

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

2023/24 Annual Service Plan Report

August 2024



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Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General 2023/24 Annual Service Plan Report compares the ministry's actual results to the expected results identified in the 2023/24 - 2025/26 Service Plan published in 2023. I am accountable for those results as reported.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Farnworth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Honourable Mike Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General
August 12, 2024

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Letter from the Minister

I am pleased to introduce this 2023/24 Annual Service Plan Report for the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. The report highlights the significant progress we've made on the key priorities of our ministry and the Province during the last fiscal year.

Keeping communities safe is our utmost priority. Through implementation of the Safer Communities Action Plan, we took direct action to stop repeat violent offending. Twelve repeat violent offending intervention hubs established across the province bring together police, dedicated prosecutors and probation officers to help stop crime before it starts. The hubs focus on holding people accountable through better monitoring and enforcement, ensuring prosecutors have the information they need to make informed decisions from bail to sentencing, and coordinating supports to address root causes of crime, like homelessness, addiction and mental health challenges. We also expanded police investigative resources and targeted enforcement capacity to strengthen investigations of repeat violent offending cases and improve information sharing between police agencies.

The Safer Communities Action Plan also included measures to target the organized criminals responsible for the toxic and volatile illicit drug supply in the province. With amendments made to the Civil Forfeiture Act, the Province can now use Unexplained Wealth Orders to go after the fast cars, fancy homes and luxury goods of high-level criminals profiting off the deadly toxic drug supply in the province.

During 2023/24, with funding from the Province, the Provincial Police Service made progress in filling existing vacancies in rural, remote and Indigenous communities, and to support specialized teams that investigate and prevent violent and organized crime. By the end of the fiscal year, the number of positions that were fully staffed and operational exceeded the provincial targets established for the year.

The Province passed amendments to the Police Act to clarify the process any municipality must follow should they wish to change their Police of Jurisdiction, actioning government's commitment to remove uncertainty, enhance public confidence, and keep people safe throughout British Columbia. The ministry also worked with key partners throughout the year to develop other extensive amendments to the Police Act to improve governance and oversight of policing and set the foundation for a modern policing system that is fair, equitable, and responsive to all communities.

We advanced work to break the cycle of gender-based violence. Safe and Supported: B.C.'s Gender-Based Violence Action Plan outlines how we're taking action to support survivors with victim-centered and trauma-informed programs, end isolation, stigma and apathy, and promote gender equity so every woman, girl and gender-diverse person can live free from violence.

We've implemented changes to better support victims of crime. During 2023/24, 70 new Sexual Assault Services Programs were procured by the ministry along with five Sexual Assault Centres. In addition, amendments made to the Crime Victim Assistance Act mean there is now

wider access to support for people seeking assistance through the Crime Victim Assistance Program.

The new Intimate Images Protection Act and the Intimate Images Protection Service support people who have had their intimate images shared, or threatened to be shared, without their consent. The service provides emotional support, information, and resources, and can help explain available options. It can also help with applications to the Civil Resolution Tribunal and with communicating intimate image protection orders, which are legal orders that someone must take down the intimate image or stop sharing or threatening to share it.

Improving outcomes for Indigenous Peoples across the justice and public safety sector continues to be a priority and throughout 2023/24, the ministry advanced work to reduce the number of Indigenous Peoples adversely involved in and impacted by the justice system. This included supporting implementation of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy and development of the Métis Justice Strategy. B.C. Corrections also continued the important work of providing culturally safe correctional programming, policies and practices, and supporting the successful reintegration of Indigenous Peoples returning to their communities through direct work with First Nations and other Indigenous partners.

We continued to strengthen and streamline regulation of the liquor, cannabis, gaming, and private security sectors, ensuring comprehensive regulatory processes and enforcement practices are positioned to protect the public while supporting business and community interests across the province.

Other work to increase public safety in B.C. is ongoing as we continue investigating unexpected deaths with care and compassion in support of preventing future deaths; working to keep our roads safe through measures to combat high-risk driving behaviours; and engaging with our partners and the public to reduce the number and severity of structure fires.

These and our many other accomplishments in 2023/24 reflect the commitment and professionalism of ministry staff throughout the province, the strength of our relationships with our partners, and our ongoing dedication to the safety and well-being of British Columbians.



Honourable Mike Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General
August 12, 2024

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 Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General Mike Farnworth's 2022 [mandate letter](#) shaped the goals, objectives, performance measures and financial plan outlined in the [Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General 2023/24 - 2025/26 Service Plan](#) and the actual results reported in this annual report.

Purpose of the Ministry

The [Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General](#) (PSSG) and the [Ministry of Attorney General](#) (AG) work together as the justice and public safety sector to advance a shared vision of a safe, secure, just, and resilient British Columbia.

PSSG's mission is to develop public safety policy and legislation and deliver associated services and programs, and administer regulations for the liquor, cannabis, and gambling sectors.

