

StrongerBC

for everyone

STRATEGIC PLAN ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24





Taking action for you

Our government is taking on the biggest challenges we're all facing and making life better for everyone

The Strategic Plan Annual Report 2023-24 provides an overview of Budget 2023 investments and achievements.

Budget 2023 was tabled during what was an uncertain time for many British Columbians. Global inflation was driving up the cost of daily essentials, while people continued to face persistent challenges such as finding an affordable place to live, getting a family doctor and adapting to our changing climate.

Budget 2023 met this moment and delivered real results focused on the priorities of British Columbians.

Our government eased the pressure of everyday costs by expanding affordable child care, making a historic investment in school food programs and becoming the first province in Canada to make prescription birth control free for all residents.

To help more people secure affordable homes, our government launched a bold new housing action plan and made transformational changes to the housing market. This work included cracking down on speculators, fixing outdated zoning rules and launching innovative initiatives to transform underused land into thriving communities and thousands of homes.

To ensure people can access high-quality public health care when and where they need it, our government added more than 800 family doctors and 6,500 nurses to our system in 2023, allowed pharmacists to prescribe for minor

ailments and contraception, and continued building more clinics, hospitals, cancer centres and long-term care homes.

British Columbians – and our government – know that living in a safe, healthy community is key to building a good life. In 2023-24, our government ensured this was a reality for more people by getting tough on organized crime and repeat violent offending, while also investing in new schools, child care spaces and community amenities and services.

Through Budget 2023, our government also continued work on longstanding priorities: advancing reconciliation in partnership with Indigenous Peoples, growing a stronger, more sustainable economy and fighting climate change.

Highlights of this interconnected work include making significant progress implementing B.C.'s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, launching a new Critical Mineral Strategy in alignment with the declaration and releasing the Future Ready Action Plan, which is focused on helping people get the skills they need for our changing economy and helping employers fill skills gaps.

Throughout 2023-24, our government was nimble, responding quickly to emerging challenges. For example, amid the worst wildfire season our province has ever seen, our government moved quickly to establish the Premier's Task Force on Emergencies to apply lessons learned to better support those on the front lines.

There is more work ahead. Our government will continue taking action for British Columbians. In an uncertain world, you can be certain our government has your back and is working hard to create a brighter future for all.

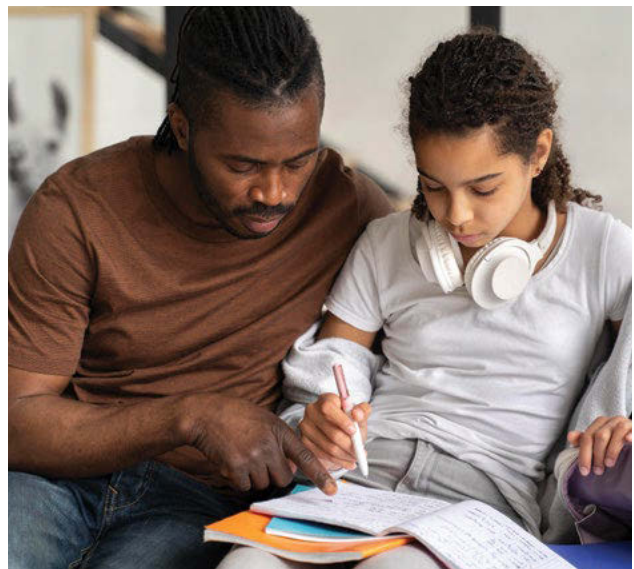
Making life a little easier

Bringing down everyday costs, from child care and groceries to rent and car insurance

- Created more than 4,900 \$10 a Day ChildCareBC spaces for a total of 13,500 since 2018-19.
- Reduced the cost of half-day preschool and before- and after-school programs by as much as \$145 per child, per month.
- Made a historic investment of \$212 million over three years to expand school food programs.
- Replenished the Student and Family Affordability Fund to help schools provide support directly to families within their school communities.
- Permanently increased the BC Family Benefit by 10%, giving parents as much as \$1,750 annually for their first child, \$1,100 for their second and \$900 for their third. Single parents are now also getting as much as an extra \$500 per year.
- Delivered another round of the BC Affordability Credit, benefiting about 85% of people with as much as \$164 per adult and \$41 per child.
- Made prescription birth control free for all residents, becoming the first province in Canada to do so.

