

Ministry of Attorney General

2022/23 Annual Service Plan Report

August 2023



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Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Attorney General 2022/23 Annual Service Plan Report compares the Ministry's actual results to the expected results identified in the 2022/23 – 2024/25 Service Plan published in 2022. I am accountable for those results as reported.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized initials 'NS' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

Honourable Niki Sharma, K.C.
Attorney General
August 18, 2023

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Letter from the Minister

I am pleased to introduce the 2022/23 Annual Service Plan Report for the Ministry of Attorney General. As Attorney General, my job is to equip our justice system with the tools it needs to work better for more people. This report outlines the significant progress we've made on our key priorities during the last fiscal year.

People increasingly expect and demand access to services and information online. At the same time, the complexity of criminal cases and the use of digital evidence is also growing.

Through the virtual bail program, we are improving access to legal services and making it easier for people to attend bail without having to leave their home community. In addition, we now have eight provincially funded legal clinics with lawyers providing advice on issues like poverty, housing, immigration, and disability, and who are available to act as counsel in legal proceedings at no cost to their clients.

As part of our ongoing commitment to advance reconciliation, we continue to work closely with the BC First Nations Justice Council and Métis Nation BC to advance Indigenous-led justice strategies.

The Province has made progress on its commitments outlined in the BC First Nations Justice Strategy, which aims to transform the justice system by “advancing First Nations’ self-determination and self-governance through the application of First Nation laws, traditions, and jurisdictions,” while “building capacity for Nations to increase holistic wellness, safety and security for their communities.”

B.C. now has four Indigenous Justice Centres and one Virtual Indigenous Justice Centre providing free legal advice, information, and representation for Indigenous Peoples along with culturally appropriate services that promote healing and wellness. With a new integrated and coordinated cross-ministry Indigenous Justice Secretariat leading the implementation of the First Nations Justice Strategy, we are working to create conditions where First Nations people are no longer disproportionately interacting with, nor being impacted by, the justice system.

The Province is developing broader anti-racism legislation that builds on the *Anti-Racism Data Act*, which became law in June 2022. This legislation will address the broader challenges of systemic racism, inequity, and discrimination in B.C. We are asking the public to provide their input and perspective on their experience of racism within government programs and services, and we're providing funding for community organizations to also explore this question.

This new legislation is being co-developed with Indigenous Peoples and other racialized communities.

I want to thank the team at the Ministry of Attorney General and all our community partners and stakeholders for your hard work, as we build a better justice system for everyone.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Niki Sharma', with a stylized, cursive script.

Honourable Niki Sharma, K.C.
Attorney General
August 18, 2023

Purpose of the Annual Service Plan Report

This annual service plan report has been developed to meet the requirements of the Budget Transparency and Accountability Act (BTAA), which sets out the legislative framework for planning, reporting and accountability for Government organizations. Under the BTAA, the Minister is required to report on the actual results of the Ministry's performance related to the forecasted targets stated in the service plan for the reported year.

Strategic Direction

The strategic direction set by Government in 2020 and the Attorney General's [2020 Mandate Letter](#) shaped the goals, objectives, performance measures and financial plan outlined in the Ministry of Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing's [2022/23 – 2024/25 Service Plan](#) and the actual results reported on in this annual report.

Purpose of the Ministry

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

The Ministry is responsible for sheriff and court administration services, legal aid, prosecution services, administrative tribunals, civil and family justice services, protection and promotion of human rights, providing legal advice to Government and providing policy and justice reform advice to the Attorney General. The Ministry is also responsible for promoting multiculturalism and leading anti-racism initiatives through the Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives.

Operating Environment

In 2022/23, two major changes occurred to the structure of the Ministry of Attorney General. On December 7, 2022, the Office of Housing and Construction Standards departed from the ministry to form a new Ministry of Housing, alongside the Planning and Land Use Management Branch from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. Further change occurred in March 2023, when the Indigenous Justice Secretariat was established, pursuant to a commitment made by Government in Strategy 9 of the BC First Nations Justice strategy, to create a cross-ministry Indigenous Justice Secretariat within the Ministry of Attorney General.

Partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations continued to be a key priority of the justice and public safety sector, with the goals of reducing the over-representation of Indigenous Peoples, as accused, offenders and victims, through supporting culturally responsive and relevant policies, programs and services that address the specific needs of Indigenous Peoples. This is consistent with government's commitment to true, lasting reconciliation through the implementation of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan, which outlines significant actions the Province will undertake in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples over the next five years to achieve the objectives of the UN Declaration.

The B.C. Human Rights Commissioner released their report on incidents of hate during the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2023. The findings from this report will help to inform the Province's approach to dismantling systemic racism, but also underscore the importance of working alongside impacted communities in advancing the Province's work. To help with the public co-development process for the anti-racism legislation, the Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Branch conducted a distinctions-based engagement process with Indigenous partners. Ministry staff have met with staff from Métis Nation BC, Modern Treaty Nations, and BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres. Legislation co-development sessions are underway with First Nations rights holders, First Nations Leadership Council, the Alliance of BC Modern Treaty Nations and Urban Indigenous groups. More engagement is necessary and will take place with racialized communities into Fall 2023.

