

# Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness

## 2024/25 – 2026/27 Service Plan

February 2024



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## Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness 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 blue ink that reads "Bowinn".

Honourable Bowinn Ma  
Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness  
February 9, 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 Emergency Management and Climate Readiness will support the government's priorities including the foundational principles listed above and selected action items identified in the [December 2022 Minister's Mandate Letter](#).

## Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (the Ministry) is responsible to British Columbians as the primary coordinating agency for reducing climate risk impacts and responding to provincial-level emergencies and disasters. The Ministry works to advance the vision of a disaster resilient British Columbia.

The mission of the Ministry is to lead provincial emergency and disaster risk management, build and foster collaborative relationships and partnerships, advance meaningful and lasting reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, and support all people in British Columbia to reduce climate and disaster risk.

The Ministry is responsible for providing cross-ministry coordination to enhance British Columbia's readiness and resilience towards climate and disaster risks and working towards a comprehensive and interconnected approach to achieving climate and disaster risk reduction. The Ministry leads provincial emergency management through the four-phased approach of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery in close collaboration with First Nations, local authorities, other provinces and territories, federal departments, industry, non-governmental organizations, and volunteers. Delivery of the Ministry's mandate is supported by the [Emergency and Disaster Management Act](#).

## Operating Environment

In recent years, British Columbia has seen an increase in climate risks and extreme weather events – including extreme heat, extreme cold, flood, fire, and drought. British Columbia is also at greater seismic risk compared with other parts of the country and must be prepared to manage the devastating effects of a large earthquake or tsunami. Additionally, the uncertainty of when British Columbia will experience an emergency or disaster, and the variable severity of yearly hazard seasons, poses significant risk to government's fiscal plan and the people of B.C.

As the Province's lead for emergency preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery, the Ministry will focus on lessons learned from past emergencies and disasters, build capacity to recover and be resilient in the face of current disaster and climate risk, and prepare for hazards in a way that mitigates the risk of future emergencies.

With the increase in extreme weather events in recent years, the Ministry has experienced an increasing demand from local authorities and First Nations for emergency preparedness, mitigation planning, and response and recovery supports. The Ministry will continue internal planning to ensure resources are effectively managed and allocated in the event of an emergency, and that the delivery of services, programs, and supports are not adversely affected and meet the urgent need of people and communities.

The Ministry will also continue working to sustain a robust organizational structure with the capacity and skills to deliver on its mandate and to support organizational excellence. Navigating B.C.'s competitive labour market remains a challenge and the Ministry will continue to explore and implement new approaches to recruit, retain, and develop staff, while also fostering a learning culture that aims to establish internal capacity with the necessary specialized and technical skillsets.

## Performance Planning

### **Goal 1: B.C.'s strategies and systems reduce the impacts of climate-driven hazards and other emergencies and disasters.**

Effective systems, proactive strategies, and planning can help reduce the impacts of climate-related hazards and other emergencies and disasters on people, communities, infrastructure, the environment, and the economy when they occur.

#### **Objective 1.1: Lead provincial coordination for disaster risk reduction and climate readiness initiatives to improve awareness and transparency, increase resilience, and build back better from disasters.**

As the Province's lead agency responsible for climate readiness and disaster risk reduction, the Ministry coordinates across the provincial government and with external partners to bring together expertise to develop plans and strategies. These plans help ensure B.C.'s communities, economy, and infrastructure are prepared to meet the challenges of a changing climate and other emergency events.

#### **Key Strategies**

- Lead cross-ministry coordination and provide guidance to ministries and collaborate with federal, local, and Indigenous governments to deliver risk reduction and resilience initiatives.
- Develop a Provincial Disaster and Climate Risk Reduction Plan that assesses risk priorities and systematically coordinates and implements cross-government interventions consistent with those priorities.
- Update the Province's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, inclusive of all four phases of emergency management, to better prepare British Columbia for disasters and emergencies in partnership with ministries, Indigenous governments, local authorities, and critical infrastructure partners.
- Work across ministries to help maintain the overall provincial business continuity program, including ministry plans that address infrastructure and services that governments, people, and businesses rely on, and continuity of government operations following an emergency or disaster.