More than 226,000 people received free birth control in the first year it was available. Someone who paid \$25 per month for birth control pills now saves **\$300 per year** and as much as **\$10,000 over their lifetime**.

- Capped rent increases for 2024 below the rate of inflation and introduced an income-tested renter's tax credit of up to \$400.
- Froze basic ICBC auto insurance rates for another two years, keeping them among the lowest in Canada.
- Increased access to financial aid for post-secondary students and eased the terms of repayment.
- Boosted income and disability assistance rates, marking the fourth increase since 2017.
- Increased payments to foster parents by as much as 47%, helping them cover the cost of essentials for children in their care.



Tackling the housing crisis

Making transformative changes to deliver more homes for people

- Launched the Homes for People action plan with more than \$4 billion over three years and a commitment of \$12 billion over the next 10 years.
- Committed \$394 million to acquiring land near existing and future transit hubs and transforming it into thousands of homes and thriving communities over the next 10 to 15 years.
- Announced BC Builds, a new initiative that leverages underused public land to deliver more lower-cost, middle-income rental homes faster.
- Preserved 414 affordable rental homes through the \$500-million Rental Protection Fund, with many more to come.
- Reined in the short-term rental market to turn more units into long-term homes.
- Fixed outdated zoning rules to ensure more small-scale, multi-unit homes can be built throughout B.C.
- Set housing targets for local governments and provided them with support to meet those targets.
- Sped up permitting by launching the Single Housing Application Service and continuing work on the new digital Building Permit Hub, which launched May 27, 2024.
- Opened new student residences at the University of Victoria, Thompson Rivers University and Simon Fraser University, and started construction on new student residences at Douglas College, the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) and North Island College.
- Introduced the Secondary Suite Incentive Program to help homeowners create affordable rentals on their properties.
- Helped more people maintain their homes in times of immediate financial need by providing a nearly \$11-million boost to the BC Rent Bank, which has the potential to support as many as 20,000 renters.
- Helped tenants and landlords resolve disputes faster by improving services at the Residential Tenancy Branch through a 40% budget increase.
- Took actions to prevent and reduce homelessness by opening or announcing 881 new supportive homes and partnering with communities to respond to encampments and help people sheltering outdoors move inside.


Our government had nearly 80,000 homes delivered or underway, as of March 31, 2024.



Improving access to health care

Making it faster and easier for people to get the high-quality health care they need closer to home

- Continued work on B.C.'s Health Human Resources Strategy, which focuses on 70 actions to recruit, train and retain health-care workers.
 - » Welcomed more than 800 family doctors and 6,500 nurses to the public health-care system in 2023.
 - » Delivered a new payment model for family physicians, with more than 4,000 signing up for the model in the first year.
- Made it faster, easier and less expensive for internationally trained doctors, nurses and health-care staff to start working in B.C.
- » Continued efforts to recruit and retain nurses, such as encouraging inactive nurses to return to practice, supported by \$237 million over three years.
- Expanded pharmacists' scope of practice so they can prescribe for minor ailments and contraception and launched a provincial booking system for appointments with pharmacists.
- Expanded the Health Connect Registry, attaching more people to a family doctor or nurse practitioner.



Approximately **468,000** people saw a pharmacist for a minor ailment or contraceptive service, or were dispensed a free contraceptive, from June 2023 to May 2024.