After providing virtual services since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person services resumed at all 19 family justice centres and five justice access centres in June 2022. Staff are now able to offer clients a full range of services both in-person as well as virtually, based on client needs and preferences. However, in-person capacity restrictions and staffing challenges led to a slight reduction in service delivery over the past year.

Courts continued to operate throughout the pandemic with health and safety measures implemented. The Court Services Branch continues to build on the momentum of recent years to enhance technology and technical infrastructure to support virtual appearances. The efforts and responses in recent years to the COVID-19 pandemic have positioned the Court Services Branch to be even more responsive to potential business disruptions, which was evident when the Golden courthouse fire occurred in March 2023.

Responding to the Safer Communities Action Plan, the BC Prosecution Service has assigned 21 Crown Counsel and 21 professional staff to the Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative,

an initiative focussing on improved information sharing, collaboration, and enhanced case management.

Prosecutors dedicated to the Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative across the province provide criminal law advice and independent prosecution support to community representatives, police, and corrections personnel, while maintaining prosecutorial independence and an organizational commitment to addressing overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system.

Other issues and trends continued to shape the priorities of the justice and public safety sector, and affect the ministry's delivery of these responsibilities, including:

- The ongoing dialogue on the need to improve access to justice;
- The illicit drug crisis and public health emergency;
- Mental health and addiction challenges necessitating increased resources and enhanced coordination of services;
- Violence against women, girls and 2SLGBTQ+ community members – especially Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQ+ people;
- Gangs and gun violence;
- Increasing service delivery demands and costs;
- Court decisions impacting service delivery, including timeliness of service;
- Rapidly changing technology and increased demand for digitized services; and
- Constitutional and legislative requirements.

Report on Performance: Goals, Objectives, and Results

This section of the annual report will report out on Attorney General-specific objectives and results from the Ministry of Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing's [2022/23 – 2024/25 Service Plan](#). The goal and objectives related to housing were the responsibility of program areas that were transferred to the Ministry of Housing in December 2022.

Goal and objective numbers have been re-stated from the 2022/23 service plan for comparability purposes. For reporting on Goal 2, please refer to the Ministry of Housing's 2022/23 Annual Service Plan Report.

Goal 1: The justice sector in British Columbia is fair

Objective 1.1: Increased access to justice

Fairness in the justice and public safety sector is bolstered by improving the public's access to justice, including affordable, effective, and lasting resolution to civil and family disputes, as well as criminal legal proceedings. A fair justice system protects the public, including disadvantaged persons and victims of crime.

Key results

- The Provincial Court Virtual Bail Initiative has successfully implemented new processes and technology in the Northern, Interior, and Vancouver Island Region. This has resulted in a more resilient justice system that can better respond to closures or delays due to extreme events, including those related to flooding, wildfires, pandemics, staff shortages, and infrastructure outages.
- New *Court of Appeal Act* and Court of Appeal Rules came into effect July 18, 2022. These changes modernize the court system and improve access to justice by using plain language and making the process for filing an appeal easier to understand and more efficient for lawyers and self-represented litigants.
- In June 2022, the Legislative Assembly passed amendments to the *Mental Health Act* to lay the foundation for a Rights Advice Service for people involuntarily admitted under the *Act*. The amendments give involuntary patients the right to meet with a rights advisor and specifies when they must be informed of this right. The amendments will come into force through regulation once the Rights Advice Service is available province-wide.
- A new provincially-funded legal clinic – a child and youth clinic hosted by the Society for Children and Youth of BC – opened in 2022, bringing the total of provincially-funded legal clinics to eight. These poverty law and other specialized (housing, disability, and immigration and refugee law) legal clinics provide free legal information, advice, and representation to low-income individuals who otherwise would not have been able to access legal support for their legal matter.
- Starting in 2022/23, B.C. committed to providing \$730,000 in annual ongoing funding to the Society for Children and Youth of BC, the only program in B.C. delivering a full range of legal services to children and youth. The Society for Children and Youth of BC's Child

and Youth Centre provides information and referrals, summary advice, and representation to children and youth across the province in contested family law matters (consistent with the views of the child), child protection matters, and other matters that affect them.

- In 2022/23, the Province provided a \$7.469 million increase to Legal Aid BC's budget to support lawyers delivering legal aid in the province. From this funding, \$2.821 million allowed for expanded and enhanced service delivery, including an enhanced and secure Family Limited Representation Contract program, a new expert witness initiative, an expanded Criminal Early Resolution Contract program, and a program to develop junior counsel to ensure access to legal aid service in the future. The remaining \$4.648 million in new funding was provided to Legal Aid BC to support and expand the delivery of legal aid services by lawyers in the province.