#### **Discussion**

As the Province's lead for emergency and disaster risk management, the Ministry will continue to work across the provincial government to advance emergency preparedness and risk reduction. This includes working with the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship to strengthen the province's flood resilience through completion of the [B.C. Flood Strategy](#), and accelerate improvement of B.C.'s communication, planning, response, and mitigation of water

scarcity and drought conditions; the Ministry of Agriculture and Food to enhance the sustainability and reliability of B.C.'s food system during emergencies, recognizing the importance of the province's food system to a secure, clean, and fair economy; the Ministry of Forests to support the BC Wildfire Service to reduce wildfire risk and prepare communities for wildfire; and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy to implement the [Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy Actions for 2022-2025](#), including provincial and regional Disaster and Climate Risk and Resilience Assessments (previously referred to as Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Assessments).

Building off the Disaster and Climate Risk and Resilience Assessments (DCRRA), the Ministry will begin the development of a Provincial Disaster and Climate Risk Reduction Plan. This plan will be informed by the DCRRA results and associated consultation and cooperation with Indigenous governing bodies, align with the *Emergency and Disaster Management Act*, and consider the responsibilities delegated to B.C. ministries, local governments, and critical infrastructure owners and operators.

The *Emergency and Disaster Management Act* also outlines new requirements for the Province's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP). The Ministry will begin to update the CEMP to advance a four-phase and all-hazard approach to Provincial emergency management in alignment with the [United Nations' Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030](#).

The Ministry will advance all of government business continuity, now enshrined as a priority requirement in the *Emergency and Disaster Management Act*, through the Provincial Business Continuity Program. In 2024/25 the Ministry will establish a Critical Services Framework and identify, with ministry partners, a Critical Services Prioritization list for business continuity during emergencies.

Lessons learned in helping communities recover will also be applied in future disaster mitigation planning and actions. The Ministry will work with the federal government to inform the development of a national flood insurance program and modernize the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements program.

In collaboration with the federal government and other provinces, the Ministry will also contribute towards a civilian workforce review for response and recovery to support non-government organizations in building and maintaining a humanitarian workforce to provide surge support in response to the pandemic and other large-scale emergency events.

## **Objective 1.2: Champion evidence-based approaches across the B.C. government to identify and reduce disaster and climate risks and invest in disaster risk reduction.**

The Province is developing a more proactive approach to disaster risk reduction informed by Indigenous and local knowledge, climate change scenarios, equity considerations, and lessons learned from past events. Using global best practices and reliable data and information, the Ministry will lead cross-government efforts aimed at enhancing the province's ability to



withstand future disasters and minimize impacts to people, communities, the economy, and the environment.

### **Key Strategies**

- In partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, and in collaboration with communities and Indigenous Peoples, advance B.C.'s commitments to the Sendai Framework by leading the development of provincial and regional Disaster and Climate Risk and Resilience Assessments that build on B.C.'s [Preliminary Strategic Climate Risk Assessment](#) and integrates climate and disaster risk.
- Advance disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation in B.C. by providing funding programs for First Nations and local authorities to undertake emergency preparedness and disaster mitigation planning and projects.
- Develop partnerships with post-secondary institutions, Indigenous organizations, non-government organizations, and other emergency management organizations and jurisdictions to support continuous improvement of the Province's emergency preparedness management and disaster risk reduction strategies.
- Implement the recommendations of the Premier's Expert Task Force on Emergencies and enhance preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery to better support people on the front lines of emergencies.

### **Discussion**

Assessing provincial and regional disaster and climate risk is an important step towards disaster risk reduction and supports evidence-based decision-making towards the Province's investments in emergency preparedness and mitigation. The *Emergency and Disaster Management Act* outlines new requirements for risk assessments to include the effects of climate change, local and Indigenous knowledges where available, and consideration of vulnerable people, animals, places, or things. The provincial and regional DCRRAs will incorporate these new requirements and result in new information, methods, and guidance for future risk assessments undertaken by local authorities, critical infrastructure owners, and others.

