

Ministry of Labour

**2025/26 – 2027/28
Service Plan**

March 2025



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Published by the Ministry of Labour

Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Labour 2025/26 – 2027/28 Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared.

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

Honourable Jennifer Whiteside
Minister of Labour
February 18, 2025

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Strategic Direction

In 2025/26, the Government of British Columbia will continue to prioritize delivering the services and infrastructure needed for people to build good lives in strong communities.

To support this objective, Government will focus on growing the economy, responding to the threat of tariffs, creating good paying jobs, improving affordability, strengthening health care and education, and making communities safer.

Government will also continue deepening relationships with Indigenous Peoples while advancing implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan.

This 2025/26 service plan outlines how the Ministry of Labour will support the government's priorities and selected action items identified in the Minister's January 2025 [Mandate Letter](#).

Purpose of the Ministry

To build a better British Columbia, the [Ministry of Labour](#) promotes fair, healthy and safe labour and employment relationships in support of a strong, sustainable and inclusive economy.

In this context, the Ministry has overall responsibility for British Columbia's labour and employment statutes – including the *Labour Relations Code*, the *Employment Standards Act*, the *Workers Compensation Act* and the *Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act* – and for the effective administration and enforcement of those statutes. The Ministry houses the [Employment Standards Branch](#), the [Workers' Advisers Office](#), and the [Employers' Advisers Office](#). The Ministry has legislative responsibility for [WorkSafeBC](#), and for the Ministry's three tribunals: the [Labour Relations Board](#), the [Employment Standards Tribunal](#), and the [Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal](#).

The Employment Standards Branch and the Ministry's three administrative tribunals manage complaints and issues that have been brought before them. The Workers' Advisers Office and the Employers' Advisers Office provide advice and advocacy for workers and employers with respect to issues under the *Workers Compensation Act*. In all cases, timely and accurate disposition of those complaints or issues is an essential component of a fair and balanced system of labour and employment laws that is readily accessible to all stakeholders.

For more information about the Ministry's areas of responsibility and key initiatives, visit the [Ministry of Labour](#) website.

Operating Environment

The Ministry of Labour operates in a changing environment shaped by shifting economic conditions and demographics, an increasingly diversified labour market and ever-evolving workplace norms and expectations. The work of the Ministry is also impacted by other factors

such as the growth of the “gig economy”, labour supply challenges, changing demands for, and supply of, foreign workers, as well as increasing cost pressures faced by employers and workers. These challenges have had significant implications for the economy and for employer/employee relations and are expected to have continuing impacts on the Ministry in this reporting cycle.

Economic Statement

B.C.’s economy experienced moderate growth last year amid relatively high interest rates, persistent price pressures and ongoing global economic uncertainty. The labour market ended the year on a positive note, supported by high immigration and strong population growth. Inflation in B.C. continued to moderate as the price growth of goods eased, while inflation for services remained elevated. Consumer spending and home sales activity were weaker for most of 2024 in the wake of still elevated interest rates and high prices. Subdued global demand and lower prices for key commodities led to a decline in the value of the province’s merchandise exports in 2024. Meanwhile, B.C. homebuilding activity remained relatively strong following record high housing starts in 2023.

The Economic Forecast Council (EFC) estimates that B.C. real GDP rose by 1.2 per cent in 2024. In the near-term, the EFC expects B.C.’s economy to grow by 1.8 per cent in 2025 and 1.9 per cent in 2026, in line with the national average. For Canada, the EFC estimates growth of 1.4 per cent in 2024 and projects national real GDP growth of 1.8 per cent in 2025 and 1.9 per cent in 2026. These projections do not fully include the impact of the evolving U.S. tariff situation.

Restrictive global trade policies, particularly potential U.S. tariffs, pose a risk to the outlook and there is uncertainty over the degree and timing of impacts on B.C.’s economy, and among the province’s trading partners. Other risks include lower population growth due to changes to federal immigration policy, as well as the potential for renewed price pressures leading to interest rates remaining elevated for longer, weaker global demand, and commodity market volatility.