Summary of progress made in 2022/23

In 2022/23, the Ministry engaged in a wide array of activities that will promote access to justice in British Columbia.

British Columbia endeavours to be transparent with international oversight mechanisms that strive to improve human rights in Canada and around the world. In March of 2023, the Ministry, along with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, representatives from the Declaration Act Secretariat, and other senior officials met with the Special Rapporteur to discuss issues related to the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In March 2023, the Legislature passed the *Intimate Images Protection Act* which is intended to provide civil legal redress to victims and survivors of the non-consensual distribution of intimate images, a devastating form of sexualized, gender-based violence. When this legislation comes into force, it will provide accessible mechanisms to stop or prevent distribution of intimate images without consent and provide a statutory, victim-focused basis to seek monetary damages.

In November 2022, amendments to the *Judicial Review Procedure Act* were passed and brought into force, providing transparency and clarity for judicial reviews of decisions made under consent-based decision-making agreements with Indigenous Peoples. The amendments are part of Government's implementation of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, which created a means for Indigenous Peoples to fully participate in decisions that affect them.

In June 2022, amendments were made to the *Offence Act* to provide for changes to the violation ticket dispute process, including the ability to submit traffic ticket disputes online via the Traffic Court Online platform. Traffic Court Online is one of the Ministry's justice modernization initiatives, aimed at creating digital capabilities and functionality. Traffic Court Online leverages technology to enhance accessibility and efficiency of the violation ticket dispute process for citizens, court staff, enforcement agencies, and ICBC. Traffic Court Online is planned to launch in early 2024.

The Ministry announced a legislative project that proposes to modernize the regulation of legal professionals in B.C. and includes the creation of a new category of legal service provider called

licensed paralegals, authorized to provide legal services directly to the public. An intentions paper was published in September 2022 as a vehicle for feedback on the Ministry's initial proposals. Work continues on the development of a legislative proposal for government's further consideration.

In April 2022, the reach of services delivered by Child Support Officers was expanded through the virtual services model so that all clients who have only a child support issue in the Supreme Court can now receive services regardless of where in the province they reside. Prior to this change, clients were limited to finalizing their matters with a family justice counsellor in a Memorandum of Understanding, whereas Child Support Officers have the authority to draft consent orders.

In May 2022, the Family Justice Services Division began using their revised assessment tool in early conversations with clients to explore safety issues, power dynamics, and potential power imbalances. The tool is now more trauma-informed and considers issues like coercive control.

A pilot to offer mediation services to Indigenous families began in November 2022. Mediation services are now regularly offered in an Indigenous-serving community partner office.

Government's ongoing public commitment to protecting human rights has prioritized important issues such as accessibility, reconciliation, anti-racism, and the establishment of the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner. These priorities have raised awareness of human rights in B.C.

Over the past ten years, the BC Human Rights Tribunal has averaged a 27 per cent increase in delegated budget to service a 210 per cent increase in the number of cases, and a 400 per cent increase in active cases. The BC Human Rights Tribunal was initially structured and funded to process approximately 1,100 cases per year. In fiscal year 2021/2022, complainants filed 3,192 new cases.

The Province increased funding for the BC Human Rights Tribunal in early 2023. The additional funding will support the BC Human Rights Tribunal in addressing the increased caseload and allow the tribunal to appoint more members and hire additional support staff to meet clients' needs. Ministry staff are working collaboratively with the BC Human Rights Tribunal to address the increased demand through managing human resources, process improvements, securing financial resources, and technological advancements.

The Ministry works to support 19 of the 28 tribunals in the province, many of which were established throughout the 1970s and 1980s to resolve disputes between private citizens and central government departments, such as claims to the Labour Relations Board or the Environmental Appeal Board. The boards and tribunals are important players in the administrative justice realm and, like the courts, require modernization.

The Tribunal and Agency Support Division supports the 19 tribunals accountable to the Attorney General. The division supports this sector and improves access to justice by introducing new technology, modernizing facilities, developing consistent processes, clarifying accountabilities, and supporting business transformation.

The Tribunal and Agency Support Division continues to work to identify areas where the adoption of new processes, technology, and organizational structure may assist in modernizing the tribunal sector to provide better access to justice for citizens, be more resilient in the face of

change and emergencies, and keep pace with government initiatives such as reconciliation, climate action, and accessibility.

The Virtual Bail Initiative has advanced long-term bail reform plans in addition to providing an immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic and has included the implementation of Crown-led evening and weekend bail and the modernization of videoconferencing technology.

Virtual Bail has minimized displacement of the accused, helped accused people continue to access the supports they need, and has allowed virtual hearings to proceed despite otherwise disruptive events such as extreme weather, pandemics, or infrastructure outages. Following the success of piloting Virtual Bail in the Northern region in 2021, Virtual Bail expanded into the Interior and Vancouver Island regions in 2022 and 2023.