Over the coming year, the Ministry will continue to invest in disaster risk reduction through different funding programs. These include the [Community Emergency Preparedness Fund](#) (CEPF), administered by the Union of BC Municipalities, which funds projects that help First Nations and local authorities prepare communities for the risks of natural hazards and climate change and lessen the effects before disasters happen.

The Ministry will also continue to administer funding for Indigenous governments and local authorities via the [Green Infrastructure Adaptation, Resilience & Disaster Mitigation](#) sub-stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (Green ARDM). The Green ARDM program is a Federal and Provincial cost sharing program that supports projects that increase structural capacity and/or increased natural capacity to mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts, natural disasters, and/or extreme weather events with the intent of reducing, or even negating, the effects of flooding.

In October 2023, the Province launched the Premier’s Expert Task Force on Emergencies to develop action-oriented recommendations to improve preparedness and response for the anticipated 2024 emergency season. The task force is co-chaired by The Ministry and the Ministry of Forests, and consists of representatives from the Premier’s Office, the BC Wildfire Service, the Ministry, Indigenous and local authority leadership, and other external experts.

The Ministry will work to ensure that the recommendations developed by the Premier’s Task Force are actioned in advance of, and for implementation in, the 2024 wildfire season. This includes enhancing the Evacuee Registration Assistance tool, modernizing community delivery of Emergency Support Services, and identifying opportunities to assist First Nations and local authorities improve evacuation orders and alerts awareness and compliance.

## Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target
1.1 Provincial and regional risk assessments developed	<p>Foundational risk assessment methodology completed.</p> <p>Initiate a joint provincial scale Disaster and Climate Risk and Resilience Assessment (DCRRA) in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ENV) and developed in collaboration with First Nations partners.</p>	<p>Complete and publish the provincial scale DCRRA.</p> <p>Initiate regional scale DCRRA in partnership with ENV and developed in collaboration with First Nations partners.</p> <p>Initiate the development of a Provincial Disaster and Climate Risk Reduction Plan in partnership with ENV.</p>	<p>Complete and publish the regional scale DCRRA.</p> <p>Complete and publish a Provincial Disaster and Climate Risk Reduction Plan.</p>	TBD <sup>1</sup>

Data source: Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness and Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, Manually compiled.

<sup>1</sup> Targets for 2026/27 will be determined in future service plans.

## Discussion

This performance measure tracks the Ministry’s progress toward completing provincial and regional DCRRAs in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy. In 2023/24 the Ministry completed development of the risk assessment methodology and, in collaboration with First Nations partners and through engagement with partners, selected hazards to assess in this phase of work. These include coastal and riverine flooding, extreme heat, drought, wildfire, earthquake, and a scenario of cascading and compounding risks. The Ministry will establish a First Nations advisory group for the risk assessment and a

series of working groups involving subject matter experts from Indigenous organizations, provincial ministries, academia, and non-governmental organizations to assess risk and resilience for each hazard. The Ministry is targeting Summer 2024 for release of the provincial DCRRA on [ClimateReadyBC](#). The provincial DCRRA will inform the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and Provincial Disaster and Climate Risk Reduction Plan.

Following completion of the provincial DCRRA, the Ministry will continue collaboration with First Nations partners and engagement with local authorities and other partners to complete regional DCRRA's. These assessments will focus on hazards and values that are priorities for each region. Regions will be defined by watersheds and First Nations language groups. Results of these assessments will also be made available on ClimateReadyBC and will support local authorities and critical infrastructure owners to complete risk assessments as required under the *Emergency and Disaster Management Act* and associated regulations. Regional and local risk assessment results will inform development of emergency management plans and prioritization of investments in disaster mitigation.

The Ministry does not have a target for the 2026/27 fiscal year. On-going programming to undertake and support disaster and climate risk assessments will be linked to new requirements in the *Emergency and Disaster Management Act* and future year targets will be determined in future service plans.