Performance Planning

Goal 1: Strong and fair labour laws and standards

Robust labour laws promote fairness, protect vulnerable workers and support world-class worker health and safety outcomes. The Ministry’s work towards this goal includes the key strategies set out below, which target priority areas for improvement and provide opportunities for collaboration with workers, employers and Indigenous peoples.

Objective 1.1: Update and modernize B.C. labour laws.

Labour laws require periodic updating to be relevant and responsive to the modern workplace and to support an inclusive, sustainable and innovative economy.

Key Strategies

- Monitor and review the implementation of gig worker protections, including new employment standards and workers’ compensation protections introduced in 2024 for app-based ride-hail and delivery services workers. Refine or replace any regulations that are not achieving the intended outcomes.
- Consider input from workers, employers and others on reviewing and updating B.C.’s labour laws to ensure they address priorities identified in modern workplaces, including challenges experienced by workers who face illness, domestic abuse, or exploitation as a result of their conditions of work.
- Continue to work with WorkSafe BC on the prevention of workplace injury or illness, the promotion of safe workplaces to ensure robust compliance and enforcement, and ensure meaningful programs are in place to support the return of injured workers to their workplaces.
- Support the Ministry of Health in examining the impacts of, and potential solutions to, the toxic drug crisis as it relates to identified employee groups.
- Protect and ensure fairness for workers and employers in the application of labour laws through the timely resolution of complaints involving non-compliance with the provincial labour and employment laws.
- Continue to prioritize opportunities for ministry engagement with Indigenous peoples as part of the ongoing effort to implement the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2023/24 Actuals	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
1 Percentage of Employment Standards Branch complaints resolved within 180 days	35%	32%	80%	80%	80%

Data source: Ministry of Labour Employment Standards Branch internal data.

Discussion

This is a long-established Performance Measure for tracking the percentage of complaints to the Employment Standards Branch resolved within 180 days from the date the complaint was received. Timely investigations align with the purposes of the *Employment Standards Act*, including promoting fair and efficient procedures for resolving disputes over the interpretation and application of the legislation, ensuring compliance with labour laws and protecting vulnerable workers.

The Branch has experienced a significant increase in demand for its services in recent years, the result of several factors and improvements. In 2019, the Ministry removed the Self-Help Kit, which was a barrier to access to justice for workers, making it easier to submit complaints. A new investigation model was implemented, and the statutory recovery period was doubled from six months to one year. The Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act and the associated Temporary Foreign Worker Registry was also launched. Pandemic response actions – including temporary layoff variances, vaccination leave, and illness and injury leave – also resulted in new work for the Branch. These changes have led to higher complaint volumes, and, in turn, a longer period of time required to assign cases. This is reflected in the reduced forecasts for the number of complaints resolved within 180 days from the date the complaint is received.

In 2023/24, the Branch received a three-year funding lift for additional FTEs. Work is also being undertaken to increase the timely resolution of complaints. For example, the Ministry has developed new, streamlined intake and triage processes to provide better outcomes for workers. Technological improvements have also been made as part of the overall digital transformation strategy, along with enhancements to information gathering to support more efficient and effective investigations.

Goal 2: Ensure that labour laws are communicated and enforced through effective, client-centered service delivery

Through the Workers' Advisers Office (WAO) and Employers' Advisers Office (EAO), continue to promote and increase workers' and employers' knowledge, awareness, and understanding of their rights and responsibilities under the workers' compensation system, with the goal of creating safer workplaces.

The Employment Standards Branch (ESB) educates workers and employers on their rights and obligations under the *Employment Standards Act* and the *Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act* through its Information Line (including a multi-lingual line); website; online publications; education sessions; and through direct service delivery. Through accessible and effective education, compliance with legislation is enhanced.

Objective 2.1: Continue to implement new/updated processes to improve service delivery.