The use of video conferencing technology and updated processes has improved communication and information sharing and enhanced the efficiency of the justice sector, ultimately improving access to justice.

The Justice Services Branch has received temporary funding from the federal Justice Partnership and Innovation Program to explore ways to improve the experience of families who have been impacted by intimate partner violence as they navigate the family law system. The Exploring Safe Supports for Family Justice (Safe Supports) project is designing prototype services focused on the private family law system: *Family Law Act* in the Provincial Court. Services are expected to be operating in three to four locations in the fall of 2023.

The Informal Trial Pilot Project Rules were implemented in the Kamloops registry in May 2022. This introduces a consent-based alternative trial process for family matters in which the trial judge can take a facilitative role to direct, control, and manage the conduct of the trial. The informal trial is designed to be less formal and more flexible to better meet the needs of the parties.

Performance measure and related discussion

Performance Measure	2019/20 Baseline	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Target	2022/23 Actual
[1.1] Number of substantive client service activities provided ¹	53,167	42,005	43,312	40,556

Data source: Family Justice Services Division (FJSD), Ministry of Attorney General

¹PM 1.1 targets for 2023/24 and 2024/25 were stated in the 2022/23 service plan as 48,815 and 54,319, respectively. For forward-looking planning information, including current targets for 2023/24 – 2025/26, please see the latest service plan on the [BC Budget website](#).

The 2022/23 result was below the target. In 2022/23 Family Justice Service Division resumed in-person services (including mediation) and continued to offer virtual services based on client needs and preferences. Although this transition moved service delivery closer to the pre-pandemic model, some in-person services were necessarily curtailed by COVID-19 prevention measures even as they resumed; for example, the maximum capacity of Self-Help Resource Rooms is now limited to allow for social distancing, reducing the number of clients that can be assisted. Staffing challenges further limited the number of clients that could be served in some Self-Help Resource Rooms in 2022/23. With the return to in-person services and staff shortages

being addressed, activity levels are expected to gradually return to baseline levels as safety measures are further relaxed and clients regain comfort with face-to-face service.

Objective 1.2: Improved outcomes for Indigenous Peoples through strengthened partnerships with Indigenous leadership and communities

Indigenous Peoples are overrepresented in the criminal justice system. The Province has committed to reduce this overrepresentation in agreements with Canada and Indigenous partners.

Key results

- B.C. and the BC First Nations Justice Council continue to advance the BC First Nations Justice Strategy. This strategy includes 25 strategies organized into two tracks of change: Reform of the existing justice system; and building First Nations justice systems and institutions. B.C. and the BC First Nations Justice Council made significant progress on several of the strategies in 2022/23.
- Indigenous Justice Centres continued to serve clients in Prince George, Prince Rupert, and Merritt/Nicola Valley, as well as across B.C. through the Virtual Indigenous Justice Centre. These centres provide access to culturally appropriate justice services in alignment with the BC First Nations Justice Strategy's Strategy 4.
- B.C. committed funding to expand the network of Indigenous Justice Centres to 15 by the end of 2024 in accordance with the BC First Nations Justice Strategy, and work began in 2022/23 on the expansion of five centres in 2023/24.
- B.C. initiated design of a legal aid model for Indigenous Peoples, including a workplan to transfer control of Indigenous legal aid services from Legal Aid BC to the BC First Nations Justice Council.

Summary of progress made in 2022/23

In the past year, the Ministry made significant investments into this work for future years, including the announced funding of over \$16 million to open five additional Indigenous Justice Centres in 2023/24 as part of the Safer Communities Action Plan. The Ministry further announced the establishment of an Indigenous Justice Secretariat to champion this work and lead the implementation of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy, as well as continuing to work towards endorsement of a Métis Justice Strategy. These announcements strengthened the partnerships that the Ministry has with the BC First Nations Justice Council, and Métis Nation BC to work towards reducing the overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in the justice system.

Performance measure and related discussion

Performance Measure	2020/21 Baseline	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Target	2022/23 Actual
[1.2] Number of Indigenous clients supported at Indigenous Centres ¹	254	380	455	256

Data source: BC First Nations Justice Council data from Indigenous Justice Centres (IJC) in Prince George, Prince Rupert and Nicola Valley/Merritt, and Virtual Indigenous Justice Centre (VIJC)

¹PM 1.2 targets for 2023/24 and 2024/25 were stated in the 2022/23 service plan as 655 each year. For forward-looking planning information, including current targets for 2023/24 – 2025/26, please see the latest service plan on the [BC Budget website](#).

