

*Ministry of
Employment and
Income Assistance*

**2005/06
Annual Service Plan Report**



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Published by the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance

Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement



As Minister of Employment and Income Assistance, it is my responsibility to provide an employment and income assistance system that is fair, caring, and sustainable. Our government is committed to helping people — who are able to work — find and keep jobs, while also providing assistance to those British Columbians most in need.

Our focus on employment and personal responsibility has been encouraging and successful. The portion of “expected to work” clients on our caseload has dropped from 55 per cent in June 2001 to less than 18 per cent in March 2006. Thousands upon thousands of our employable clients are now pursuing gainful employment, education, and brighter futures.

More than two-thirds of our caseload is now comprised of Persons with Disabilities and Persistent Multiple Barriers to employment. These clients receive this government’s highest levels of supports and services to help them sustain an improved quality of life. The ministry will continue to foster the best possible system of support for these individuals, assisting them achieve greater independence, whether in the workplace or in their daily life.

For persons with disabilities who wish to work, the Minister’s Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities is forging alliances with B.C.’s business leaders to promote these individuals as skilled, motivated, and desirable employees. Our work is already making a notable difference in the hiring policies of some key provincial industries.

We are active participants in the Premier’s Taskforce on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions — an important initiative in seeking solutions to these critical societal issues. We have launched several effective outreach projects to ensure B.C.’s most vulnerable citizens, particularly those who may be homeless, access services that immediately make a real difference in their lives. We collaborate closely with all levels of government, and valued community partners, to ensure that people in need receive the income supports, shelter and health benefits readily available through government.

I look forward to working with Ministry staff and partner agencies to maintain high levels of efficient, responsive service for our clients. I thank them all for their dedication and excellent professionalism.

The 2005/06 Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance Annual Service Plan Report was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. The report compares the actual results to the expected results identified in the ministry's 2005/06–2007/08 Service Plan Update. I am accountable for those results as reported.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Claude Richmond". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "C" and "R".

Honourable Claude Richmond
Minister of Employment and Income Assistance

June 30, 2006

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Highlights of the Year

Over the past year, the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance has made substantial progress towards achieving the commitments detailed in the Ministry's Service Plan 2005–06 including:

Enhanced Client Supports

- **Expected to Work (ETW):** The number of employable clients on the ministry's caseload decreased by 5,200, or 17.5 per cent, in the last year as a result of a revived provincial economy, strengthened labour markets and ministry policies and programs that support getting clients into jobs. Less than half of ETW clients stay on the caseload longer than four months and those transitioning from ministry employment programs to financial independence received an average starting wage of almost \$11 dollars an hour.
- **Persons with Disabilities (PWD):** The ministry continued to focus on clients with disabilities in support of government's Great Goal 3 — To build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk, and seniors. \$37 million was provided to increase PWD rates by \$70 per month, making these rates the highest in the province and the third highest in Canada. Earnings exemptions were increased to \$500 per month for individual clients and \$750 for two-recipient family units to support financial independence and greater community engagement. To assist PWD clients in participating in their communities to the greatest extent possible, the ministry delivered a wide range of specialized supports and voluntary employment programs. The PWD caseload increased by 3,800 clients, or 7 per cent, during 2005/06, due in part to an aging population, longer life expectancy for individuals experiencing significant health issues, and the impact of new illnesses and conditions.
- **Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB):** For clients who are not expected to become financially independent, the earnings exemption was increased to \$500 to provide additional support to those who may be able to gain employment.
- **Seniors:** An additional \$10 million restored the BC Senior's Supplement program, providing 43,900 seniors with a guaranteed minimum income level for residents of British Columbia receiving federal Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement or federal allowances.
- **Low-Income Families:** \$123 million in health and dental assistance was provided to individuals and families with limited incomes, to support improved health outcomes and reduce disincentives to becoming and remaining financially independent.

Responsive Program Delivery

- **Homeless Outreach Project:** The ministry partnered with the City of Vancouver, the Housing Centre, and Carnegie Outreach to seek out homeless individuals on the street in the Vancouver Downtown Eastside and connect them with ministry offices.

Between October 2005 and the end of March 2006, the project assisted 113 individuals to access housing, income assistance, and medical treatment.

- **Community Partnerships:** To demonstrate the value of innovative partnerships with community agencies and other levels of government, and to better serve vulnerable clients, the ministry made one-time investments totaling \$1.2 million in several projects including:
 - Outreach and shelter programs in Vancouver, Victoria, Nanaimo, the Comox Valley, Chilliwack, Abbotsford, the Tri-Cities, and Kamloops;
 - Basic computer skills for single parents in the Fraser Valley;
 - Sponsorship of *Working Together: A Round Table on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Prevention and Intervention for Northern British Columbia* in Prince George attended by more than 150 service providers that work directly with adults and children with FASD; and
 - Health and dental supports to: New Life Mission in Kamloops; Pain Control Dental Clinic at the Prince George Native Friendship Centre; Christian Medical and Dental Society; Mid-Main Community Health Centre; Cool Aid Society; Kelowna Gospel Mission Dental Centre; Strathcona Community Dental Clinic; and the BC Dental Association.
- **OnLine Resource Public View:** The ministry made its OnLine Resource available on the Internet providing members of the public with a user-friendly resource containing its policy and resources for clients.

Building Capacity to Serve

- **Employment Programming:** A comprehensive redesign of the ministry's employment programs and Community Assistance Program was initiated to meet the needs of increasingly barriered clients on the ministry's evolving caseload more effectively. This initiative included extensive consultations with more than 90 public and private sector partners in communities throughout the province.
- **Service Code and Values:** Staff from across the ministry and all regions of the province led a broad-based and inclusive dialogue to develop common values and a Service Code supported by tools that would assist staff in applying these values and codes in their daily work life. The results of this employee-led initiative are currently being incorporated into human resource and business planning, as well as service delivery initiatives throughout the organization.
- **Integrated Service Delivery (ISD):** The ministry completed implementation of the ISD initiative, which streamlined business processes, improved tools and resources for determining eligibility, and provided staff with more time to spend directly with clients.
- **Multi-Channel Service Delivery (MCSD):** The ministry, in collaboration with the province's Chief Information Officer, other ministries and stakeholders, initiated the Multi-Channel Service Delivery (MCSD) project. The MCSD initiative is part of a commitment to use information technology in order to provide the general public, applicants, and clients with more options to access ministry information, programs, and services.

Support for Great Goal 3

- In supporting the government's great goal to build the best system of support for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk, and seniors, the ministry contributed over \$35 million to many organizations including:
 - \$15 million to the 20th anniversary of the Rick Hansen Man in Motion Tour to improve the lives of people with spinal cord injuries;
 - \$5 million to the Vancouver Foundation in support of the Disability Supports for Employment Fund;
 - \$4.2 million to the 411 Seniors Centre Society so it can purchase and maintain the heritage building it has occupied for over 30 years;
 - \$750,000 to the Canadian Mental Health Association to reach out to individuals with mental illness across the province, and connect them with income, housing, and medical services;
 - \$400,000 to She-Way to provide supported housing for pregnant women with substance abuse issues in the Vancouver Downtown Eastside; and
 - \$275,000 for the Directorate of Agencies for School Health (DASH) to support low-income families improve their skills in healthy eating and food preparation.

Purpose, Vision, Mission and Values

Purpose

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance provides income and disability assistance, and employment programs for British Columbians in need. These programs are administered under the BC Employment and Assistance program (BCEA), and are guided by the *Employment and Assistance Act* and the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*, which came into force in September 2002.

Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance envisions a province in which British Columbians in need are assisted to achieve their social and economic potential.

Mission

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance provides services that move people toward sustainable employment and assist individuals and families in need.

Values

The ministry continued to be guided by the British Columbia Public Service's core values of Integrity, Fiscal Responsibility, Accountability, Respect, and Choice. Building on this foundation, the ministry identified additional values that shape the design and delivery of its unique programs and services, and define its relationships with clients, partners, and staff. These values support the Government's broader strategic plan and priorities.

The ministry's values are:

- **Personal responsibility** — Personal responsibility was emphasized by assisting clients who were able to work to find employment and achieve independence. The ministry supported the efforts of clients who are working to enhance their self-reliance and involvement in their communities.
- **Active participation** — Clients who are able to work are required to actively seek employment. The ministry supported these efforts with work search and job placement services, targeted employment training, and tools such as employment plans. The ministry provided additional specialized supports to Persons with Disabilities to maximize their self-reliance.
- **Dignity and respect** — The ministry committed to treating all members of the public with equity and fairness, upholding the principles of dignity and respect through open communication, building effective relationships, and maintaining high ethical standards.

- **Innovative partnerships** — The ministry began developing creative and innovative ways for delivering client-centered services, as well as working with a range of service providers and external agencies.
- **Citizen confidence** — Maintaining public confidence in ministry programs and services is fundamental to realizing the ministry's long-term objective of providing a sustainable income assistance system that provides for those most in need.
- **Fairness and transparency** — The ministry supported the values of administrative fairness and transparency by informing clients of all reasons a decision was made, and providing access to a fair and impartial review of the original decision through reconsideration and appeal.
- **Clear outcomes** — The ministry continued setting well-defined goals for itself and for clients as outlined in their employment plans.
- **Accountability for results** — Through performance management systems, the ministry is accountable to government and all British Columbians for the results it achieves.