- Became the first jurisdiction in Canada to establish minimum nurse-to-patient ratios, improving care for patients and working conditions for nurses.
- Launched a 10-year Cancer Care Action Plan to better prevent, detect and treat cancer, and took other actions to improve cancer care throughout the province.
 - » Became the first jurisdiction in Canada to launch a provincial self-screening program for cervical cancer.
 - » Continued work on establishing four new cancer centres in Surrey, Nanaimo, Kamloops and Burnaby, in addition to the six existing cancer centres.
 - » Expanded support for people who need to travel to receive cancer care.
- Continued work on new and expanded hospitals, including an expanded Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital, a new ICU at Nanaimo Regional Hospital and a refurbished and relocated cancer care clinic at Richmond Hospital.
- Continued upgrading equipment at hospitals, including a new CT scanner at Squamish General Hospital and new MRI machines at Kelowna General Hospital.
- Announced 10 new or expanded long-term care homes throughout the province, including in Vernon, Richmond, Burnaby, Delta, Kitimat, Nanaimo, Campbell River, Cranbrook, Abbotsford and Prince George.
- Approved the business plan and funding for a state-of-the-art Clinical Support and Research Centre at the new St. Paul's Hospital and announced a new clinical trials unit at Mount Saint Joseph Hospital.

- Announced new urgent and primary care centres (UPCCs) – for a total of 36 opened since 2017 – to provide people with urgent and after-hours non-emergency care and primary care in their communities, relieving pressure on hospitals.

Between April 2023 and March 2024, there were more than 716,000 patient visits to UPCCs. Since the first UPCC opened in 2018, there have been more than 2.54 million patient visits.

- Established new Primary Care Networks – for a total of 79 established since 2017 – to help people access care from a team of doctors, nurses and other health-care providers in their communities.
- Delivered record numbers of surgeries, with all patients whose surgeries were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic having received or been rescheduled to receive their surgeries.
- Protected youth from nicotine by putting nicotine pouches behind pharmacy counters and allowing the pouches to be sold only by pharmacists.



Building a comprehensive system of mental-health and addictions care focused on treatment and recovery

- Made a historic investment of more than \$1 billion over three years to ensure that people with mental-health or addiction challenges can access the care they need.
- Added and expanded mental-health and addiction services at hospitals, including launching Road to Recovery at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver, a first-of-its-kind initiative to provide people with seamless support through detox, treatment and recovery.
- Announced 180 publicly funded treatment and recovery beds throughout the province – nearly double the Budget 2023 commitment of 100 – including 112 open as of March 31, 2024.
- Expanded youth mental-health and addictions supports:
 - » Opened a new Foundry centre and announced 24 more, for a total of 35 throughout the province.
 - » Expanded wraparound supports in hospitals and communities, including at Surrey Memorial Hospital and BC Children's Hospital.
 - » Funded 28 new youth community care beds as part of a new program at Covenant House Vancouver.



- Announced 25 complex-care housing units for people experiencing mental-health or addiction challenges, and enhanced services at existing buildings.
- Expanded Mobile Integrated Crisis Response (MICR) Teams to nine communities, for a total of 17 teams throughout the province. MICR Teams pair mental-health professionals with police officers to help people in crisis who call police and need appropriate health-care services.
- Expanded peer-assisted teams (PACTs) to three communities, for a total of six throughout B.C. PACTs are made up of people with lived experience and mental-health professionals and support people 13 and older who are experiencing a mental-health or substance-use crisis.
- Opened a 10-bed sobering centre in Prince George to provide a safe space for adults who are intoxicated and unable to safely care for themselves.

Growing a cleaner economy

Leveraging our natural strengths to create good jobs and opportunities for everyone in B.C.

- Announced a BC Hydro investment of \$36 billion over 10 years to build out B.C.'s electricity system to power communities and a growing clean economy, while supporting an average of 10,500 to 12,500 jobs annually.
- Continued advancing the production, distribution and use of low-carbon hydrogen and creating new economic opportunities through B.C.'s Hydrogen Strategy.

Critical minerals, such as copper, nickel and molybdenum, are essential components in electric vehicles, solar panels, wind turbines, electrical transmission lines and batteries. B.C.'s mining sector provides many of the building blocks of clean technologies that the province and the world need to fight climate change and build a cleaner economy.