This performance measure was developed during 2021/22 fiscal year and was first included in the 2022/23 Service Plan. The target for 2022/23 was developed with the assumption that two more centres would be operational in 2022/23. These openings are now scheduled for 2023/24 which has led to the 2022/23 number of clients supported to be under the target. The number of clients served in 2022/23 was further reduced from 2021/22, as there were periods in the year where Merritt and Prince George did not have the full complement of lawyers staffed, limiting the number of cases that could be taken at those centres.

Each physical centre offers unique supports tailored to the local Indigenous community, and individuals are able to access a number of services from each centre, including legal advice and representation for criminal and child protection matters; advocacy and support in dealing with agencies such as the police and Ministry of Children and Family Development; referrals to relevant agencies and services such as counselling or employment support; information towards better transitions from jail and integration into the community; and restorative justice options to better support and address the needs of those impacted by a crime. This measure reflects government's work with Indigenous leadership and communities to increase access to justice for Indigenous Peoples through delivery of local and culturally relevant services.

Goal 3: B.C.'s Communities and institutions are free from racism

Objective 3.1: Champion anti-racism across government, address systemic discrimination, and support communities to respond to public incidents of racism and hate

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

Key results

- In partnership with the Ministry of Citizens' Services, the *Anti-Racism Data Act* became law in June 2022. It is an important tool to help the Province dismantle systemic racism. This legislation enables government to collect and use demographic information such as race, gender, and ancestry to identify and eliminate systemic racism. An 11-member Anti-Racism Data Committee was appointed in Fall 2022. The Committee represents a wide

cross-section of racialized communities and geographic regions in the province. Both the Indigenous Governing Entities and the Committee are collaborating with government on setting anti-racism research priorities.

- The Ministry moved forward with the public co-development and engagement on the broader anti-racism legislation during late 2022 and early 2023. A distinctions-based engagement process with Indigenous partners has begun. Legislation co-development sessions are underway with First Nations rights holders, First Nations Leadership Council, BC Alliance of Modern Treaties and Urban Indigenous groups. The broader anti-racism legislation is planned to be introduced in Spring 2024.
- Communities in all regions of the province received funding through the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network to provide them with supports and training they need to respond to, and prevent future incidents of racism. Some communities received funding for Anti-Racism and Multiculturalism Grants, and others received Anti-Racism and Multiculturalism Awards and recognition for the important Anti-Racism and Multiculturalism work they have done.
- The Ministry continued to make progress in supporting the legacy actions recommended in the National Association of Japanese Canadians' "Recommendations for Redressing Historical Wrongs Against Japanese Canadians in B.C." report. The legacy actions that came out of the community consultations and were covered in the report include the following six pillars: Health and Wellness, Education, Monument, Community and Culture, Heritage, and Anti-Racism & Acknowledgement. Four out of the six pillars have been funded at this time.

Summary of progress made in 2022/23

The Ministry continues to make progress on addressing this objective. The Ministry is working diligently with Indigenous and racialized communities to build from the work that was done for the *Anti-Racism Data Act*, to create broader anti-racism legislation that will provide additional policy and rigor to help dismantle system racism in government programs and policies. Through essential multiculturalism and anti-racism initiatives, the Province has been able to provide funding to Indigenous and racialized communities across the province to support the great work that is being done to help build a stronger anti-racism focused province. The Ministry is also working hard to address the hurtful historical wrongs that impacted the Japanese Canadians in B.C. by providing funding and working closely with the community to develop important redress initiatives.

Performance measure and related discussion

Performance Measure	2017/18 Baseline	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Target	2022/23 Actual
3.1 Number of B.C. communities engaged in projects that build intercultural trust and understanding and reduce racism and systemic barriers ¹	45	55	50	60

Data source: Data compiled from the BC Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Grants Program, the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network, and grants provided for engagement toward the *Anti-Racism Data Act*.

¹PM 3.1 targets for 2023/24 and 2024/25 were stated in the 2022/23 service plan as 50 each year. For forward-looking planning information, including current targets for 2023/24 – 2025/26, please see the latest service plan on the [BC Budget website](#).

The Ministry administered the Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Grants program, provided funding for the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network and have led a number of anti-racism engagement sessions with communities across B.C. The ministry exceeded the target number of communities engaged in 2022-23.

Financial Report

Discussion of Results

The Estimates operating expense budget of the Ministry for 2022/23 before a December 2022 reorganization was \$1,374.030 million. The Ministry received a budget increase of \$101.529 million compared to the 2021/22 fiscal plan for the following: Permanent Housing Plan; Homelessness Strategy; Rapid Housing Initiative; Legal Aid Policy Mandate; Provincial Courts Judiciary Support; Courts Modernization; Digital Evidence Management System; Housing Hub Implementation; Intersection Safety Camera Violation tickets; Court Fees and Fines System Implementation; *Public Inquiry Act* - Cullen Commission; Housing Supply Shortage; Legal Services Branch-Cannabis Implementation Advice; Superior Court Judiciary Support; Digital Evidence Storage; Building BC; Legal Services Fee-Increased Recoveries; fiscal budget adjustment, and prior year decisions.

