated to additional centres.

⁴ [Draft Principles that Guide the Province of British Columbia’s Relationship with Indigenous People \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/indigenous/draft-principles)

Discussion

The objective of improved outcomes for Indigenous Peoples in their interactions with the justice system will be met through more Indigenous clients receiving high quality legal and other services in a culturally safe and relevant way. Previous measures did not distinguish between the number of clients served and the number of cases opened, and/or referrals made for individuals who may not become a client of an Indigenous Justice Centre (IJC). In 2023/24 and moving forward, both figures will be measured and reported out on.

The targets in these performance measures were developed based on the current Indigenous Justice Centre caseloads and the planned opening of five additional IJCs in 2023/24. These targets will be adjusted when six additional IJC sites open in 2024/25, as the specific dates, sites, and target client volumes are not yet known. The BC First Nations Justice Council directly provides this data as the service provider.

The target measures are based on assumptions of usage at IJCs that are not yet open. These figures assume the forecasted staffing complement, opening dates, and community usage of services. The increase to target amounts for these measures is based on the expansion of the network of IJCs to 15 in person IJCs by end of 2024/25. Through 2022/23 there were only four in-person IJCs and one virtual IJC. In 2023/24, five new IJCs are opening in major urban areas. These IJCs employ more lawyers and support staff and are in more populated areas and are expected to serve more clients than the smaller IJCs previously opened. Six additional IJCs will be opened in 2024/25 bringing the total to 15 IJCs and one virtual IJC in the province.

Financial Summary

(\$000s)	2023/24 Restated Estimates ¹	2024/25 Estimates	2025/26 Plan	2026/27 Plan
Operating Expenses				
Justice Services	177,620	197,467	200,879	202,446
Indigenous Justice Secretariat	23,519	22,363	20,333	20,333
Prosecution Services	173,671	212,499	212,505	212,510
Court Services	148,684	156,067	156,133	156,198
Legal Services	32,267	40,682	40,682	40,682
Agencies, Boards, Commissions & other Tribunals	48,781	52,506	52,480	52,480
Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism	2,361	6,804	6,604	6,604
Executive and Support Services	37,110	40,936	40,482	40,482
Judiciary	93,617	110,671	110,809	110,956
<i>Crown Proceeding Act</i>	24,500	24,500	24,500	24,500
Independent Investigations Office	11,564	12,428	12,428	12,428
Public Guardian and Trustee Operating Account	0	0	0	0
Total	773,694	876,923	877,835	879,619
Capital Expenditures				
Agencies, Boards, Commissions & other Tribunals	10	10	10	10
Executive and Support Services	5,768	8,925	4,450	4,450
Judiciary	770	819	770	770
Public Guardian and Trustee Operating Account	363	363	363	363
Total	6,911	10,117	5,593	5,593

¹ For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2023/24 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2024/25 Estimates

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

Financial Summary: Electoral Boundaries Commission

While the Electoral Boundaries Commission operates independently from the Ministry of Attorney General, their expenditures report out as the responsibility of the ministry. Therefore, they are not considered one of the core business areas accountable to the Attorney General, but they are included in the Annual Report.

(\$000s)	2023/24			
	Restated Estimates ¹	2024/25 Estimates	2025/26 Plan	2026/27 Plan
Operating Expenses				
Electoral Boundaries Commission	147	0	0	0
Total	147	0	0	0

¹ For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2023/24 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2024/25 Estimates.

Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations

As of February 13, 2024, the Ministry of Attorney General is responsible and accountable for the following organizations:

- [Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of BC](#)
- [Association of BC Forest Professionals](#)
- [British Columbia Ferry Commission](#)
- [BC Family Maintenance Agency](#)
- [BC Human Rights Tribunal](#)
- [British Columbia Institute of Agrologists](#)
- [British Columbia Review Board](#)
- [British Columbia Utilities Commission](#)
- [Building Code Appeal Board](#)
- [Civil Resolution Tribunal](#)
- [College of Applied Biology](#)
- [Community Care and Assisted Living Appeal Board](#)
- [Employment Standards Tribunal](#)
- [Energy Resource Appeal Tribunal](#)
- [Engineers and Geoscientists BC](#)
- [Environmental Appeal Board](#)
- [Financial Services Tribunal](#)
- [Forest Appeals Commission](#)
- [Health Professions Review Board](#)
- [Hospital Appeal Board](#)
- [Independent Investigations Office of BC](#)
- [Investigation and Standards Office](#)
- [Judicial Council of the Provincial Court of BC](#)
- [Labour Relations Board](#)
- [Legal Aid BC](#)
- [Mental Health Review Board](#)

- [Notaries Public Board of Examiners](#)
- [Property Assessment Appeal Board](#)
- [Passenger Transportation Board⁵](#)
- [Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia](#)
- [Safety Standards Appeal Board](#)
- [Skilled Trades BC Appeal Board](#)
- [Surface Rights Board](#)
- [Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal](#)

⁵ The Passenger Transportation Board will transfer from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to the Ministry of Attorney General, effective April 1, 2024.