- Helped 81 manufacturing companies modernize, innovate and grow by providing \$91.3 million in funding for capital projects through the BC Manufacturing Jobs Fund.
- Launched Phase 1 of a new Critical Mineral Strategy to expand the critical minerals sector in alignment with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Formed a \$1.05-billion partnership with E-One Moli and the federal government to bring lithium-ion battery cell production to Maple Ridge and create 450 high-quality jobs.
- Partnered with the Vancouver International Airport to fight pollution in the aviation sector, grow investment and support clean, sustainable jobs and business opportunities for people in B.C.



- Launched B.C.'s first Life Sciences and Biomanufacturing Strategy and continued supporting the life sciences sector:
 - » Provided the Michael Smith Genome Sciences Centre with \$20 million over two years to sustain cutting-edge research.
 - » Provided AbCellera with \$75 million over six years to expand in Vancouver and solve global health-care challenges, while creating hundreds of new, high-paying jobs.
- Launched a new B.C. Maritime Industries Strategy to modernize the sector and create more highly skilled jobs to meet growing demands.
- Increased support for tourism, including \$20 million to repair the dome at Science World, \$30 million to enhance tourism infrastructure throughout B.C. and \$2.2 million to support the revitalization of Vancouver Chinatown.
- Helped B.C. food- and beverage-processing businesses increase productivity, economic opportunities and competitiveness, while strengthening food security for British Columbians, through the new \$20-million Food Processing Growth Fund.
- Created the New Entrant Farm Business Accelerator Program to help new and small-scale farmers grow their businesses and help strengthen food security in their communities.



Connecting people to education, training and jobs

- Launched the \$480-million StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan to help thousands of people get the skills they need to succeed in our changing economy and help close the skills gap many businesses are facing.
- Provided \$39 million over three years for the future skills grant, which gives people as much as \$3,500 to cover the costs of short-term skills training for in-demand jobs.
- Removed barriers to help internationally trained professionals start working in B.C. faster by passing the International Credentials Recognition Act, which increases fairness, efficiency, transparency and accountability in the credential-recognition process.
- Created clearer pathways for international workers coming to B.C. and made it more difficult for predatory recruiters to take advantage of them by updating the BC Provincial Nominee Program selection criteria.
- Continued work to provide every household in B.C. with access to high-speed internet services by 2027. In 2023-24, 77% of rural households and 80% of households on First Nations reserves and Modern Treaty Nation lands had access to high-speed internet services.
- Supported the new Centre for Clean Energy and Automotive Innovation at Vancouver Community College, the new mass-timber skills training hub at BCIT and a new Capilano University campus in Squamish.
- Created new post-secondary student spaces in high-demand areas, including a total of 3,000 technology-relevant spaces and 400 early-childhood-education spaces per year for three years.

- Improved the quality of post-secondary education for international students by strengthening quality standards and bringing in new safeguards.
- Provided more people facing barriers with access to training and education, including by expanding the Provincial Tuition Waiver Program to all former youth in care, regardless of age or time spent in care.

Supporting workers and businesses

- Increased minimum wage to \$16.75 an hour, the highest of all provinces in Canada, and passed legislation to ensure minimum wage keeps up with inflation.
- Enacted the Pay Transparency Act, which sets out new obligations for employers to help close the gender pay gap in B.C. For example, all employers are now required to include wage or salary ranges on all publicly advertised jobs.
- Launched the Workplace Innovation Fund to support the construction sector by addressing labour shortages, better preparing employers and workers for our changing economy, and attracting, hiring and retaining a diverse workforce.
- Enhanced safety for workers doing asbestos removal, transportation and disposal by becoming the first jurisdiction in Canada to require asbestos-abatement employers to be licensed and workers to be trained and certified.
- Established a new Environmental, Social and Governance Centre of Excellence to help B.C. businesses diversify markets for their world-class goods, create sustainable jobs and access tools, resources and training.