The Public Accounts shows Other Authorizations of (\$567.068) million and includes:

- \$89.180 million in Contingencies Vote access for: Addressing Japanese Canadian historical Wrongs, Japanese Canadian Survivors Health and Wellness Implementation Plan, Digital Evidence storage, Court Modernization, Legal Services branch pressures, Court Services pressures, Independent Investigations Office pressures, Anti-Racism Legislation, BC Law Institute, Intersection Safety Camera Program, Law Foundation Advocacy Network, RISE Women's Legal Clinic, Accelerated funding for Uniform Law Conference of Canada assessment, Resilience BC Grants, *Mental Health Act* rights advice, Negotiation Support for Association of Legal Aid Lawyers, law clerk and articling student compensation, and the Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of BC.

- (\$667.584) million in program budgets from the AG Ministry Vote was transferred out as a result of the December 7, 2022, Cabinet Announcement (OIC 658):
 - (\$652.791) million Housing Vote was transferred to the Ministry of Housing;
 - (\$12.884) million Housing Endowment Fund Special Account was transferred to the Ministry of Housing;
 - (\$1.337) million of the ministry's appropriation for Executive Support Services was transferred to Ministry of Housing - Housing Exec Support;
 - (\$0.572) million of the ministry's appropriation related to the Office of the Superintendent of Professional Governance from Justice Services Branch was transferred out to Post-Secondary and Future Skills .

Spending under the statutory appropriations was \$11.336 million, including \$11.116 million for the *Crown Proceeding Act*, reflecting the cost of settlements or judgments, as well as adjustments to accrued liabilities for civil litigation against the province, and \$0.220 million under the *Public Inquiry Act* for the Cullen Commission of Inquiry into Money Laundering in British Columbia.

Including the Other Authorizations, the Ministry's Total Estimated budget was \$806.962 million compared to actual expenditures of \$805.865 million, prior to the adjustment for Prior Year's Accruals.

Financial Summary

	Estimates	Other Authorizations ¹	Total Estimated	Actual	Variance
Operating Expenses (\$000)					
Justice Services	170,576	12,700	183,276	183,276	0
Prosecution Services	167,852	0	167,852	166,818	(1,034)
Court Services	135,111	1,577	136,688	137,414	726
Legal Services	28,399	1,635	30,034	31,301	1,267
Agencies, Boards, Commissions and other Tribunals	43,753	0	43,753	42,574	(1,179)
Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism	1,916	63,081	64,997	64,997	0
Executive and Support Services	33,980	7,929	41,909	42,130	221
VOTE 15	581,587	86,922	668,509	668,509	0
Judiciary	92,325	0	92,325	91,431	(894)
Crown Proceeding Act	24,500	11,116	35,616	35,616	0
Independent Investigations Office	9,093	349	9,442	9,442	0
Housing	652,791	(652,791)	0	0	0
Housing Endowment Fund	12,884	(12,884)	0	0	0
Public Guardian and Trustee Operating Account	10,763	0	10,763	10,560	(203)
Transfer from General Account to PGT Operating Account	(10,763)	0	(10,763)	(10,763)	0
Public Inquiry Act	850	220	1,070	1,070	0
Sub-Total	1,374,030	(567,068)	806,962	805,865	(1,096)
Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual²	0	0	0	(884)	(884)
Total	1,374,030	(567,080)	806,962	804,982	(1,980)

¹ "Other Authorizations" include Supplementary Estimates, Statutory Appropriations, Government Reorganization and Contingencies. Amounts in this column are not related to the "estimated amount" under sections 5(1) and 6(1) of the *Balanced Budget and Ministerial Accountability Act* for ministerial accountability for operating expenses under the Act.

² The Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual of \$0.884 million is a reversal of accruals in the previous year.

Capital Expenditures

Ministry Capital Expenditures Consolidated Revenue Fund (\$000)					
	Estimates	Other Authorizations ¹	Total Estimated	Actual	Variance
Justice Services	0	0	0	259	259
Prosecution Services	0	0	0	31	31
Court Services	0	0	0	5,008	5,008
Legal Services	0	0	0	7	7
Agencies, Boards, Commissions, and other Tribunals	10	0	10	0	(10)
Multiculturalism	0	0	0	0	0
Executive and Support Services	13,944	1,552	15,496	3,242	(12,254)
Judiciary	770	0	770	730	(40)
Crown Proceeding Act	0	0	0	0	0
Independent Investigations Office	0	0	0	220	220
Public Guardian and Trustee Operating Account	363	0	363	256	(107)
Public Inquiry Act	0	0	0	0	0
Total	15,087	1,552	16,639	9,753	(6,886)

¹ "Other Authorizations" include Supplementary Estimates, Statutory Appropriations and Contingencies. Amounts in this column are not related to the "estimated amount" under sections 5(1) and 6(1) of the *Balanced Budget and Ministerial Accountability Act* for ministerial accountability for operating expenses under the Act.

Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations

As of August 18, 2023, the Ministry of Attorney General is responsible and accountable for the following organizations:

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

- [Notaries Public Foundation and Board of Examiners](#)
- [Oil and Gas Appeal Tribunal](#)
- [Property Assessment Appeal Board](#)
- [Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia](#)
- [Safety Standards Appeal Board](#)
- [Surface Rights Board](#)
- [Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal](#)

Appendix B: Electoral Boundaries Commission

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

Purpose of the Electoral Boundaries Commission

The Electoral Boundaries Commission is an independent and non-partisan commission appointed to review provincial electoral district boundaries. The Commission makes proposals to the Legislative Assembly on the area, boundaries, and names of electoral districts to be used in the next two provincial general elections. This ensures that each part of B.C. has effective representation.

Governance Structure

Under the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act*, the Lieutenant Governor in Council must appoint the BC Electoral Boundaries Commission, consisting of:

- A judge or retired judge of the Supreme Court or the Court of Appeal who is nominated by the Lieutenant Governor in Council,
- A person who is not a member of the Legislative Assembly or an employee of the government and who is nominated by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, after consultation with the Premier and the Leader of the Official Opposition, and
- The Chief Electoral Officer appointed under the *Elections Act*.

Key Results

- In 2022-23, the Commission continued their initial public consultation phase of their work, both virtual and in-person, concluding on May 31, 2022.
- The Commission tabled its preliminary report in the Legislative Assembly on October 3, 2022, requesting comment from British Columbians. The Commission subsequently conducted 13 public hearings, hearing from 76 presenters, as well as receiving more than 800 submissions. On November 23, 2022, the Commission held hearings for MLAs, hearing 35 presentations.
- The Commission subsequently finalized their recommendations for B.C.'s electoral districts, with the Report ready to be released at the beginning of the 2023-24 fiscal year.

Financial Summary

	Estimates	Other Authorizations ¹	Total Estimated	Actual	Variance
Operating Expenses (\$000)					
Electoral Boundaries Commission	2,194	0	2,194	1,484	(710)
Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual ¹	0	0	0	(7)	(7)
Total	2,194	0	2,194	1,477	(717)

¹ The Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual of \$0.007 million is a reversal of accruals in the previous year.

Appendix C: Progress on Mandate Letter Priorities

The following is a summary of progress made on priorities as stated in Minister of Attorney General's 2020 Mandate Letter.