While these values underlay the delivery of the ministry's programs and services, staff from across the ministry and all regions of the province led a comprehensive review and confirmation of common organizational values during the past year. The refined Values and a new Service Code, which resulted from this broad-based staff engagement, will provide the basis for a new relationship between staff and clients over the coming years. For information on the ministry's new Values and Service Code, see Appendix A.

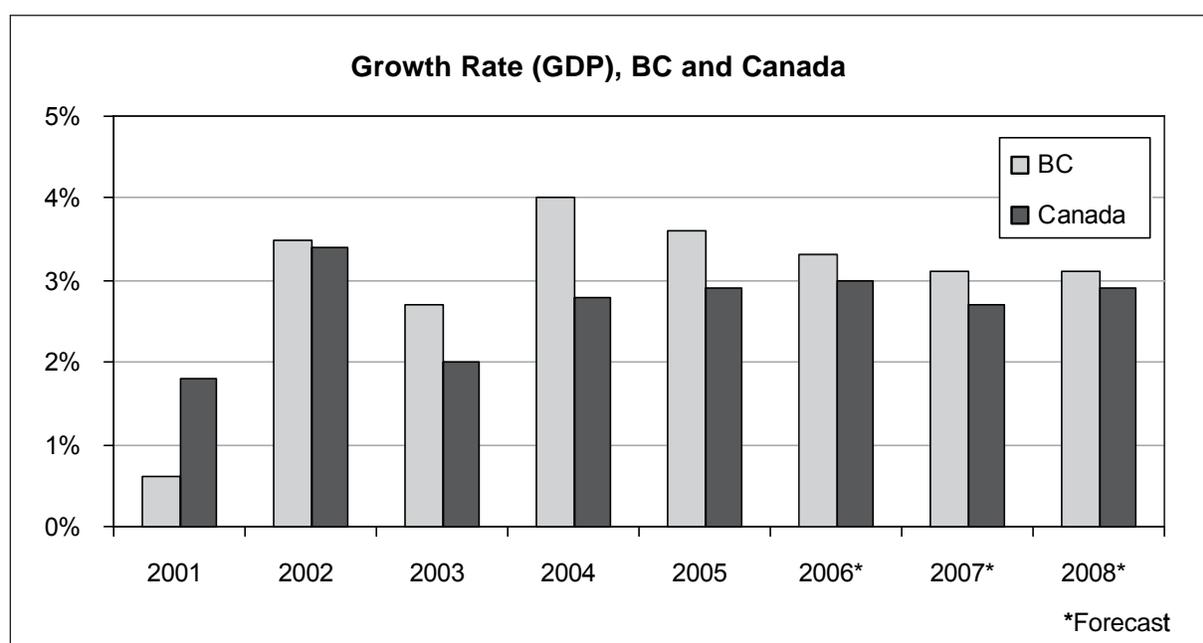
Strategic Context

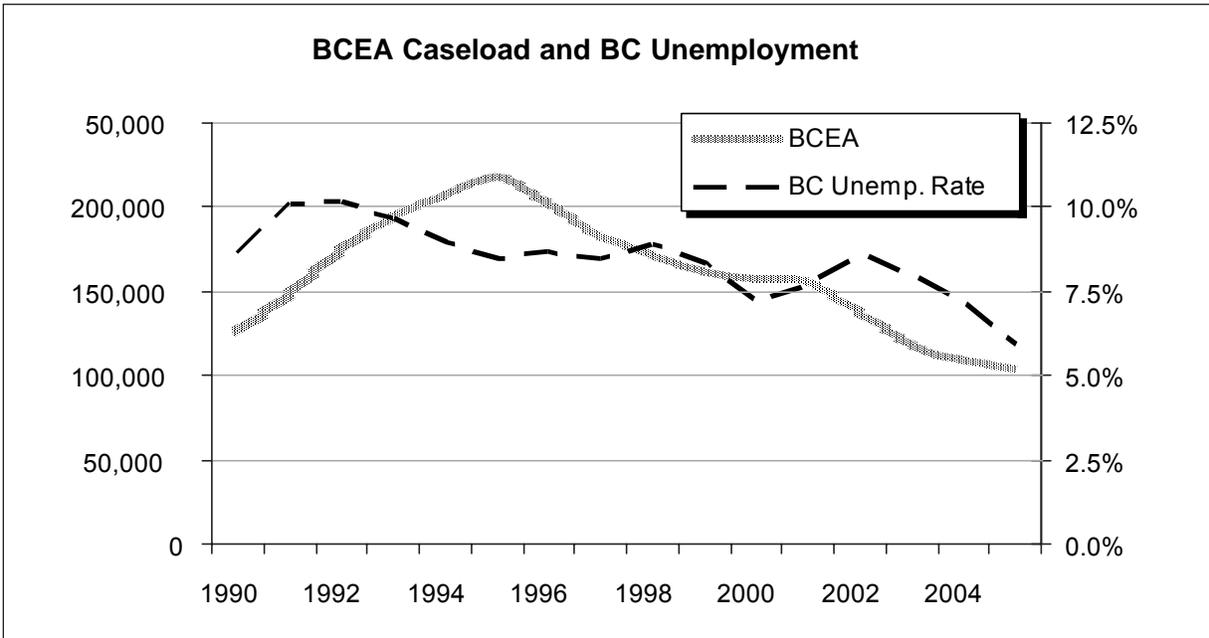
To effectively and responsibly deliver services that assist those most in need and move people from assistance to employment, the ministry must be responsive to the environment in which it operates. Over the past year, the ministry regularly monitored its risk environment, capacity, and performance through regular risk and performance reviews. These efforts have allowed the ministry to pursue opportunities, mitigate risks to its operations and clients, and support continuous improvement in the delivery of services.

External Risks

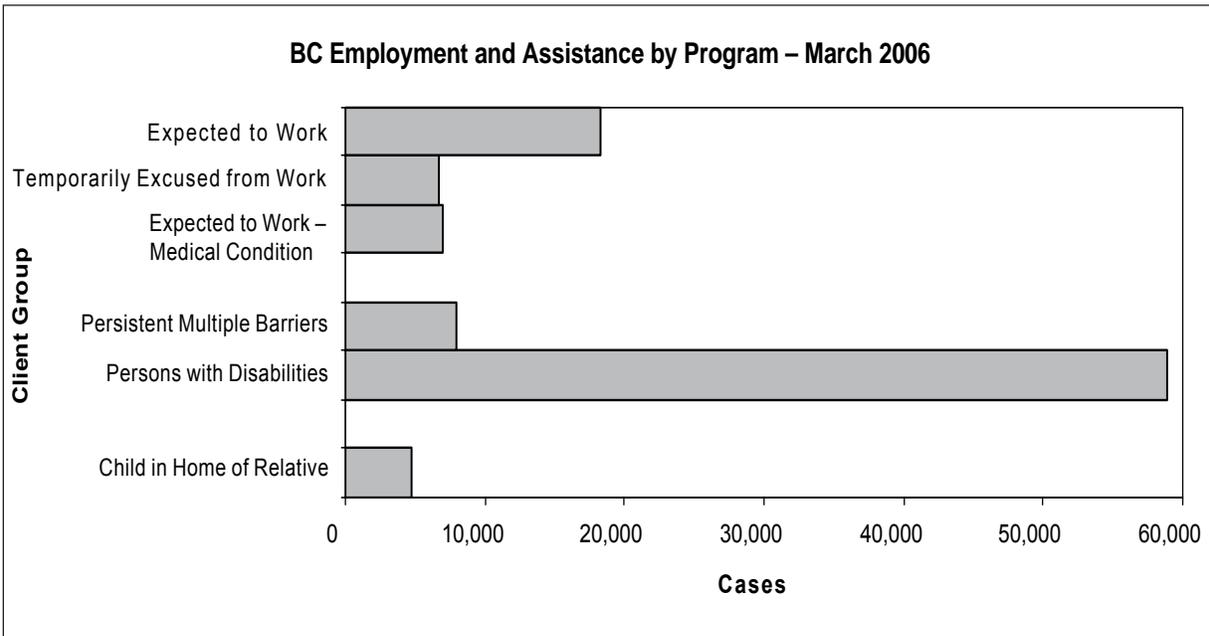
The primary drivers of demand for the ministry's programs and services, which are not within the ministry's control, include:

Strength of the provincial economy and local labour markets: British Columbia's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by a solid 3.5 per cent in 2005, slightly faster than the 3.4 per cent growth rate forecast in the *September Budget Update*. Strong consumer spending and investment helped make B.C.'s growth the second fastest in the country, behind Alberta's 4.5 per cent expansion. B.C.'s economic growth was accompanied by a marked drop in the unemployment rate and strong labour income growth, supporting consumer spending and residential construction growth.





Population growth and demographics: Natural population growth and migration into the province are directly linked to an increased demand for the ministry’s employment and assistance programs. At the same time, the number of Persons with Disabilities requiring assistance has continued to grow due in part to an aging population, longer life expectancy for individuals experiencing significant health issues, and the impact of new illnesses and conditions (such as HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis-C, and drug and alcohol dependencies).