- Launched a new international Trade Diversification Strategy to help more B.C. businesses export and invest internationally and increase the diversity of exporters and global markets to ensure a stronger, more resilient economy.

Keeping people and goods moving

- Continued work upgrading, replacing and building new roads and bridges, such as advancing work on a wider, safer Highway 1 through the Fraser Valley and Kicking Horse Canyon, and completing climate-resilient bridges on the Coquihalla Highway.
- Took action to help prevent truckers from crashing into highway infrastructure by implementing stronger deterrents against unsafe driving practices.
- Started work on the Belleville Terminal Redevelopment Project, which will make travel between Victoria and Washington state more convenient and enjoyable.
- Continued work to improve public transit, including advancing work on the Surrey Langley SkyTrain and the Broadway Subway Project, and contributing \$5 million to help develop and maintain safe, reliable and affordable transit in rural communities.



Fighting climate change

Making it easier and more affordable for people to make cleaner, healthier choices

- Accelerated zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) targets to help more people go electric, increasing access and choice for ZEV buyers.
- Made it easier for strata corporations and owners to install electric vehicle charging stations by making amendments to the Strata Property Act.
- Offered people rebates to replace wood stoves with cleaner, healthier heating options, such as heat pumps or emissions-certified wood stoves, in partnership with the BC Lung Foundation.
- Launched an initiative with BC Hydro to provide people who are medically vulnerable and have low incomes with free air conditioners to keep them safe during extreme heat emergencies.



Keeping people and communities safe today, while building a more climate-resilient British Columbia for generations to come

- Introduced a new Emergency and Disaster Management Act to enable a more proactive approach to emergency management and safeguard people and communities.

The new Emergency and Disaster Management Act was the first piece of provincial land-based legislation developed through consultation and co-operation with First Nations since the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act came into force.

- Launched the Premier's Expert Task Force on Emergencies to better support those on the front lines by applying lessons learned.
- Expanded the use of wildfire predictive technologies that can produce real-time wildfire behaviour predictions, incorporating information directly from the field.
- Launched a new comprehensive B.C. Flood Strategy and invested \$8.69 million for flood-hazard mapping to help communities better prepare for floods.

- Finalized an international, multi-government agreement committing to addressing flood risks and restoring fish habitat in B.C.'s Fraser Valley and Whatcom County, Wash.
- Committed \$76.6 million to flood-resilience upgrades to the Barrowtown Pump Station, a crucial piece of infrastructure to the Sumas Prairie's flood-protection system.
- Announced approximately \$105.7 million for 500 projects through the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund to help communities prepare for climate events.
- Boosted the Agricultural Water Infrastructure Program by \$80 million to help B.C. farmers prepare for drought.
- Upgraded and expanded B.C.'s firefighting aviation and ground fleet, as well as equipment for ground crews, with a nearly \$16-million investment.
- Strengthened local and volunteer fire departments by providing access to enhanced training opportunities, more equipment and an expanded psychological wellness program for firefighters.
- Improved support for evacuees by providing a new option for people to receive \$200 per household, per night, for accommodation via Interac e-Transfer, streamlining training for Emergency Support Services (ESS) responders and supporting local ESS projects to recruit and train volunteers.
- Launched a new enhanced replant program that will provide as much as \$70 million to help B.C. farmers replace damaged, diseased and low-producing vines, plants and trees with climate-resilient varieties that produce in-demand, premium fruit.