## **Goal 2: Indigenous Peoples are true partners and leaders in emergency and disaster risk management.**

In line with the B.C. Government's commitments to true and lasting reconciliation, the Ministry will include First Nations in all four phases of emergency management and improve the cultural safety of emergency services provided to Indigenous Peoples.

### **Objective 2.1: Include First Nations in all phases of emergency management, including all levels of planning, decision making, and implementation.**

Effective emergency management requires involvement and expertise of First Nations and Indigenous organizations across B.C. The Ministry will work with Indigenous governing bodies through government-to-government relationships to foster shared leadership across all phases of emergency management, including mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, to build their future resilience.

#### **Key Strategies**

- Build emergency management partnerships and agreements with Indigenous organizations to strengthen emergency and disaster risk management knowledge, capacity, and practices.
- Enhance First Nations emergency management capacity by working with the federal government and the First Nations Leadership Council, who are directly engaging First Nations communities, to replace the current bi-lateral service agreement with a new

multi-lateral service agreement for the delivery of emergency management services on reserve lands.

- Support the advancement of Indigenous-led disaster risk management priorities that reduce risks to communities and consider future climate conditions.
- Develop, negotiate, and implement new emergency management government-to-government agreements with Indigenous governing bodies enabled through the *Emergency and Disaster Management Act*.

## Discussion

Recognizing the importance of Indigenous knowledge for effective emergency management and the increased risk of climate-related emergencies in rural and remote communities, the Ministry will work to establish First Nations as true partners and encourage collaboration with local authorities across all phases of emergency management. These relationships will be based on a foundation of respect and humility, and cultural sensitivity.

The Ministry will also work with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) to replace the current bi-lateral agreement, signed in 2017, to deliver emergency management services on First Nations reserves equitable to services delivered to local governments across all four phases of emergency management – mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

Due to the increasing scope, scale, and frequency of emergency management events impacting communities over the past several years, First Nations communities have signalled an urgent need to modernize the current approach to service delivery and replace the current bilateral service agreement with a new multilateral agreement that better serves the unique needs of First Nations and aligns with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

The Ministry will also continue to advance flood mitigation in the Nooksack River and Sumas River Watersheds through the Transboundary Flood Initiative. This initiative represents a multi-government agreement between the Sumas, Matsqui, and Leq'á:mel First Nations, the Nooksack Indian Tribe, Lummi Nation, the City of Abbotsford, and Whatcom County, Washington and advances a collaborative framework to identify and pursue actions for flood-risk reduction and habitat restoration.

The Ministry will also work to make the Sumas Prairie more resilient to flooding through the Sumas River Flood Mitigation Collaborative Framework. The Ministry will work closely with the Semá:th, Matsqui, and Leq'á:mel First Nations, the City of Abbotsford, and the City of Chilliwack to support the design of mitigation projects in the Sumas River watershed and timely delivery of watershed recovery programs that benefit people and the farming community and protect infrastructure.

## **Objective 2.2: Better shape the delivery of services to Indigenous Peoples to consider both the needs and the cultural perspectives of individual members and communities.**

Actions and decisions taken by the Ministry will be guided by the B.C. Government's commitment to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Ministry recognizes the diversity of First Nations in British Columbia and respects self-determination of Indigenous Peoples. Services, programs, and training will be sustained to improve cultural awareness and sensitivity.

### **Key Strategies**

- Deliver emergency management services and supports guided by the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action that enable in-person connection with community leaders, knowledge keepers, and recovery leads and incorporate cultural safety and humility.
- Support capacity building and training through regional and provincial emergency management meetings and forums and First Nations' Emergency Services Society.
- Provide coordinated provincial, federal, and Indigenous partner emergency management services through the Multi Agency Support Team initiative.
- Facilitate an Indigenous Agency Working Group to promote situational awareness and support response to communities during emergency events.

### **Discussion**

Lessons learned following recent devastating provincial emergencies have highlighted the importance of establishing First Nations as true partners and leaders during all phases of emergency management.