The ministry undertook the following strategies in order to mitigate negative impacts and realize potential opportunities associated with these external factors:

Strategies	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular reviews of organizational performance and financial results compared to caseload forecasts. • Analysis and adjustment of service demand by program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lower ETW caseload than expected, due to successful employment programs, and a 10.4 per cent under-expenditure in Temporary Assistance. • A lower cost per PWD case than expected and 1.2 per cent under-expenditure in Disability Assistance. • Achieved 7 of the 8 performance measures included in the 2005/06 Service Plan.

Catastrophic Events: The ministry recognizes that potential catastrophic events, such as earthquakes or pandemics, pose a significant and uncertain risk to the ministry’s ability to provide uninterrupted delivery of critical assistance programs. During 2005/06, the ministry identified an avian influenza pandemic as a potentially catastrophic risk. The threat associated with avian influenza included a dramatic shift in the needs of clients compounded by a reduced staffing capacity within the ministry.

Strategies	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of common cross-government avian influenza direction and protocols. • Expansion of Enterprise-wide Risk Management practices throughout the ministry. • Support greater use of direct deposit among clients to provide them with safe and reliable access to their funds and to reduce potential delays in the event of reduced staffing levels. • Ongoing review and updates to the ministry’s Business Continuation Plan to support uninterrupted delivery of critical services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No disruption to services. • Increased internal capacity and strengthened relationships with partner ministries. • Increased use of direct deposit among ministry clients. • Living Business Continuation Plan available to coordinate current business needs in the case of a catastrophic event (i.e., earthquake).

External Opportunities

Collaboration and Partnerships: The ministry continued to build new partnerships with other ministries, local governments, and stakeholder groups to deliver flexible, cost-effective, and innovative services to clients. The challenges many of the ministry’s clients confront are frequently complex and require coordination of services and supports to effectively address issues of homelessness, mental health, addictions, disabilities, insufficient education or limited life skills.

Strategies	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-time funding of \$930,000 for integration projects providing services targeted to homelessness outreach, mental health and addictions, dental clinic services, and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder prevention and treatment. • Consultation with advocacy groups to review policy, programs and services. • Partnering with the City of Vancouver to enforce good practices among landlords in the Downtown Eastside through the Housing Integrated Task Team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved client services and outcomes. • Strengthened community capacity. • Demonstrated the value of innovative partnerships with community agencies, other levels of government and ministries.

Internal Risks

Information Management: In order to deliver its programs and services, the ministry is required to manage a significant volume of client information. Despite strict security standards and practices, the ministry did experience a potential public information breach in early 2006 resulting from the disposal of surplus equipment. A comprehensive review of the incident was undertaken by Government’s Chief Information Officer who determined that no personal information had been harmfully used, distributed, or copied.

Strategies	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of a comprehensive review of existing information management policies and procedures for all personal information. • Establishment of new policies and procedures including ongoing staff training, information management protocols and ongoing monitoring and reporting requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No public release of personal information. • Strengthened information security standards. • Reaffirmed that the security and integrity of personal information is critical to both the operations of the ministry and the privacy rights of its clients.

Workplace Safety: The ministry works directly with sometimes vulnerable or at-risk clients at 104 office locations in every region of the province. Providing staff and clients with a safe environment is of paramount importance and every effort is made to prevent and mitigate any workplace incidents.

Strategies	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Violence Prevention Plans for all 104 offices including, where appropriate, permanent security guards, facilities enhancements and critical incident support. • Implementation of an Incident Reporting and Tracking system to monitor and respond to events affecting staff and clients. • Creation of a Service Code detailing the expectations of both ministry staff and clients in their interactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 25% decrease in incidents reported to WorkSafeBC (formerly the Workers Compensation Board of B.C.), since 2001.

Internal Opportunities

Enhanced Client Capacity: The ministry continued to focus on assisting expected-to-work clients to transition to employment and financial independence.

Strategies	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment plans for all Expected to Work clients. • Provide employment programming to meet the needs of the changing caseload. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Expected to Work caseload in 2005/06 decreased by 17.5% from 2004/05. • Less than half of Expected to Work clients stay on assistance longer than 4 months. • Clients leaving employment programs had an average starting wage of almost \$11 per hour.

Focus on Those Most In Need: Clients who are most in need and not expected to achieve financial independence continued to receive higher levels of assistance and access to a suite of directed supports and programs. The involvement of clients with persistent multiple barriers or disabilities in these programs improved their independence and provided important benefits to the communities in which they live.

Strategies	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the highest assistance rates in the province for Persons with Disabilities; 3rd highest rates in Canada. • Increase earnings exemptions for Persons with Disabilities and Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers. • Deliver specialized employment and training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Persons with Disabilities caseload in 2005/06 increased by 7% from 2004/05 due in part to an aging population, increased life expectancy for those experiencing significant health issues, and the impact of new illnesses and conditions.

Citizen-Centred Service Delivery: The ministry built upon its citizen-centred culture by working with staff to design services that are coordinated, cost-effective, and responsive to evolving client needs.

Strategies	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Integrated Service Delivery initiative streamlining application processes. • Expand the use of information and communication technologies including launching the Multi-Channel Service Delivery initiative. • Increase the utilization of children’s health supports available to low-income families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff benefited from streamlined business processes, improved tools and job aids, allowing them more time to spend with clients. • The ministry increased its capacity to inform decision-making that is responsive, professional, inclusive, cost-effective, transparent, accountable and fiscally sustainable. • Clients benefited from greater choice, consistency and timeliness in accessing ministry services.

Staff Capacity: Ministry staff consistently demonstrated a high degree of dedication, professionalism, and flexibility in carrying out their responsibilities over the past year. Their continued support and expertise has been, and will continue to be, critical to the success of the ministry and its clients.

Strategies	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a comprehensive Human Resources Management Plan that builds upon existing attraction, retention, and leadership development strategies for critical positions. • Training and development for leaders across the ministry including 360 degree feedback instruments for all managers and provision of the Management Essentials program. • Engage staff in the development of a Service Code that clarifies common organizational values and expectations for interacting with others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ministry will be better positioned to compete with other public and private sector organizations to attract and retain highly-skilled and motivated staff. • Enhanced leadership capacity through implementation of leadership tools and programs. • Improved dialogue throughout the ministry regarding services, expectations of performance and ability to improve the lives of clients.

Great Goals for a Golden Decade

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance supports four of government’s five Great Goals, which are to:

1. Make British Columbia the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent.
2. Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness.
3. Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk, and seniors.
5. Create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada.

Government envisions a province which offers a comprehensive and integrated system of support for vulnerable people in B.C. communities. Such a system includes assistance intended for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk, and seniors, to improve their health and safety, assist them in accessing services, and increase their

participation in the social and economic life of the province. The province is developing a comprehensive multi-year strategy which will result in improved outcomes for persons with disabilities, persons with special needs, seniors, and children at risk.

During the past year, the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance assumed a leading role, working with partners from other ministries, levels of government and community organizations, in the development of the provincial Disability Strategy. The Disability Strategy will provide for a flexible, comprehensive, and integrated system of support for persons with disabilities that will allow them to participate more fully in the social and economic life of the province. A key focus of the Strategy will be the integration of government services to make them more accessible, easier to deal with, and more responsive to those who need them.

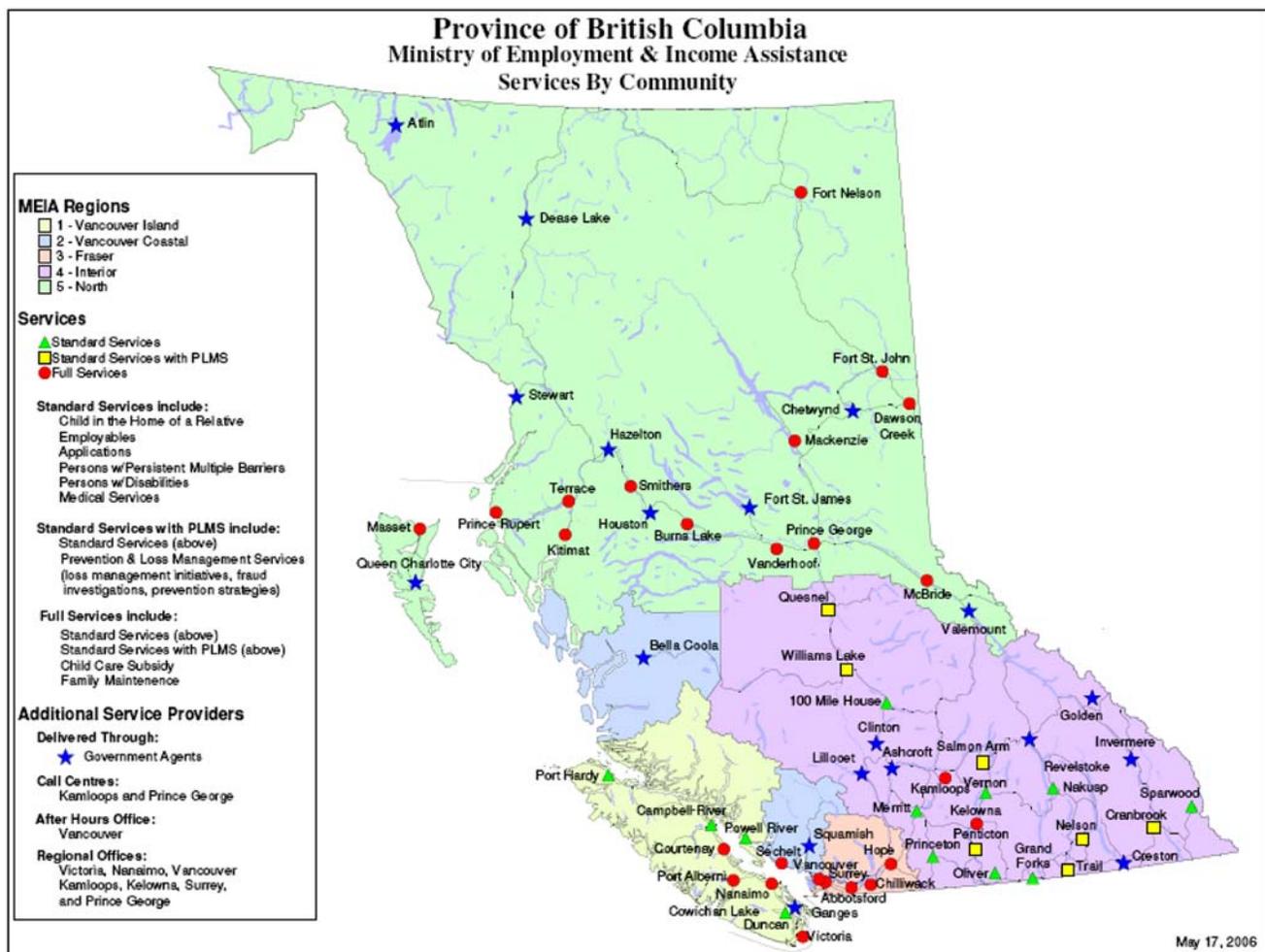
The ministry's mandate does not directly contribute to the achievement of Great Goal 4 which is to:

4. Lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none.

Service Delivery and Core Business Areas

Service Delivery

The ministry delivers a suite of assistance programs and services to approximately 140,000 individuals and their dependents through 104 ministry offices, 19 government agent branches, and three service centres across the province. The ministry also delivers employment programming services through external service providers in regions across British Columbia. The ministry's service delivery network reflects its focus on improving access to services, particularly for those clients living in rural areas and Persons with Disabilities.



The ministry's major services are provided under the BC Employment and Assistance (BCEA) program, which emphasizes self-reliance and personal responsibility, and reduces long-term dependence on income assistance for those who are able to work.

In order to better meet the diverse needs of its clients, the ministry established the following client groups:

- **Expected to Work (ETW):** These include employable clients in need of short-term income assistance and supports, as well as those who are temporarily excused from employment obligations due to a medical condition or family situation, such as a single parent with a child under 3.
- **Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB):** These are clients who experience significant and multiple barriers to employment that limit their ability to be financially independent.
- **Persons with Disabilities (PWD):** These are clients who experience a severe physical or mental impairment and require assistance as a result of significant restrictions to their ability to perform daily living activities.
- **Children in the Home of a Relative (CIHR):** If a parent is unable to care for and support their child and places the child in the home of a relative, the ministry may provide financial support to the relative on behalf of the child.
- **Seniors:** These include persons aged 65 years or older, with low-incomes, who are eligible for Senior's Supplement benefits and subsidized bus passes, based on their annual tax return.
- **Low and moderate-income families:** These include individuals and families who are not direct clients of the ministry, but are eligible for health and dental assistance based on their limited incomes. Providing extended coverage to these families improves health outcomes and reduces disincentives to their financial independence.

BCEA programs and services are delivered through six core business areas, each of which is directly tied to the ministry's vision, mission, and goals.

Core Business Area: Employment Programs

The Employment Programs business area provides for the operation and administration of programs that assist eligible individuals to find sustainable employment. It also provides for the operation and administration of employment-related programs, such as the Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities (EPPD), to support individuals with persistent multiple barriers and disabilities in improving their life skills, employability, and participation in the community.

A suite of employment programs are offered to an increasingly diverse caseload. Programs range from pre-employment services to job and volunteer placements and ongoing job-training supports. The ministry also provides programs, such as the Bridging Employment Program, geared toward specified client groups. This pre-employment program assists women to overcome language and cultural barriers, or barriers created through experience with violence, abuse and/or working in the sex trade, helping them move towards finding and maintaining employment.

Ministry employment programs are delivered through public and private service providers. Their services are governed by performance-based contracts, and compensation is dependent on the successful implementation of specified deliverables, resulting in positive outcomes for ministry clients.

Employment Programs accounted for \$91,701,000 of the ministry's 2005/06 operating expenditures.

Core Business Area: Temporary Assistance

Temporary Assistance is provided in accordance with the *Employment and Assistance Act* for the family units of eligible individuals who are capable of financial independence through employment, are unable to seek work because of a prescribed short-term medical or other condition, or who have persistent multiple barriers to employment.

The *Employment and Assistance Act* sets out criteria the ministry uses to determine eligibility for Temporary Assistance. Temporary Assistance includes income support and shelter allowances for those with accommodation expenses. Temporary Assistance provides for the Expected to Work client group, comprising 32 per cent of the caseload.

- **Expected to Work (ETW):** This group of clients includes individuals who are capable of employment, have met eligibility criteria such as a three-week work search, and have ongoing employment-related obligations. ETW clients have to maintain individualized employment plans detailing specific job search commitments as a condition of continued assistance. Research indicates that this approach benefits families and individuals over the long-term by breaking the inter-generational cycle of welfare dependency and ending the 'cycle-on, cycle-off' pattern that many clients have experienced. ETW clients comprise 18 per cent of the ministry's caseload.

There are circumstances where ETW clients may be temporarily excused from, or have limited employment obligations. These clients form the following two groups:

- **Expected to Work — Medical Condition:** The ministry recognizes that some clients may be unable to work due to short-term medical conditions or participation in a rehabilitation program. These clients have temporarily limited employment obligations and represent 7 per cent of the ministry's caseload.
- **Expected to Work — Temporarily Excused:** Clients may also be temporarily excused from normal eligibility requirements if they: are parents of children under three years of age; are caring for a dependent child or spouse with serious physical or mental conditions; have recently left an abusive relationship; or have reached 65 years of age. These clients comprise 7 per cent of the ministry's caseload.

Temporary Assistance also provides for Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers, comprising 9 per cent of the caseload; and Children in the Home of a Relative, comprising 4 per cent of the caseload.

Temporary Assistance accounted for \$318,162,000 of the ministry's 2005/06 operating expenditures.

Core Business Area: Disability Assistance

Disability Assistance is provided in accordance with the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act* for the family units of eligible individuals who require assistance as a result of significant restrictions to their ability to perform daily living activities.

Income and Disability Assistance legislation and ministry policies recognize that people with disabilities face unique challenges in daily living and may require additional support. Clients may apply for a “Persons with Disabilities” (PWD) designation by submitting an application form that has been completed by their physician or other health professional with details concerning diagnosis, health history, the degree of impairment, and impact on the applicant’s daily living activities. Applicants may be designated as PWD if their medical information demonstrates they have a severe physical or mental impairment that significantly restricts their ability to carry out daily living activities. Clients receiving Disability Assistance are eligible for increased income support and shelter allowances, a low-cost annual bus pass, a monthly earnings exemption, and may be eligible for other supplements, described below in the Supplementary Assistance core business area.

Persons with Disabilities who successfully leave assistance for employment in B.C. retain their PWD designation and are eligible to maintain access to health supplements. PWD clients represent 55 per cent of the ministry’s caseload.

Disability Assistance accounted for \$573,528,000 of the ministry’s 2005/06 operating expenditures.

Core Business: Supplementary Assistance

In accordance with the *Employment and Assistance Act* and *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*, Supplementary Assistance provides eligible clients with additional assistance for expenses related to health and medical needs, emergency food and shelter, transportation costs, some moving costs, employment-related expenses and other specified expenses. These include:

- Medical Equipment
- Orthotics and Bracing
- Medical Supplies
- Physiotherapy
- Massage Therapy
- Podiatry
- Chiropractic Services
- Basic Dental and Orthodontic Supplements and Services
- Monthly Nutritional Supplement
- Medical Transportation
- Confirmed Job Supplement
- Crisis Supplement
- School Start-Up Supplement
- Christmas Supplement
- Security Deposits
- Senior’s Supplement
- Clothing Supplement for clients in special care facilities
- Guide Dog Supplement
- Optical Supplements (basic eyewear and repairs)
- Natal Supplements
- Infant Formula Supplement

Supplementary Assistance accounted for \$205,255,000 of the ministry’s 2005/06 operating expenditures.

Core Business: Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal

This business area provides for an independent and objective appeal tribunal. The Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal is a single-level, regionally based appeal system established under the *Employment and Assistance Act*. Ministry clients may appeal to the impartial and independent Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal if they are dissatisfied with the ministry's reconsideration decisions.

The Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal accounted for 14 Full-Time Equivalent employees and \$1,832,000 of the ministry's 2005/06 operating expenditures.