Protecting our water, land and air

- Launched a new \$300-million Conservation Financing Mechanism to accelerate protection of B.C.'s oldest and rarest trees, while benefiting communities and wildlife.
- Expanded B.C.'s parks and protected areas by adding 189 hectares to six existing provincial parks and one conservancy, and acquiring 109 hectares of land to be added to five provincial parks.
- Contributed \$10 million to the BC Parks Foundation to help strengthen the long-term protection of B.C.'s natural beauty and provide more opportunities for everyone to connect with nature.
- Strengthened regulations to ensure that people conducting illegal activities in B.C.'s protected spaces can be prosecuted or fined.
- Boosted the Clean Coast, Clean Waters Initiative Fund, which supports projects that clean up marine debris and remove derelict vessels from B.C.'s shoreline.
- Invested \$39.8 million for projects that prevent plastic waste, reduce emissions and create clean-tech jobs through the CleanBC Plastics Action Fund.
- Continued work on the New Energy Action Framework, including committing to a regulatory emissions cap for the oil and gas industry to act as a backstop to the federal cap.
- Updated B.C.'s carbon pricing system for large industry, giving companies incentives to lower pollution and create good jobs for British Columbians.
- Changed the BC Building Code to require 20% better energy efficiency for most new buildings, in line with B.C.'s commitment to zero-carbon new construction by 2030.

Advancing reconciliation

Partnering with Indigenous Peoples to build a better future for everyone

- Continued work implementing B.C.'s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act across government.
- Delivered funding to more than 90% of eligible First Nations through the first year of the \$200-million Declaration Act Engagement Fund, which supports government-to-government engagement with the Province to help shape provincial laws, policies and programs.

Supporting the title, rights and self-determination of Indigenous Peoples

- Co-developed 10 long-term agreements with First Nations that recognize and support reconciliation, self-determination, decision-making and economic independence.
- Entered into a second consent-based decision-making agreement with the Tahltan Central Government related to the future operation of the Red Chris mine in Tahltan Territory.

In 2023-24, our government continued advancing reconciliation by working with First Nations and Indigenous housing organizations to deliver more culturally appropriate homes for Indigenous people. One such project is House of Clans, a 34-unit affordable rental complex for members of the shíshálh Nation in Sechelt that opened in May 2024.



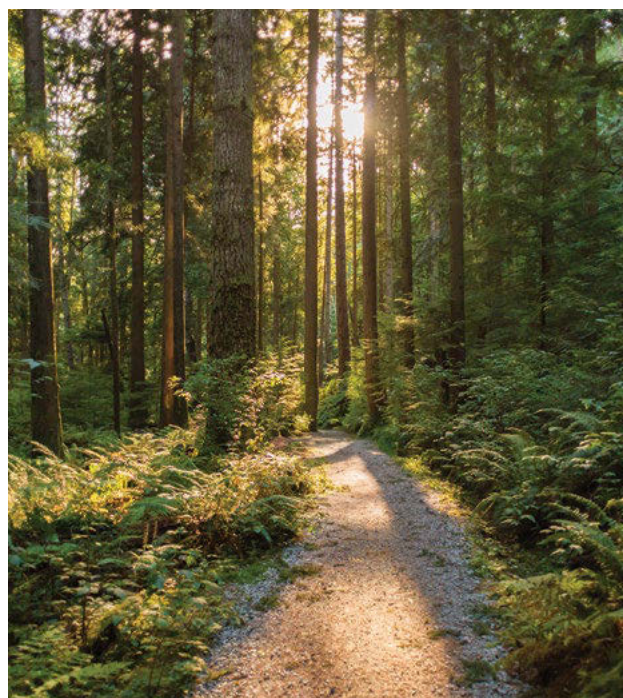
- Made systemic changes to improve outcomes for K-12 Indigenous students, such as ensuring Indigenous people have more input into the decisions and processes affecting the education of Indigenous children and youth in B.C. public schools.
- Recognized the importance of First Nations post-secondary institutes with funding to support the revitalization of First Nations languages and cultures, and to provide quality education to First Nations learners.
- Continued work to reform the Mineral Tenure Act in consultation and co-operation with First Nations, including by creating a dedicated office and working group to advance this project.