The Ministry will continue to support capacity building and training through regional and provincial emergency management meetings and forums. The First Nations Emergency Management Partnership Tables (Partnership Tables) began in 2018 to offer a regional forum for First Nations emergency managers to build relationships, share knowledge and conduct training, as well as guide service-delivery efforts supported by the Ministry, ISC, and other key Indigenous service providers. Additionally, the annual Emergency Management Forum, supported by the Ministry, ISC, and FNLC provides a provincial forum for First Nations to share their lived experiences, learn from best practice, and share policy and funding updates.

Once a new multi-lateral service agreement is negotiated, the Ministry, ISC, and FNLC will be reassessing the current approach to both the Partnership Tables and the Emergency Management Forum to find opportunities for greater collaboration and alignment, based on feedback from First Nations communities. It is anticipated a new model will be introduced in the 2024/25 fiscal year.

The Ministry will also work with First Nations support organizations – including First Nations' Emergency Services Society, First Nations Health Authority, and ISC – and the Ministry of

Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation through the Multi Agency Support Team (MAST) initiative to collaborate with impacted First Nations communities during emergency events and as required during recovery.

MAST provides timely and integrated support to impacted First Nations communities, an enhanced understanding of the most urgent needs, and provides immediate supports where possible. MAST also prioritizes face-to-face communications and increases community access and understanding of wise practices, information, and response options to ensure decisions are made in an informed way.

## Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target
2.1 Number of new Indigenous Emergency Management Agreements	0	2	5	5

Data source: Partnerships, Engagement and Legislation Division, Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness

## Discussion

The *Emergency and Disaster Management Act* includes an agreements framework that supports reconciliation, self-determination and self-government, and decision-making. The Ministry's approach to agreement development and implementation meets the objective of working towards Indigenous Peoples being full partners in emergency management, supports implementing the agreement framework, and advances the principles in the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

This performance measure, new to the 2024/25 – 2026/27 Service Plan, tracks the number of new Indigenous Emergency Management Agreements between Indigenous governing bodies and the Province enabled by the *Emergency and Disaster Management Act* that came into force in November 2023. The Ministry will work closely with First Nations to collaboratively develop an agreements process and learn where there is interest in agreements. The Ministry has set a target of two new Indigenous Emergency Management agreements for the 2024/25 fiscal year and aims to increase the number of agreements in future years.

Types of agreements include Collaborative Emergency Management Agreements, Joint Decision-Making Agreements for Emergency Management, and Coordination Agreements.

Collaborative Emergency Management Agreements (CEMAs) create a structure for collaboration to ensure that First Nations are at the table and informing decisions that affect them, their families, and their territories, while prioritizing the importance of cultural safety and Indigenous knowledge in wildfire and emergency management. The Ministry will advance discussions with First Nations communities in high-risk areas that have an interest in entering CEMAs or other types of agreements.

The *Emergency and Disaster Management Act* enables Joint Decision-Making and Consent-Based agreements between Indigenous governing bodies and the Province. Statutory powers or statutory powers of decision under the *Emergency and Disaster Management Act* are based on Section 6 and 7 of the *Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

Coordination Agreements are also enabled by the *Emergency and Disaster Management Act* and recognize that Indigenous Peoples may exercise authorities, or have Indigenous laws related to response and recovery actions, in parallel to other governments' authorities and laws. By agreement, provincial decision makers in exercising statutory powers or powers of decision could exercise those powers in a coordinated manner respectful of Indigenous Governing Body preferences, and respectful of Indigenous law, or parties can harmonize and coordinate plans, policies, and programs.

### **Goal 3: B.C. has modernized and enhanced emergency management in all four phases (prepare, mitigate, respond, and recover).**

Government is expected to follow modern and effective practices in emergency management. This goal addresses the Ministry's role in supporting Indigenous communities, local authorities, and individuals to prepare for emergencies, mitigate the risks of a changing climate, respond to disasters, and recover quickly after they occur.