Core Business: Executive and Support Services

Executive and Support Services provide support for the office of the Minister of Employment and Income Assistance. It also provides for leadership, direction, and administrative support services for the operating programs of the ministry. This includes strategic and business planning, financial administration and budget co-ordination, human resources, asset and risk management, prevention, compliance and enforcement, information technology, records management, freedom of information, and protection of privacy. It also provides for corporate and community based service delivery, including services provided by other ministries and agencies on behalf of the ministry. Costs are recovered for ministry services from other ministries and from parties external to government.

Executive and Support Services accounted for 1,841 Full-Time Equivalent employees and \$159,237,000 of the ministry's 2005/06 operating expenditures.

Report on Performance

Five Great Goals		Ministry Mission The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance provides services that move people toward sustainable employment and assist individuals and families in need.			
Direct Impact	Indirect Impact	Ministry Goals	Ministry Objectives	Performance Measures	Results
<p>Goal 3: Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk and seniors.</p> <p>Goal 1: Make British Columbia the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent.</p> <p>Goal 2: Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness.</p> <p>Goal 5: Create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada.</p>		1. Clients who are able to work become self-reliant through employment.	• Clients actively seek work.	1.1 Percentage of B.C.'s population aged 19-64 receiving Temporary Assistance with employment-related obligations.	✓✓
		1.2 Average percentage of clients with employment-related obligations who leave the caseload each month.	✓✓		
		2. Clients increase their independence through employment, volunteer, and income assistance programs.	• Persons with Disabilities who seek work find employment, and Persons with Disabilities who seek to volunteer are placed in volunteer positions.	2.1 Percentage of B.C.'s population receiving income assistance.	✓✓
		2.2 Percentage of total caseload receiving Disability Assistance.	✓✓		
		2.3 Percentage of persons receiving Disability Assistance who declare income from working or receive volunteer supplements.	✓✓		
		3. Clients receive supplementary assistance for health and transportation needs.	• Clients receive health care supports in a timely manner.	3.1 Average number of working days required for the adjudication of short-term nutritional supplement requests.	✓
		4. Individuals have access to a fair and timely reconsideration process.	• Reconsideration issues are efficiently resolved.	4.1 Percentage of reconsideration decisions that are made within 10 business days.	✗
			• Decisions are made on appeals and parties notified within the statutory timelines.	4.2 Percentage of appeals commenced within the 15-business day statutory time limit.	✓

✓✓ Exceeded target. ✓ Achieved target. △ Target mostly achieved. ✗ Missed target. N/A — Not Applicable.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Performance Measures

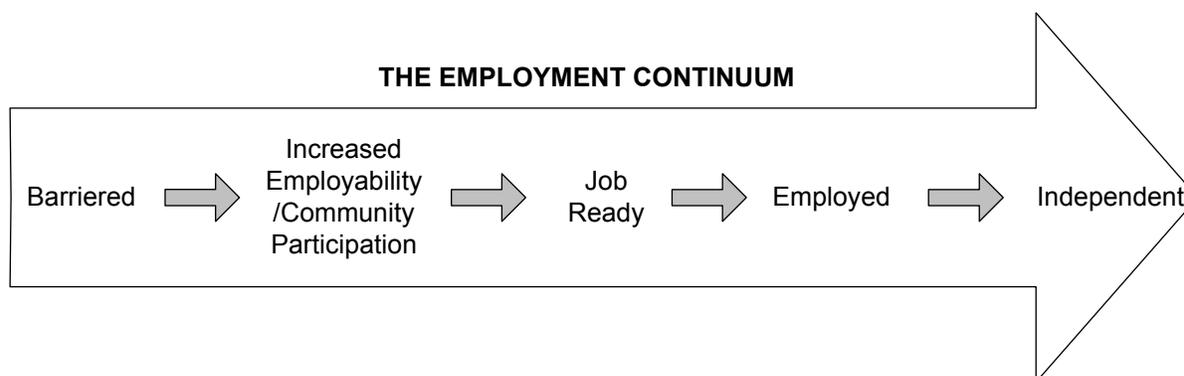
Ministry Goal 1

Clients who are able to work become self-reliant through employment.

Core Business Areas: Employment Programs, Temporary Assistance and Executive and Support Services.

For those clients able to work, the ministry continued to focus upon improving their capacity and progress along the employment continuum to avoid entanglement in a cycle of dependency. Over the course of the last year, the ministry's Expected to Work caseload decreased by 5,200 due in large part to ministry policies and programs that emphasized financial independence and participation in the revived provincial economy and strengthened local labour markets.

In 2005/06, the ministry invested more than \$91 million in employment programming supports to provide clients with work search assistance, employment planning assistance, specific skills training, job placement and job retention services. These programs and services are intended to assist clients move along the employment continuum towards independence as shown below:



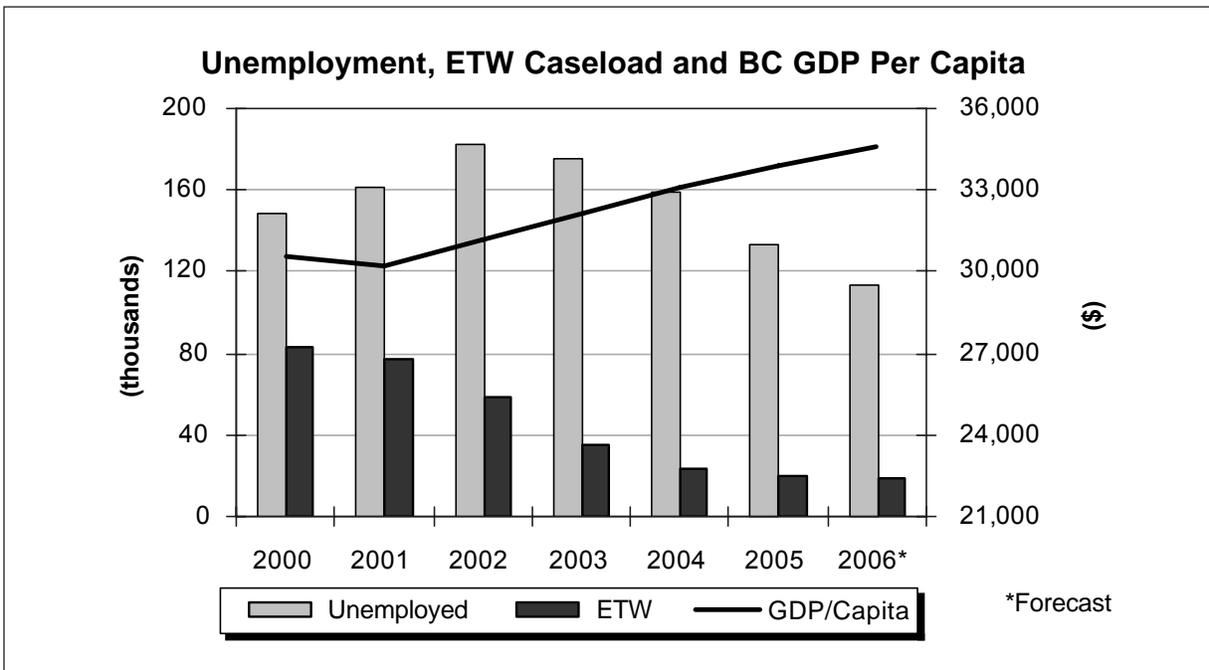
In rural areas with limited access to employment supports, the ministry provided transportation, work-clothing and certification fee assistance to ensure all eligible clients were fully supported in seeking employment to address potential program gaps. In 2005/06, 6,900 clients were assisted to find employment, particularly in the hospitality and construction industries, bringing the total number of job placements to more than 47,000 since 2001. Clients successfully completing employment programs earned an average starting wage of almost \$11 per hour.

The ministry's focus on assisting clients to transition back to employment as quickly as possible was successful as 50 per cent of Expected to Work clients left assistance within 4 months. Their attachment to the workforce and financial independence profoundly improves their lives and those of their family. Research has found that children raised

in income assistance-dependent families are 70 per cent more likely to require income assistance in their lifetime than are children raised in financially independent families. Significant progress has been made. In 2001/02, 1 in 10 children in the province were on the ministry's caseload. By 2005/06, that number had fallen to 1 in 30.

Ministry Employment Programming Facts:

- Placed 47,000 clients in jobs through service providers since 2001.
- Clients successfully leaving the programs enjoy an average starting wage of almost \$11 per hour — 40% more than minimum wage.
- Hospitality and construction industries attract many former clients.
- 50% of Expected to Work clients leave assistance within 4 months.



The ministry delivered a series of Outreach Programs to bring ministry services to those in need who had difficulty accessing services. These programs connected those in need with a network of support programs and services offered by the ministry, other ministry partners, other levels of government, and community social service providers. One-time funding was provided to actively seek out potential clients from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, Victoria, Nanaimo, the Comox Valley, Chilliwack, Abbotsford, the Tri-Cities, and Kamloops.

Between October 2005 and the end of March 2006, the Vancouver Downtown Eastside Outreach Program assisted 113 individuals access housing, income assistance, and medical treatment.

Objectives

1. Clients actively seek work.

During 2005/06, 56,700 employable clients in need were provided with Temporary Assistance. As a condition of their eligibility, they were required to establish and adhere to individualized employment plans designed to assist them transition back to work. Of these, 25,700 clients were exempt from, or had limited employment-related obligations because they had circumstances that limited their ability to seek work — such as parenting a young child or experiencing a temporary illness or injury requiring medical treatment.