Working to end Indigenous-specific racism

- Co-developed the Anti-Racism Act with Indigenous organizations. The act, which became law in May 2024, aims to remove racist barriers to accessing government programs and services.
- Implemented a new graduation requirement to ensure all students complete Indigenous-focused coursework before they graduate.
- Helped more Indigenous people access culturally safe, Indigenous-led legal supports and services by opening six new Indigenous Justice Centres, for a total of nine centres throughout the province, as well as a virtual centre.
- Continued implementing recommendations from the report *In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care*, and taking other actions to address systemic racism in health care. This includes adding new provisions to the Physician Master Agreement to address systemic racism and cultural safety and humility and retain Indigenous employees.

Supporting social, cultural and economic well-being

- Supported several First Nations clean-energy projects, empowering communities to access more efficient and sustainable energy sources.
- Built unique partnerships encouraging investment and improving the services and infrastructure everyone relies on.
- Implemented a new Indigenous child-welfare director position to advise, guide and oversee the health and safety of Indigenous children, and ensure their connection to community and culture.
- Signed a child and family services agreement with the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations to guide decision-making related to child welfare and help children and youth in care stay safely connected to their families, culture and community.
- Launched a two-year project with the Simpcw First Nation to help members living away from home access supports from their communities, such as family support, cultural connections and wellness activities.



Building safer, healthier communities

Making sure schools are safe and supportive places for all students and staff

- Announced more than \$892 million for new and improved schools, additions and site purchases for future schools throughout B.C.
- Created more than 3,100 child care spaces on school grounds, for a total of more than 12,800 since 2018-19.
- Started work with school districts to restrict cellphone use in schools.
- Committed to making Holocaust education mandatory for high school students.

Supporting families, kids and young adults

- Launched Safe and Supported: B.C.'s Gender-Based Violence Action Plan, which includes actions to enhance prevention and awareness campaigns, and provide more programs and supports for survivors.
- Improved family law and access to services, such as changing the process for determining ownership and possession of companion animals following a separation or divorce, and expanding legal aid for people experiencing family violence.
- Expanded housing and health-care supports for youth and young adults up to age 27 who have been in government care, and increased the time they can get these supports from four to seven years through the Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment program.

Ensuring B.C. remains a great place to live for everyone

- Launched a rural vision to boost connectivity, improve health care and deliver more investments rooted in local realities.
- Boosted support for non-profits with \$60 million in new funding, helping more people access community support, arts and culture services, and support to find affordable housing.
- More than quadrupled funding for newcomer services – from \$6 million to \$25.6 million per year – and launched a new online multi-language information hub.
- Launched the BC Demographic Survey to safely collect race-based data, which will be used to help identify and eliminate systemic racism from government services.





Protecting people and communities, so everyone feels safe and welcome

- Created 12 regional hubs bringing together police, dedicated prosecutors and probation officers to tackle repeat violent offending.
- Cracked down on organized crime by establishing unexplained wealth orders that require people to explain how they acquired assets suspected of being proceeds of unlawful activity or money laundering.
- Implemented the Intimate Images Protection Act to help people who have had their intimate images or videos shared without consent get the images off the internet, stop their distribution and seek monetary compensation.
- Launched new Intimate Images Protection Services to help people access self-help tools to diagnose their legal issues, get information about their rights and connect to supports.
- Established the Anti-Hate Community Support Fund to help community groups prevent or respond to hate-motivated attacks.
- Continued work on the Racist Incident Helpline, which launched on May 30, 2024, and allows people who witness or experience a racist incident to receive trauma-informed, culturally appropriate support in more than 240 languages.
- Launched the new \$10.5-million Securing Small Business Rebate Program to help businesses prevent and respond to vandalism.

Creating a brighter future

Continuing to put people first to build a better British Columbia for everyone

Through Budget 2023, our government took action to make life better for British Columbians by easing the pressure of everyday costs, delivering more affordable homes and improving access to high-quality public health care.

Our government also continued work on longstanding priorities, including advancing reconciliation in partnership with Indigenous Peoples, growing our clean economy and fighting climate change.

In 2023-24, our government delivered real results focused on the priorities of British Columbians, but there is much more work to do.

Moving forward, our government will continue making choices that put people first and build a brighter future for everyone who calls our province home.