#### **Objective 3.1: Modernize B.C.'s emergency and disaster risk management legislation.**

Modernizing the Province's emergency management legislation is a crucial step in implementing the Sendai Framework, emphasizing the importance of disaster risk reduction, and strengthening the four phases of emergency management – mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

#### **Key Strategies**

- Work with Indigenous partners, local authorities, and other organizations and interest groups to support the implementation of the *Emergency and Disaster Management Act* and promote effective coordination, collaboration, and information sharing among partners.
- Support regulated entities in implementing new Indigenous engagement obligations required under the *Emergency and Disaster Management Act*.
- In accordance with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, consult and cooperate with First Nations in the development of emergency management regulations.

#### **Discussion**

Over the fiscal year, the Ministry will continue to support implementation of the *Emergency and Disaster Management Act*, working with First Nations, local authorities, and other organizations

and interest groups. This will include providing guidance and supports in relation to new and changed aspects of the legislative framework.

The *Emergency and Disaster Management Act* outlines engagement obligations that require local authorities, the Province, and critical infrastructure operators to consult and cooperate, engage and cooperate with Indigenous governing bodies, and incorporate cultural safety and available Indigenous knowledge into risk assessments and emergency management plans. Additionally, for the response and recovery phases, consultation and cooperation with Indigenous governing bodies are required when a municipality or regional district plans to use certain land-based response or recovery powers.

The objective of consultation and cooperation with Indigenous governing bodies is to obtain free, prior, and informed consent, consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Municipalities and regional districts must adopt this as the standard, make every effort to achieve it, and reflect it in their approach when they engage with Indigenous governing bodies.

To support this work, the Ministry has released an [Indigenous Engagement Requirements Interim Guidance document](#) to outline the general engagement requirements with Indigenous governing bodies. Further guidance related to Indigenous engagement requirements is expected to be released in Spring 2024.

Additionally, the Province is providing \$18 million to First Nations, municipalities, and regional districts to support the implementation of Indigenous engagement requirements. The funding will be used to support relationship-building across jurisdictions through consultation and cooperation with Indigenous governing bodies and ensure the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and cultural safety across emergency management practices. The funding also supports policy improvements that reflect the lived experience of Indigenous Peoples and address the disproportionate effects on Indigenous Peoples during emergency events.

The Ministry will also continue development of supporting regulations. In accordance with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and Declaration Act Secretariat's Interim Approach to Implement the Requirements of Section 3, the Ministry will consult and cooperate with First Nations as a key aspect of developing new regulations. The Ministry will also engage with many other partner groups such as local governments, critical infrastructure owners, Indigenous organizations, and non-governmental organizations. Work in 2024/2025 will focus on regulations related to provincial ministries, local authorities, and post-emergency financial assistance.



### **Objective 3.2: Support Indigenous communities, local authorities, and individuals to access the tools and resources needed to manage emergencies and disasters in alignment with local conditions and needs.**

The Province plays a key role in providing programs, systems, and resources that people need to prepare themselves and their communities for disasters and manage emergencies when they occur.

#### **Key Strategies**

- Continue to expand the [ClimateReadyBC](#) platform with new and current hazard data and resources to guide the public and communities on disaster and climate readiness strategies and supports.
- Expand public education initiatives, such as the [PreparedBC](#) program, and deepen engagement with partners to increase awareness of emergency preparedness across British Columbia, focusing on inclusive and culturally appropriate resources.
- Continue to evolve the public alerting system to enhance First Nations and local authority preparedness and response.
- Enhance catastrophic earthquake preparedness in collaboration with partners through the ongoing development of plans, training, exercises, and public education.

#### **Discussion**

By providing tools, resources, and education, people and communities can mitigate risks and better prepare for emergencies and disasters.

ClimateReadyBC, a disaster and climate risk reduction resource hub, will be expanded over the coming year. The Ministry will continue engagement with Indigenous Peoples, local authorities, and other organizations to improve the platform, make it more accessible, and incorporate local and Indigenous knowledge. The provincial DCRRA will also inform the development of new content, including new and refreshed data, maps, and tools.