The Expected to Work caseload declined by 17.5 per cent in 2005/06 due to a very strong economy, labour market and ministry policies and programs which support clients in finding employment. Since 2001, ministry programs have successfully helped over 47,000 clients find jobs. Clients who leave income assistance for jobs tend to have higher incomes and their children are less likely to receive income assistance when they become adults. Children whose parents work are also more likely to complete high school, attain higher levels of training and education, and be actively involved in the labour market when they reach adulthood.

Strategies

1. Applicants are required to undertake a three-week, self-directed work search as a condition of eligibility.

Income assistance is intended to be a program of last resort for those in genuine need. The three-week work search emphasizes personal responsibility and ensures that applicants pursue employment and other resources before receiving assistance.

In 2005/06, 58 per cent of applicants were exempt from conducting the three-week work search and received assistance on a priority basis. Applicants are not required to conduct the three-week work search if they are:

- Individuals fleeing from an abusive spouse or relative;
- Over the age of 65 years;
- Legally not allowed to work in Canada;
- Afflicted with a physical or mental condition that precludes the person from completing a search for employment; or
- In immediate need of food, shelter or medical attention.

2. Clients with employment-related obligations are required to complete and comply with employment plans as a condition of eligibility.

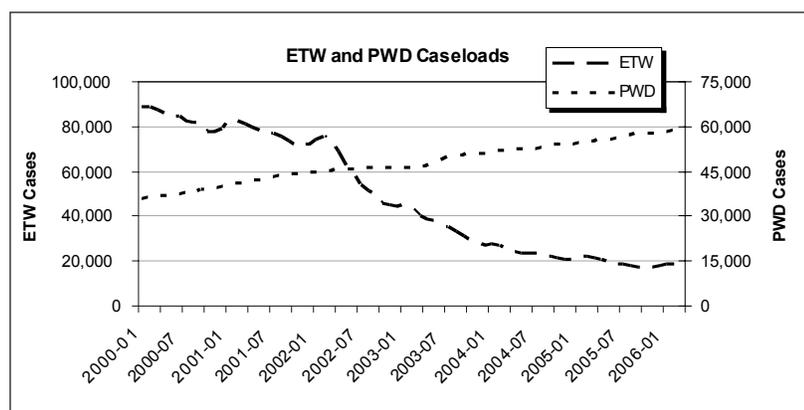
Employment plans are the foundation for ongoing dialogue and planning between ministry staff and clients. These plans provide clients with access to the tools and supports required to find a job and become independent of income assistance based on each client's unique strengths and skills. The plans outline employment objectives for clients and clearly identify interventions, expected outcomes, and compliance requirements. During 2005/06, more than 90 per cent of Expected to Work clients had the support of personalized employment plans, which are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

Performance Measures ¹

Performance Measure	Client Group	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Actual	Variance	Target Met?
1.1 Percentage of B.C.'s population aged 19–64 receiving Temporary Assistance with employment-related obligations.	Total	1.2%	1.2%	1.0%	-0.2%	✓✓
	ETW	0.9%	0.9%	0.7%	-0.2%	✓✓
	ETW-MC	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	✓

Effective April 2004, the category of clients the ministry defined as “expected to work and have a medical condition” (ETW-MC) have employment-related obligations. The actuals and targets above have been adjusted to reflect inclusion of this client designation. Source: Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch, Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.

Measure 1.1 tracks the percentage of British Columbia’s working age population receiving Temporary Assistance. A lower percentage indicates that fewer people are in need of assistance and more are contributing to a strong and vibrant provincial economy.



The percentage of British Columbia’s able-to-work population receiving income assistance has declined by more than 70 per cent since 2001/02. In 2005/06, there were even fewer cases than had been projected, which, paired with the ministry’s continued success at helping clients find employment, resulted in a surpassed target.

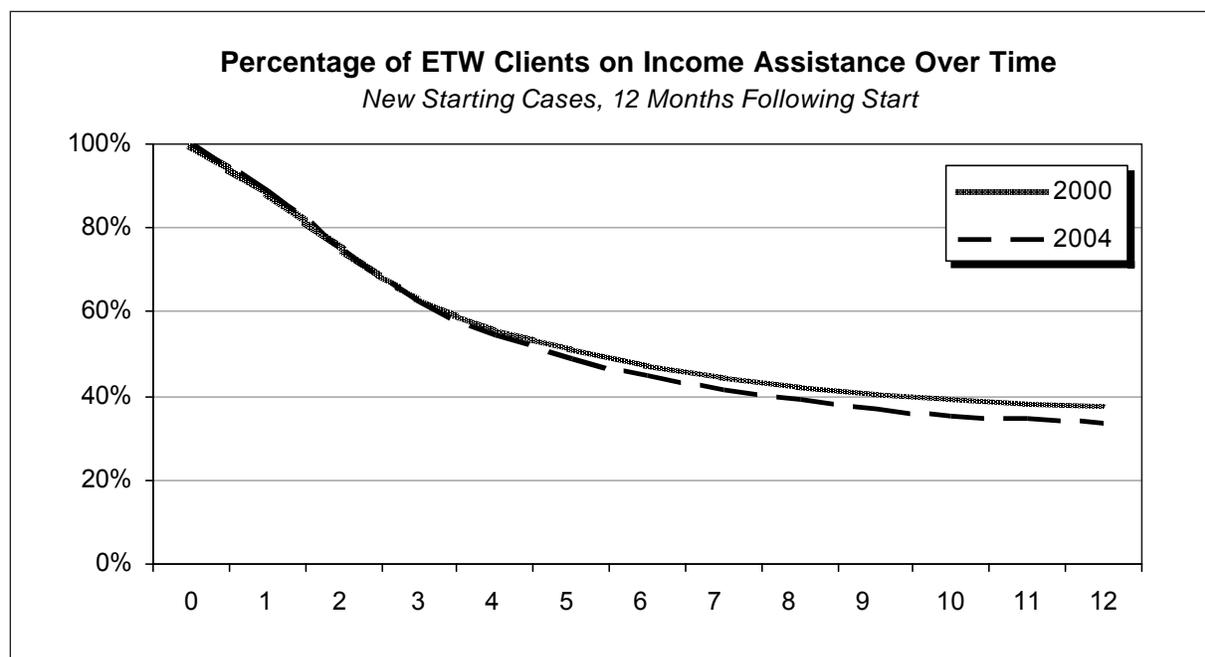
Performance Measure	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Actual	Variance	Target Met?
1.2 Average percentage of clients with employment-related obligations who leave the caseload each month.	10.7%	9.9%	10.2%	0.3%	✓✓

Source: Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch, Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.

Measure 1.2 gauges the success of clients achieving financial independence. Results were impacted by readily employable clients continuing to find work while clients with additional challenges to employment, who are not as job ready and require specialized supports and assistance, formed a larger proportion of the caseload. The ministry has undertaken a comprehensive redesign of its employment programming during the past year in direct response to this identified client need.

¹ Methodologies specific to each performance measure can be found on the ministry’s website at <http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/publicat/REPORTS/annrpts.htm>.

The following chart shows that less than half of ministry clients with employment obligations stay on the caseload longer than 4 months.



Ministry Goal 2

Clients increase their independence through employment, volunteer, and income assistance programs.

Core Business Areas: Disability Assistance, Employment Programs and Executive and Support Services.

The substantial decline in the number of clients who are expected to work was offset by an increased number of clients with restrictions to their daily living. Income and Disability Assistance legislation and ministry policies recognize that those managing significant health issues — Persons with Disabilities — face unique challenges in daily living and may require additional support. In response to this need, clients receiving Disability Assistance are eligible for:

- The highest rates of assistance in the province — the third-highest in Canada;
- Earnings exemptions of \$500 per month for individuals and \$750 for two-recipient families; increased from \$400;
- Medical coverage which includes Medical Services Plan and Pharmacare coverage with no deductible;
- Health supplements;
- Subsidized annual bus pass;
- Community Volunteer Supplement to assist with the costs associated with volunteer activities; and
- Specialized employment programming.

The ministry's emphasis on supporting those most in need was reflected in the addition of 3,800 new Persons with Disabilities (PWD) on the ministry's caseload. PWD clients now represent 55 per cent of the ministry's total caseload and 43 per cent of total operating expenditures.

B.C. provides the third-highest rate of assistance for persons with disabilities in Canada

Objectives

1. Persons with Disabilities who seek work, find employment, and Persons with Disabilities who seek to volunteer are placed in volunteer positions.

In April 2002, the ministry introduced the Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (ESPD). The strategy includes the Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities (EPPD), as well as the Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities. Both of these initiatives support persons with disabilities as they enhance their employability and engage in employment to the greatest degree possible; this may include full or part-time work, or volunteering. In 2005/06, the ministry continued to provide pre-employment services, assisted job search, job coaching, job placement, follow-up services, and assistance with starting a business for disabled clients.

Volunteering is a valuable activity for many clients who are receiving Disability Assistance and are not able to support themselves through employment. Community work may lead to employment, as it often provides valuable skills and experience. It is also an opportunity for clients to contribute to their communities.