The Ministry of Labour aims to regularly refine operational systems and procedures to ensure they are delivered efficiently and effectively. We must continually adapt and optimize operations to meet evolving needs of employers and workers in a complex compensation/employment standards/foreign worker protection system.

Key Strategies

- The WAO offers free public training sessions, mentoring and advice to workers, service providers, and stakeholders on the workers' compensation system and is reviewing and updating workflow processes, to optimize operations and ensure consistent quality of service.
- The WAO continues to develop a new Case Management System and redesign of the public interface to more efficiently and effectively serve workers and their representatives. This is estimated to be completed in Fall 2025.
- The EAO provides education to ensure that employers and workers are receiving timely and accurate information, to reflect ongoing legislative, regulatory, and policy changes within the workers' compensation system and to increase their understanding, compliance, and promote safe, healthy and respectful workplaces.
- The EAO is initiating the replacement of the Case Management system to reduce administrative burden, improve client service delivery with modern tools, manage caseloads more effectively, and improve data to better respond to clients' needs within the workers' compensation system.
- The ESB provides free virtual education sessions with workers, employers and licensed entities to ensure these parties are well informed about their obligations and entitlements under the legislation and promote compliance with the law.
- The ESB continues to review, update and improve its digital systems, including its case management system and web-based resources, to maximize operational efficiency and provide high quality information about ESB's statutory interpretation, policy and processes.
- The ESB continues to evaluate and improve direct informational services to the public, as well as complainants and employers, workflow processes, policy interpretation guidelines and service standards to provide fair and efficient procedures for resolving disputes; to encourage open communication between employees and employers; and to ensure compliance with the law.

Objective 2.2: Maintain an effective B.C. Temporary Foreign Worker Protection (TFWPA) Regime

The *Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act* protects vulnerable temporary foreign workers from harmful hiring practices. It requires recruiters of temporary foreign workers to be licensed and employers of certain temporary foreign workers to be registered and provides for enforcement of legislative requirements.

Key Strategies

- Maintain and enforce the recruiter licensing system.
- Maintain and enforce the employer registration system.
- Maintain the public-facing website to ensure reliable information is available and accessible.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2023/24 Actuals	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
2a Number of representations completed by Workers' Adviser's Office (WAO) Advisers ¹	2233	2367	Maintain or increase	Maintain or increase	Maintain or increase
2b Number of educational outreach sessions conducted annually by the Employers' Advisers Office (EAO). ²	328	334	Maintain or Improve	Maintain or Improve	Maintain or Improve

Data source:

¹Ministry of Labour, Workers' Advisers Office internal data. Representations are made following an assessment of the merits of the claim and may be either written or verbal submissions to the Review Division of WorkSafeBC or Workers' Compensation Administration Tribunal.

²Ministry of Labour, Employers' Advisers Office internal data.

Performance Measure	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
2c Number of proactive investigations undertaken under the Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Program	12	Maintain or improve	Maintain or improve	Maintain or improve

Data source: Employment Standards Branch data.

Discussion

The number of representations completed by WAO advisors is a new performance measure, replacing the former measure of number of community outreach sessions conducted annually by WAO advisors. The shift from community outreach to individual representation better aligns with WAO's mission to support workers under the *Workers' Compensation Act*. Providing workers and their dependents with free advice, assistance, and in some cases representation, on appeals has an immediate impact, resolving disputes, and ensuring fairness in the workers' compensation system. Advisers can empower workers by strengthening awareness and educating them on their legal rights and responsibilities and promote equity and compliance. This change reflects a commitment to impactful, proactive support for workers.

The EAO education sessions ensure that employers and workers are receiving timely and accurate information, to reflect ongoing legislative, regulatory, and policy changes within the workers' compensation system and to increase their understanding, compliance, and promote safe, healthy and respectful workplaces. The sessions also promote the services of the EAO including advice, representation, and education for employers so they will be better equipped to navigate the complex processes and obligations associated with the workers' compensation system.