PreparedBC, the Province's emergency preparedness education program, will continue to increase the resilience of British Columbians by providing accurate, meaningful, and relevant emergency preparedness information, and support Indigenous communities, local authorities, and other partners in their preparedness efforts and actions. This will be achieved by increasing public outreach opportunities, improving preparedness education programming for youth, and exploring opportunities to modernize service delivery, such as the use of interactive online tools.

The Ministry will continue to evolve the public alerting system in collaboration with First Nations and local authorities to help people make informed decisions. The Ministry will also collaborate with federal-provincial-territorial alerting partners and help educate the public about the public alerting system.

### **Objective 3.3: Support urgent coordinated government response and recovery to communities in times of emergency.**

The Ministry will apply lessons learned from past events and support a coordinated emergency and disaster response and recovery efforts to improve outcomes for people and communities.

#### **Key Strategies**

- Continue to support the province-wide response and recovery from the widespread damage caused by severe events, such as wildfire, flooding, drought, and landslides in B.C.
- Enhance emergency management program and service delivery through lessons learned, systems reviews, and by promoting a culture of continuous improvement.
- Enhance awareness and modernize Emergency Support Services and Disaster Financial Assistance to improve accessibility and operating efficiency to better support communities and individuals impacted by disasters.
- Continue to work closely with the Public Safety Lifeline Volunteer groups in support of response related efforts.
- Maintain specialized regional emergency management partnership agreements with local authorities, and cross-border arrangements and agreements with key groups, aimed at enhancing B.C.'s preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation efforts for disasters.

#### **Discussion**

Climate-related emergencies are growing in scope, scale, and duration in British Columbia. The Ministry will continue to support people and communities impacted by past emergencies and disasters, and apply lessons learned from past events to improve programs and service delivery.

The Ministry will work to enhance community recovery readiness by supporting post-secondary and other education recovery programs, contractors and non-governmental organizations specializing in recovery, and local and First Nations governments. This also includes corporate supply agreements that enable communities to access recovery supports more easily through established channels and drive competition in the private sphere of recovery, honing expertise, and stabilizing the cost of recovery supports. The Ministry will also work with educational institutions to develop training for both communities and the public sector to undertake recovery.

Over the fiscal year, the Ministry will work towards enhancing awareness and modernizing Emergency Support Services (ESS) and Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA). Key actions include continuing the support to local authorities and First Nations to transition to the Evacuee Registration and Assistance tool, integrating cultural safety in the delivery of ESS, and reviewing policies to assess equity and disproportionate impacts. The Ministry will also establish a reliable communications hub for evacuees to access information and improve awareness and improve capacity to process DFA applications and appeals in a timely manner.

The Ministry will continue to actively promote agreements and relationships that enhance coordination and information sharing during the four phases of emergency management. This includes ongoing work to support strategic planning and steering committee meetings for the Integrated Partnership for Regional Emergency Management in Metro Vancouver, which supports improved coordination of emergency management planning and streamlined communication with municipalities and First Nations in the Metro Vancouver region. Similarly, work will continue to support the Regional Emergency Management Partnership in the Capital Region.

Additionally, EMCR will work with partners to develop tools to support Indigenous governing bodies and local authorities with establishing multijurisdictional emergency management organizations enabled under the *Emergency and Disaster Management Act*.

### Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2022/23 Baseline	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target
3.1 Percentage of eligible communities onboarded and utilizing the Evacuee Registration and Assistance (ERA) tool	35%	50%	75%	95%	95%

Data source: Regional Operations Division, Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness

### Discussion

The ERA tool, a digital platform that supports ESS, increases the efficiency and speed of service delivery and payments for evacuees. ERA enables the ability to transfer funds directly to evacuees for things like food and incidentals and provides evacuees with increased ability to make decisions that align with their personal preferences, culture, and health needs.