Strategies

1. Employment services and related supports are provided to Persons with Disabilities to enhance their self-reliance.

In addition to its network of Disability Assistance and employment, health and transportation supports, the ministry partnered with the federal government to pilot a streamlined application process for clients eligible for Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPPD) benefits. Clients received assistance from ministry staff in completing the necessary forms, which accelerated the adjudication process. Clients participating in the pilot had a higher successful application rate for CPPD, which provided them with:

- CPPD benefits that contribute to higher CPP retirement benefits at age 65;
- Rates of assistance that meet or exceed provincial assistance; and
- Continued access to ministry health supplements.

In response to the positive feedback from clients, this pilot will be expanded in 2006/07 to provide all eligible clients with assistance accessing their full federal entitlements.

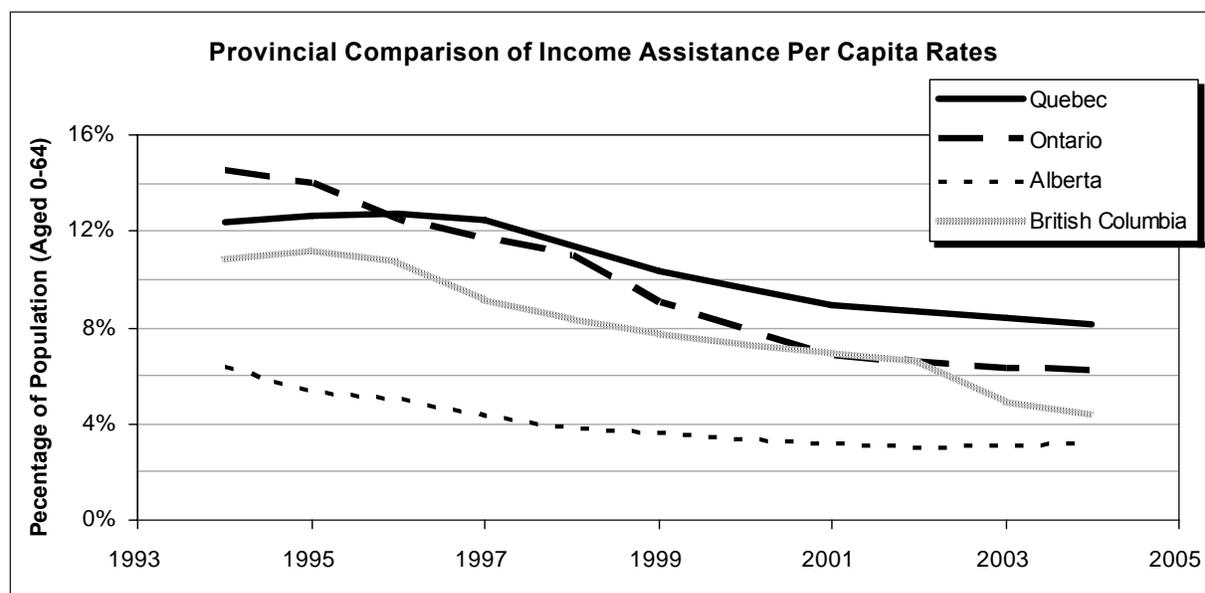
The ministry also contributed \$15 million to the 20th Anniversary of the Rick Hansen Man in Motion Tour to improve the lives of people with spinal cord injuries.

B.C. is the only province to provide a subsidized provincial bus pass for persons with disabilities

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Actual	Variance	Target Met?
2.1 Percentage of B.C.'s population receiving income assistance.	3.6%	3.7%	3.3%	-0.4%	✓✓

Source: Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch, Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.



Measure 2.1 shows the overall percentage of the provincial population that is receiving income assistance. A lower percentage indicates a decreasing proportion of the provincial population is dependent on income assistance. The percentage of the provincial population receiving income assistance was lower than had been expected for 2005/06. A number of factors have contributed to this result, including continued growth in B.C.'s economy and the delivery of ministry programs that move clients towards independence.

Performance Measure	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Actual	Variance	Target Met?
2.2 Percentage of total caseload receiving Disability Assistance.	49.8%	53.6%	55.6%	2.0%	✓✓

Source: Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch, Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.

Measure 2.2 tracks the percentage of the total caseload receiving Disability Assistance. Results indicate a continued growth in this measure. As the number of clients receiving Temporary Assistance declines (i.e., demonstrating success in finding employment), the proportion receiving Disability Assistance will grow. The number of Persons with Disabilities requiring assistance has also continued to grow due in part to an aging population, longer life expectancy for individuals experiencing significant health issues, and the impact of new illnesses and conditions, which also contributes to this result.

Performance Measure	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Actual	Variance	Target Met?
2.3 Percentage of persons receiving Disability Assistance who declare income from working or receive volunteer supplements.	15.1%	15.0%	15.7%	0.7%	✓✓

Source: Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch, Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.

This measure provides a conservative count of volunteer activity, as the result only tracks those who report volunteering activities. There is a substantial amount of additional volunteer activity that the ministry is unable to measure. Results show a continued increase in the percentage of Disability Assistance clients who either had employment income or received volunteer supplements.

Through ministry employment services, 75 PWD clients found full-time jobs, 119 found part-time jobs, and 12 became self-employed in 2005/06. 120 clients received referrals to other services such as training and post-secondary education. 87 clients found volunteer positions. Based on positive feedback from clients, other stakeholders, and the success of this performance measure, the ministry is increasing funding for the Community Volunteer Supplement in 2006/07 to address the growing number of interested clients. In future years, the ministry anticipates continued increases in Measure 2.3.

Ministry Goal 3

Clients receive supplementary assistance for health and transportation needs.

Core Business Area: Supplementary Assistance and Executive and Support Services.

The ministry provides a range of supplementary assistance designed to meet the health and transportation needs of clients. This assistance includes confirmed job supplements, health assistance, Senior's Supplement, bus passes and travel assistance, and user fees for continuing care, alcohol and drug facilities. The ministry spent \$205 million on Supplementary Assistance in the 2005/06 fiscal year.

Vancouver is the most accessible city in the world for Persons with Disabilities

Objectives

1. Clients receive health care supports in a timely manner.

Ministry clients with special health care needs frequently require equipment, supplements, and supports tailored to their specific requirements. Their ability to access these resources in a timely manner assists them in improving their quality of life, ability to find employment and participation in the community. The ministry began working on service standards and reviewed its business processes to improve timeliness and access to services through enhancing systems and streamlining the workload required to access services.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Actual	Variance	Target Met?
3.1 Average number of working days required for the adjudication of short-term nutritional supplement requests.	N/A	Establish Baseline	5 days	N/A	✓

Source: Health Assistance Branch, Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.

Measure 3.1 evaluates the ministry's performance in the review and adjudication of requests for short-term nutritional supplements provided by the ministry. Nutritional supplements are critical to the wellbeing of vulnerable clients, including infants and Persons with Disabilities. On average, the ministry processed nutritional adjudication requests within five working days establishing a new baseline for this target. This result demonstrates staff's commitment to ensuring clients receive a timely response and positive outcomes.

Ministry Goal 4

Individuals have access to a fair and timely reconsideration process.

Core Business Area: Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal and Executive and Support Services.

The ministry is committed to openness and transparency in its delivery of services to clients. All clients are informed of their rights to request a reconsideration of ministry decisions that affect their application for services. Clients dissatisfied with a decision may request an internal assessment or 'second look' by Reconsideration Adjudicators within the ministry who are removed from the initial determination.

The BC Employment and Assistance appeal system ensures unbiased, fair, timely, and transparent decision-making for clients. The Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal operates under the authority of the *Employment and Assistance Act* and the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*. The mission of the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal is to provide an accessible appeal process that delivers timely and fair decisions. The Appeal Tribunal is structured as an independent public body to ensure unbiased, fair and transparent decision-making. The Appeal Tribunal's Chair and Vice-Chairs are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor, and the Appeal Tribunal members are recruited throughout the province and appointed by the Minister. Appeal hearings occur throughout the province. Although most hearings are in-person, the appeals may also occur by teleconference, or, if both parties agree, through written submission to the Appeal Tribunal. This flexibility ensures all clients have access to the appeal process, regardless of where they reside.

Objectives

1. Reconsideration issues are efficiently resolved.
2. Decisions are made on appeals and parties notified within the statutory timelines.

Adjudication of health decisions represents a large and growing proportion of the reconsideration requests that the ministry undertakes annually. Health reconsiderations assess issues specific to individuals, such as their eligibility for a Persons with Disability (PWD) designation, or requests for medical equipment, supplies, and supports. The number of PWD reconsiderations increased by 33 per cent in 2005/06. Health reconsiderations are often complex, requiring additional medical evidence to be submitted by professionals and detailed examination of all case materials.

Strategies

1. The efficient processing of requests for reconsideration is monitored and, when necessary, procedures are amended to ensure reconsideration timelines are within statutory requirements.
2. The efficient processing of appeals is monitored and procedures are amended, when required, to ensure appeal timelines are within statutory requirements.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Actual	Variance	Target Met?
4.1 Percentage of reconsideration decisions that are made within ten business days.	79.7%	87%	69%	-18%	✘

Source: Health Reconsiderations Branch, Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.

Due to an increase in the number of complex cases this year, reconsideration decisions took longer than last year, on average. In response to this identified requirement, the ministry began to streamline the health reconsiderations process and dedicated more staff to processing health reconsiderations in order to mitigate the impacts and complexities associated with the growing health reconsiderations caseload. On average, the ministry made all of its reconsideration decisions within 11 days.