Proactive investigations of employers that hire foreign workers and of agencies that recruit foreign workers are a key feature of ensuring that the *Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act* is effective in protecting vulnerable foreign workers. This performance measure reflects an important aspect of the Ministry's priority described above in objective 2.2. The Branch's current priority and focus is on investigating active foreign worker complaints to ensure those vulnerable workers are protected and receive effective service. Hence the baseline target moving forward for proactive work is 12 proactive investigations.

Financial Summary

(\$000s)	2024/25 Restated Estimates ¹	2025/26 Estimates	2026/27 Plan	2027/28 Plan
Operating Expenses				
Labour Programs	23,322	23,903	23,903	23,903
Executive and Support Services	2,085	2,083	2,083	2,083
Total	25,407	25,986	25,986	25,986
Capital Expenditures				
Labour Programs	3	3	3	3
Total	3	3	3	3

¹ For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2024/25 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2025/26 *Estimates*.

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

Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations

As of March 4, 2025, the Minister of Labour is responsible and accountable for the following organizations:

[WorkSafeBC](#)

WorkSafeBC is an agency established under the *Workers Compensation Act* with the mandate to oversee a no-fault insurance system for workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities. WorkSafeBC partners with employers and workers in B.C. to: promote the prevention of workplace injury and illness; rehabilitate those who are injured and provide timely return to work; provide fair compensation to replace workers' loss of wages while recovering from injuries; and ensure sound financial management for a viable workers' compensation system.

[The Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal](#)

The Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal is the final level of appeal in the workers' compensation system of B.C. and is independent of WorkSafeBC. The Tribunal is established under the *Workers Compensation Act*.

[The Labour Relations Board](#)

The Labour Relations Board is an independent, administrative tribunal established under the *Labour Relations Code* with the mandate to mediate and adjudicate employment and labour relations matters related to unionization and unionized workplaces.

[The Employment Standards Tribunal](#)

The B.C. Employment Standards Tribunal is an administrative tribunal established under the Employment Standards Act. The Tribunal conducts appeals of determinations issued by the Director of Employment Standards under the Employment Standards Act and under the Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act.

Appendix B: Minister Mandate Letter



January 16, 2025

Honourable Jennifer Whiteside
Minister of Labour
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Whiteside:

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Labour at a critical time for our province. Serving as a member of the executive council is a privilege and responsibility which I am confident you will fulfill with integrity and a commitment to the people of our province.

British Columbians have trusted us with a mandate to deliver for them in ways that make a tangible difference in their daily lives. They expect us to listen and learn from people of different perspectives – and work together to make things better for everyone.

Specifically, we will tackle the challenges people worry about at the kitchen table:

- **Grow the economy by creating good jobs across British Columbia.** We will collaborate with businesses, workers, and communities to attract investments in both new and traditional sectors as well as emerging sectors of the economy. This approach will bring certainty for business, security for workers, and generate the wealth needed to support the essential services British Columbians rely on.
- **Reduce costs for families** including by helping people access homes they can afford through support for first-time homebuyers, increasing the supply of rental housing stock, and stronger measures to crack down on housing speculation.

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- **Strengthen health care** by expanding access to family doctors and recruiting and training more health professionals, ensuring that every British Columbian can access the care they need, no matter where they live. We will also increase access to addictions treatment and provide help for people whose struggles require intensive supports.
- **Make our neighbourhoods and communities safer** by working with law enforcement and social agencies to address street disorder, crack down on organized crime, and do all we can to ensure repeat offenders stay behind bars.

Our commitment to take action on climate change remains foundational and will be key to a healthy and prosperous BC for future generations.

Underlying all this work is our partnership with Indigenous peoples. Advancing reconciliation, implementing the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and working in partnership with First Nations rights-holders to advance shared interests is the responsibility of every Minister.