The Ministry has completed significant engagement with communities regarding further modernization of community supports and digital transformation. Modernized ESS service delivery reflects the need to respond to more complex and longer duration emergency events and demonstrates the Ministry’s progress on strengthening community resilience and providing rapid response when disasters occur. ERA also allows communities from across the province to remotely provide supports to evacuees during large-scale events and streamlines renewal of supports when needed to support lengthy emergencies.

The Ministry has set a baseline of 35% for this measure, representing the percentage of eligible communities onboarded and utilizing the tool in the first year after launch in 2022/23. The Ministry has set a target of 75% of eligible communities onboarded and utilizing the ERA tool for the 2024/25 fiscal year and aims to increase the percentage to 95% by 2025/26. The Ministry set and is working towards these targets through the promotion of the value of the tool and providing training and support. Achievement of the target is limited by community uptake as it is voluntary.

In 2024/25, the Ministry will continue to engage with communities to onboard and train on the ERA tool and work closely with communities to encourage adoption and highlight the value proposition of the tool. The Ministry will also continue to work with Indigenous communities and other partners to ensure the program is administered in a culturally safe manner and meets the needs of those receiving support.

<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>2022/23 Baseline</b>	<b>2023/24 Forecast<sup>2,3</sup></b>	<b>2024/25 Target<sup>2,4</sup></b>	<b>2025/26 Target<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>2026/27 Target<sup>2</sup></b>
3.2 Percentage of complete Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) private applications processed within 90 days	25% <sup>1</sup>	TBC	60%	75%	90%

Data source: Disaster Recovery Division, Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness

<sup>1</sup> Baseline does not use the same methodology as targets. Baseline includes all applications for the Atmospheric River event that were processed up to September 28, 2022. This includes incomplete applications that required additional information from the applicant before assessment.

<sup>2</sup> Forecast and targets do not include incomplete applications received that were delayed awaiting supporting information from the applicant.

<sup>3</sup> DFA Digital Portal completed in Fall 2023 for homeowners and tenants (2 of 5 private sector application categories). Data for application processing times will be available in Spring 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Digital Portal expected to launch for remaining private sector application categories in 2024/25.

## Discussion

The DFA program is offered by the Ministry to support individuals and businesses in the aftermath of an eligible disaster with financial assistance to restore sudden, unexpected, or uninsurable losses that affect homes, people’s livelihood, and community services. The DFA program is split into two sectors: Private, which includes homeowners, residential tenants, charitable organizations, farm owners, and small businesses, and Public for communities.

In November 2023, the Ministry completed the DFA Digital Portal for private applications. The portal will replace the previous paper-based application process to streamline and strengthen the program. This will improve service delivery, timeliness of financial assistance, and the user experience. This performance measure, new to the 2024/25 – 2026/27 Service Plan, tracks the percentage of complete DFA private applications processed within 90 days.

The Ministry has set a baseline of 25% for this performance measure. This represents the percentage of DFA private applications from the Atmospheric River event processed within 90 days under the previous paper-based model. This baseline includes both complete and incomplete applications meaning it includes the time spent waiting for supporting information from the applicant. The Ministry has set a target of 60% of only complete applications processed within 90 days for the 2024/25 fiscal year and is targeting 75% and 90% for the 2025/26 and 2026/27 fiscal years, respectively. The Digital Portal helps to ensure applications are complete, reduces delays in the Ministry’s adjudication of applications, and improves recovery outcomes through timeliness of financial support to rebuild post-disaster.

## Financial Summary

(\$000s)	2023/24 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2024/25 Estimates	2025/26 Plan	2026/27 Plan
<b>Operating Expenses</b>				
Emergency and Disaster Management Operations	32,416	39,033	38,633	38,633
Climate Readiness Programs	18,429	28,429	38,429	38,429
Executive and Support Services	13,739	11,585	11,584	11,584
Emergency and Disaster Management Act	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Financial Assistance	6,420	6,420	6,420	6,420
<b>Total</b>	<b>101,004</b>	<b>115,467</b>	<b>125,066</b>	<b>125,066</b>
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>				
Emergency and Disaster Management Operations	524	548	53	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>53</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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](#).