Performance Measure	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Actual	Variance	Target Met?
4.2 Percentage of appeals commenced within the 15-business day statutory limit.	100%	100%	100%	0%	✓

Source: Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal

Measure 4.2 tracks the percentage of appeal hearings commenced within the 15-day statutory time limit as set out in the Employment and Assistance Regulation.

Deregulation

One of the goals set out in the British Columbia Government Strategic Plan 2002/03 – 2004/05 was to achieve a one-third reduction in regulatory requirements across government. By June 2004, the ministry had surpassed that objective with the achievement of a 34.3 per cent reduction in regulatory requirements. Since June 2004, the ministry has maintained a zero per cent net increase in regulations, meeting government's current commitment to ensure no increase in regulations over the next three years. Over the next year, the ministry will support government's initiatives to improve regulatory quality by exploring opportunities to refine regulations to be more citizen-centred, cost-effective, results-based and responsive to clients by reducing and/or streamlining the steps or business processes involved in complying with ministry regulations.

In 2005/06, the ministry began aligning its information-sharing provisions with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPPA), thereby reducing duplication and supporting consistency across government.

Report on Resources

The annual budget is based on core business assumptions contained in the ministry's three-year Service Plan. The plan utilized forecasts of expenditure and caseload trends, plus anticipated impacts of legislative, policy and program changes. Ministry overall financial results are sensitive to fluctuations in caseload and program demand. The ministry manages its core businesses with the objective of achieving its overall budget.

88% of ministry expenditures provided direct assistance and employment supports to clients.

Resource Summary Table 2005/06

	Total Estimated ¹	Actual	Variance
Operating Expenses (\$000)			
Employment Programs	79,370	91,701	(12,331)
Temporary Assistance	355,187	318,162	37,025
Disability Assistance	580,423	573,528	6,895
Supplementary Assistance	172,479	205,255	(32,776)
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	1,819	1,832	(13)
Executive and Support Services	165,682	159,237	6,445
Total before Adjustment	1,354,960	1,349,716	5,244
Adjustment to Prior Year's Accrual	0	(22,529)	22,529
Total	1,354,960	1,327,187	27,773
Full-time Equivalentents (FTEs)			
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	14	14	0
Executive and Support Services	1,959	1,841	118
Total	1,973	1,855	118
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)			
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	35	0	35
Executive and Support Services	17,472	4,567	12,905
Total	17,507	4,567	12,940

¹ These amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with the presentation of the 2005/06 *Estimates*. Schedule A of the *Estimates* presents a detailed reconciliation.

Explanation of Variances

Employment Programs

The over-expenditure of \$12.3 million or 15.5 per cent reflects the current year costs of concluding the Job Placement Program and paying for services received. The new BC Employment Program (BCEP) will replace the Job Placement and Training for Jobs programs. BCEP was designed in response to the changing nature of the ministry's caseload and the requirement to provide increasingly barriered clients with flexible programming to meet their needs.

Temporary Assistance

The under-expenditure of \$37.0 million, or 10.4 per cent, is the result of a significantly lower Temporary Assistance caseload. The employable caseload has declined as a result of a revived provincial economy and ministry policies which support getting clients into jobs. The Temporary Assistance actual average caseload was approximately 46,000, 10 per cent lower than the budgeted average caseload of 50,500.

Disability Assistance

The under-expenditure of \$6.9 million or 1.2 per cent is the result of a lower cost per case for the Persons with Disabilities caseload. The Persons with Disabilities actual caseload average was 57,500 — one per cent higher than the budgeted average caseload of 57,000.

Supplementary Assistance

The over-expenditure of \$32.8 million or 19 per cent is the result of various ministry expenditures aimed to help build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk, and seniors; and the Premier's Taskforce on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions. These expenditures are tangible evidence of the ministry's commitment to work collaboratively with other provincial social sector ministries and agencies as well as non profit agencies and local governments.

Executive and Support Services

The under-expenditure of \$6.4 million or 3.9 per cent is primarily due to reduced expenditures in information systems and facilities.

Full Time Equivalency (FTE)

The ministry's FTE budget was under by 118 FTEs or 6 per cent in anticipation of the transfer of the Child Care Services program to the Ministry of Children and Family Development in fiscal 2006/07. As outlined in the transfer agreement, the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance agreed to retain the Child Care Service staff in the ministry. To ensure positions were available for all staff, the ministry elected not to permanently fill vacancies as they become available.

Capital Expenditures

The ministry's capital budget was under spent by \$13 million, or 74 per cent, due to changing priorities in the information technology capital plan.

Adjustment to Prior Year's Accruals

The adjustment to prior year's accruals is primarily comprised of a reduction in the ministry's allowance for doubtful accounts, to reflect improvements in the collection of accounts receivable. At March 31, 2006, the gross value of the ministry's accounts receivable was \$207.9 million with an allowance for doubtful accounts of \$164.5 million, for a net value of \$43.4 million.

Appendix A: Values and Service Code

The Values and Service Code was developed during the 2005/06 fiscal year and will be reflected in future Service Plans and Service Plan Reports.

Values

Our values support the integrity of the ministry. How we deliver our services and demonstrate our ability to operate in a manner that reflects our values is fundamental to building confidence among staff, clients and the public.

We Value:

- People
- Personal Responsibility
- Respect and Empathy
- Equity and Fairness
- Accountability
- Transparency and Open Communication

Service Code

In support of the ministry's Values, we commit to:

- be personally responsible for our thoughts, feelings and actions;
- honour and respect diversity and support this through our organizational practices;
- listen to understand;
- enhance our communication skills by practicing open, honest dialogue in a manner that does not discount others;
- define and respect our own boundaries and the boundaries of others;
- include or consult those affected in planning and decision-making processes when appropriate; and
- hold others in goodwill.

Within the context of our working relationships, each of us is expected to:

- model the ministry's core values in our daily work and align our actions with the ministry's mission and vision;
- take responsibility for our own work by seeking clarity in, and fulfilling our roles and responsibilities, setting realistic goals, acknowledging and learning through mistakes, and taking appropriate action;

- participate actively in employee performance development processes, including learning to give and receive effective feedback;
- share information openly, when appropriate, and communicate personally whenever possible;
- help foster and maintain a solutions-oriented and supportive work environment in which people can speak freely without fear of repercussion;
- take responsibility for resolving issues directly;
- recognize, acknowledge and celebrate individual and team success;
- stay current on our understanding of issues facing clients and communities, and of relevant legislation, policy and procedures; and
- take responsibility for our own well-being, including work/life balance.

As a client or a member of the public, you can expect ministry staff to provide:

- courteous, professional and consistent service, in a manner that emphasizes listening to understand;
- respect for your privacy and confidentiality;
- fair and thorough assessments of your situation and needs;
- assistance in identifying realistic approaches for meeting your needs;
- information and clear explanations of decisions as soon as possible; and
- help in understanding the ministry's legislation, and internal reconsideration and appeal processes.

As ministry employees, we expect that clients and members of the public will:

- treat us courteously and respectfully;
- provide us with the information we require to serve them;
- be accountable for meeting the requirements to receive assistance; and
- take responsibility towards achieving their potential.

Appendix B: Glossary of Terms

Caseload — The number of family units receiving temporary, disability or supplementary assistance.

Disability Assistance — Financial assistance provided to eligible persons who have been designated as meeting the criteria of a Person with Disabilities, as defined in the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*.

Earned Income — Any money or value received in exchange for work or the provision of a service (this includes stipends provided to clients for their participation in volunteer positions designed to build employment skills).

Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal — Agency that administers the appeal panel process. Its role begins when a Notice of Appeal is received from the appellant. At that point, the ministry operates at ‘arm’s length’ from the tribunal process, and is simply one of the parties to the appeal.

Employment Plan — A document that initiates discussion between the client and the ministry and supports employment planning and successful client outcomes. This is a mandatory requirement for most clients with employment-related obligations.

Employment Programs — Programs targeted toward employment and job readiness established or funded under the *Employment and Assistance Act* and the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*.

Employment-related Obligations — The ministry’s expectation that a client will seek work, based upon individual ability.

Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (ESPD) — A strategy designed to assist persons with disabilities to participate in employment-related activities to the best of their ability. The strategy recognizes that individuals experience disabilities in varying degrees, at different stages of their lives, and provides flexibility for those who want to volunteer or work full-time, part-time, or be self-employed.

Income Assistance — Financial assistance provided to eligible persons under the *Employment and Assistance Act*.

Persons with Disabilities — People meeting the criteria as set out in the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*.

Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers — People with multiple barriers to employment are those who meet the criteria as set out in the Employment and Assistance Regulations. Examples of multiple barriers are literacy issues, limited education and work experience, long-term dependence on assistance and medical conditions that preclude or impede employment.

Reconsideration — When a client disagrees with a ministry decision, the client may request a review of the decision. The process involves a written request, which is reviewed by a Reconsideration Adjudicator who makes a new decision. If the client does not agree with that decision, the matter may proceed to the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal.

Supplementary Assistance — Supplementary Assistance addresses pressing needs, such as health assistance, senior's supplement and bus passes.

Temporary Assistance — Short-term financial assistance provided to eligible persons, including Expected to Work clients and Children in the Home of a Relative, as defined in the *Employment and Assistance Act*.