Over this mandate I expect you to prioritize making progress on the following:

- In order to protect key services that British Columbians rely on, work with the Minister of Finance to review all existing Ministry of Labour programs and initiatives, to ensure our programs remain relevant, are efficient, protect employees and their families, grow the economy, and help keep costs low for British Columbians. This is important in the context of current Provincial budget constraints; the realities faced by provincial employers in relation to access to capital, global inflation and interest rates; and the threat of American tariffs.
- Support workers facing domestic abuse, life threatening illness, or significant risk of exploitation due to precarious status, by ensuring provincial programs and protections are responsive to their particular needs.
- Consider particular categories of workers who face higher rates of workplace illness or exploitation as a result of their conditions of work and ensure that they are supported appropriately.
- Continue to work with WorkSafe BC on the prevention of workplace injury or illness, the promotion of safe workplaces to ensure robust compliance and enforcement, and ensure meaningful programs are in place to support the return of injured workers to their workplaces.
- Support the Minister of Health to ensure that trades workers, who are disproportionately affected by the toxic drug crisis, have treatment options and programs available that are responsive to their particular needs.

- Review the implementation of gig worker protections to ensure they are delivering meaningful and intended outcomes to gig workers. Refine or replace any regulations that are not achieving the intended outcomes.
- Work to ensure our labour laws are keeping up with modern workplaces through the continued review of the *Labour Relations Code*, providing stable labour relations and supporting the exercise of collective bargaining rights.

To assist you in meeting the commitments we have made to British Columbians, you are assigned a Parliamentary Secretary for Labour whose focus will be to:

- Support development and maintenance of relationships with organized labour to ensure their feedback is considered in policy development.

You will work closely together and ensure your Parliamentary Secretary receives appropriate support to deliver on this work.

As you are aware, we have established an accord with the BC Green Caucus that supports our shared commitment to ensuring stable governance focused on delivering progress and tangible outcomes for British Columbians. The commitments in that accord complement the direction in these mandate letters.

As a Cabinet, we will uphold the highest standards of ethics, collaboration, and good conduct in service of the public, and as a Minister of the Crown, you are expected to review, understand, and act according to the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act*. You will establish a collaborative working relationship with your Deputy Minister and the public servants under their direction, who provide the professional, non-partisan advice that is fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities. Your Minister's Office must meet the highest standards for integrity and provide a respectful, rewarding environment for all staff.

The work we have ahead takes place in a profoundly challenging geopolitical environment. Close friends and neighbours to our south are contemplating imposing draconian tariffs on our products that would hurt both Americans and Canadians. Our allies internationally face governmental instability. Hate and racism are on the rise around the world. Artificial intelligence breakthroughs with unclear implications and astonishing potential are announced daily. Global inflation, snarled supply chains, and war are threatening global economic growth and prosperity as well as the transition to a low-carbon economy.

We have an obligation to protect and defend British Columbians, as well as seize opportunities, in these uncertain times.

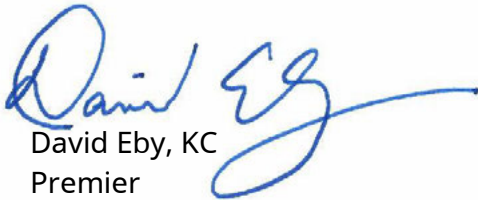
The good news is that we have everything we need to succeed, and we will succeed. British Columbia's people – our workers, entrepreneurs, business leaders, artists, and

innovators – are among the most talented in the world. We are home to world-class educational institutions and public services. Our natural beauty is unmatched, we have internationally envied resources, and we are one of the most diverse places on the planet. Your job is to help us leverage these advantages in perilous times.

Use this mandate letter to guide your work, and do not be afraid to challenge assumptions, or be innovative, bold and aggressive in achieving the goals set out for you and your Ministry by the people of this province.

Thank you for joining me in the work ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Eby", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Eby, KC
Premier

cc: Darlene Rotchford, MLA
Parliamentary Secretary for Labour