2020 Mandate Letter Priority	Status as of March 31, 2023
<p>Work with the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Indigenous communities, and the BC First Nations Justice Council to advance the First Nations Justice Strategy and to improve access to culturally appropriate justice, including continuing to establish Indigenous Justice Centres across the province.</p>	<p>In progress – The BC First Nations Justice Strategy (FNJS), was signed on March 6, 2020, and an implementation workplan was approved by Cabinet in July 2021. Since then, there has been significant progress made on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy 4: Establishing a Network of Indigenous Justice Centres (IJC): There are three IJCs operating in Prince George, Prince Rupert, and Merritt as well as a Virtual Indigenous Justice Centre (VIJC), all of which provide legal advice and representation to Indigenous clients with criminal or family law legal matters who may not otherwise have access to legal representation. The Province has committed to funding the network of 15 IJCs as described in the FNJS by the end of 2024, with a centre set to open in Chilliwack this spring, five to open in major urban centres (Kelowna, Nanaimo, Surrey, Vancouver, and Victoria) this year, and six more IJCs scheduled to open next fiscal. • Strategy 9: Establishing an Indigenous Justice Secretariat: On March 6, 2023, B.C. appointed the Executive Director of the Indigenous Justice Policy and Legislation Division, Colleen Spier, to the role of Assistant Deputy Minister for the newly formed Indigenous Justice Secretariat. This is as described in Strategy 9, which calls for B.C. to establish the Indigenous Justice Secretariat to advance the FNJS through coordination throughout the Provincial Government, Federal Government and the broader justice sector. • Strategy 16: Establish an annual Justice Summit on First Nations Issues. The BCFNJC hosted a First Nations Justice Forum on March 6-8, 2023, which provided a space for First Nations rights holders, leadership, and subject matter experts to attend and hear updates on FNJS implementation and provide their input and feedback. Topics covered at the forum included community safety and policing, First Nations women's justice, Indigenous courts, the National Indigenous Justice Strategy, and the future of legal services for Indigenous Peoples, including the expansion of Indigenous Justice Centers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There continues to be progress across other areas of the FNJS as well. This includes securing funding from Canada to develop an Indigenous Women's Justice Plan (Strategy 11), developing cultural competency standards for the justice system (Strategy 20), and the Province funding the development of a workplan to transition Indigenous Legal Aid Services from Legal Aid BC to BCFNJC.
Work with the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General and the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions to fast track the move toward decriminalization by working with police chiefs to push Ottawa to decriminalize simple possession of small amounts of illicit drugs for personal use. In the absence of prompt federal action, develop a made-in B.C. solution that will help save lives.	Completed - Health Canada granted an exemption from the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to the Province of B.C. This is effective from January 31, 2023, to January 31, 2026. Under this exemption, adults (18 years and older) in B.C. are not arrested or charged for possessing small amounts of certain illegal drugs for personal use.
Advance recommendations from the findings of the Cullen Commission and the German Report to fight money laundering.	In Progress - The ministry is advancing a small number of recommendations, including changes to the Notaries Act as part of our overall project to modernize the regulation of legal professionals. The Law Society is also advancing a number of recommendations relating to the regulation of lawyers.
Support the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation to deliver the action plan required under DRIPA to build strong relationships based on recognition and implementation of the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples protected in Canada's constitution.	<p>In progress – Action 3.12: Prioritize implementation of the First Nations Justice Strategy (FNJS). FNJS, was signed on March 6, 2020, and an implementation workplan was approved by Cabinet in July 2021. Since then, there has been significant progress made on the Strategy. Of the 25 strategies contained within it, there has been significant progress on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy 4: Establishing a Network of Indigenous Justice Centres (IJC). Strategy 9: Establishing an Indigenous Justice Secretariat. Strategy 16: Establish an annual Justice Summit on First Nations Issues.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy 17: January 20, 2022, the BCFNJC, BC and Canada announced the signing of a Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding to support their shared agenda, including the implementation of the FNJS, and collaboration on the development of a National Indigenous Justice Strategy. • There continues to be progress across other areas of the FNJS as well. This includes securing funding from Canada to develop an Indigenous Women's Justice Plan (Strategy 11), developing cultural competency standards for the justice system (Strategy 20), and the Province funding the development of a workplan to transition Indigenous Legal Aid Services from Legal Aid BC to BCFNJC. • Action 3.13: Prioritize endorsement and implementation of the Métis Justice Strategy (MJS): • The ministry has received the draft MJS from MNBC and continues to facilitate government consultation on the MJS and its accompanying draft Implementation Workplan. • On March 7, 2023, Minister Sharma, KC, Minister Rankin, KC, and Minister Heyman met with Jose Francisco Calí Tzay, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In their roundtable discussion, it was agreed that in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, we will continue to review and align British Columbia laws with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (UNDRIP), for all statutes within the Ministry of Attorney General's mandate, including new and amending bills. • Some recent examples of UNDRIP alignment undertaken in AG statutes include amending the Human Rights Code to specifically identify that Indigenous identity is a prohibited ground of discrimination; amendments to the <i>Interpretation Act</i> to ensure that all B.C. laws are interpreted in a manner that is consistent with, and does not derogate from, aboriginal and treaty rights, including being consistent with UNDRIP; most recently, amendments to the Judicial Review Procedure Act that clarify the process a court must follow when reviewing decisions made by government under a s. 6 or 7 <i>Declaration Act</i> agreements (i.e. prior consent of an Indigenous governing body comes before the government decision.) • The Ministry has developed and implemented Parenting After Separation for Indigenous Families, an online course
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	<p>developed with support, partnership and guidance from an advisory committee with Indigenous representatives from across the province.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ministry is training all client-facing staff regarding Indigenous culture, history, and the impact of colonization on Indigenous Peoples.
Conduct a full review of anti-racism laws in other jurisdictions and launch a stakeholder consultation to inform the introduction of a new Anti-Racism Act that better serves everyone in B.C.	In Progress - The Ministry has been working with the B.C.'s Human Rights Commissioner's office and have begun the Interim approach with Indigenous Governing Entities to help co-develop the Anti-Racism legislation. Consultation and engagement will continue and expand to include other racialized communities throughout the process. The legislation is scheduled to be introduced in Spring 2024.
Work with B.C.'s new Human Rights Commissioner and other stakeholders to introduce legislation that will help reduce systemic discrimination and pave the way for race-based data collection essential to modernizing sectors like policing, health care and education.	In Progress - The Ministry is working with the Ministry of Citizens' Services on the Anti-Racism Data Act implementation. In Fall of 2022, the Anti-Racism Data Committee was appointed. The committee is made up of 11 members that represent a wide cross-section of racialized communities and geographic regions of B.C.
Honour the Japanese Canadian community by providing lasting recognition of the traumatic internment of more than 22,000 Japanese Canadians during World War II in libraries, communities and at the BC Legislature.	In Progress - Ministry staff have delivered \$62 million out of the \$100 million commitment that the BC Government made in May 2022. These funds sent to the Japanese Canadians Legacies Society are to support the new initiatives outlined in the communities' historical wrongs redress proposal, which covered six pillars of work.