The ministry is responsible for: [policing and law enforcement superintendence](#); [911 emergency communication services](#); [correctional services](#); [victim services](#); [crime prevention and reduction](#); [restorative justice](#); [civil forfeiture](#); [coroners' services](#); [liquor and cannabis regulation](#); [gambling regulation](#); [problem gambling prevention and treatment services](#); [road safety](#); [criminal record checks](#); the [protection order registry](#); [security industry regulation](#); [consumer protection](#); and [structure fire prevention and safety](#).

The Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General is also responsible for the [BC Liquor Distribution Branch](#) (LDB), and a number of agencies and boards, including the [Insurance Corporation of British Columbia](#) (ICBC) (see Appendix A), and the [Organized Crime Agency of BC](#) within the [Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit - British Columbia](#) (see Appendix B).

Operating Environment

Throughout 2023/24, the ministry continued to strengthen partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations. These partnerships are integral to advancing the priorities of the ministry, including reducing the overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples adversely involved in and impacted by the justice and public safety sector; addressing gender-based violence, especially against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+¹ people, who are disproportionately affected; and supporting culturally relevant policies, programs and services. This is consistent with government's commitment to true, lasting reconciliation, the [Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#), the [B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) (DRIPA) and the associated [Declaration Act Action Plan](#), the [B.C. First Nations Justice Strategy](#), and the [Draft Principles that Guide the Province of British Columbia's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples](#).

The ministry also remains committed to advancing its work through a [Gender-Based Analysis Plus](#) lens and in alignment with the [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#) for the BC Public Service to deliver policies, programs, and services that are inclusive, intersectional, responsive, accessible, and culturally safe.

During 2023/24, the Province took significant steps to address the challenges communities throughout B.C. have faced with repeat offending – criminal activity from a small group of people who are disproportionately committing crimes in neighbourhoods – as well as unprovoked violent stranger attacks.²

Cross-sector collaboration resulted in the May 1, 2023 implementation of the [Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative](#) (ReVOII). This innovative program brings together probation officers, police, and Crown prosecutors, with the support of community integration specialists, to address repeat violent offending through enhanced investigation, enforcement and monitoring of individuals in communities throughout B.C. While it will take time before the effectiveness of the program can be measured quantitatively through recidivism rates, early findings are promising. Anecdotal evidence indicates the ReVOII hubs are working to interrupt the cycle of reoffending for some individuals and improving justice response times through enhanced and streamlined information sharing to address immediate public concerns and hold individuals accountable. ReVOII is supported by the Special Investigative and Targeted Enforcement (SITE) program which provides operational funding to police for targeted investigations and broader public safety projects to address repeat violent offending.

There have been challenges associated with vacancies in the RCMP, which comprises B.C.'s [Provincial Police Service](#) (PPS); however, with \$48 million in funding from the Province in

¹ The acronym 2SLGBTQIA+ refers to people who are Two Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and/or asexual.

² Repeat violent offending has been linked to unintended impacts of federal law changes and case law, and the increased mental health and addiction challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and the toxic drug crisis. For a detailed analysis of trends in repeat violent offending, see [A Rapid Investigation into Repeat Offending and Random Stranger Violence in British Columbia](#), released in September 2022 by Amanda Butler and Doug LePard.

2023/24, RCMP recruitment efforts were advanced. It has been particularly important to fill vacancies in rural and remote RCMP detachments and regional units, and to hire more officers for specialized units such as the [BC Highway Patrol](#), and units combatting issues such as major crime, the sexual exploitation of children, and money laundering. As of March 31, 2024, the number of PPS positions fully staffed and operational exceeded the year one provincial targets toward the RCMP ultimately reaching a full staffing level of 2,602 in B.C.

The ministry continues to be concerned about Canada's investment in federal policing, including for high-level organized crime and drug investigations, anti-money laundering investigations, and international port protection enforcement. Lack of adequate federal investment targeting these areas results in crime issues that impact the province, such as organized crime and provincial drug dealing exacerbating the toxic drug crisis.

Throughout 2023/24, the ministry worked with key partners to develop the first phase of Police Act legislative amendments, which are focused on municipal police governance and oversight, and represent an interim step towards longer-term and broader legislative modernization.³ As well as completing the drafting of this legislation, by the end of 2023/24 the ministry had distributed grants to support community-led engagement with diverse and intersectional British Columbians and provided capacity funding to First Nations and Modern Treaty Nations for co-development of policing policy during the second phase of the legislative work. Through the initial work completed in 2023/24, the Province significantly advanced its phased approach to transformative change in policing and community safety in British Columbia in alignment with the recommendations of the April 2022 [final report](#) of the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act.

British Columbians continue to suffer the tragic effects of the toxic and volatile drug supply in the province. More than 14,500 deaths have been caused by unregulated drug toxicity since the public health emergency into substance-related harms was first declared in April 2016. In 2023/24, 3,321 British Columbians lost their lives to unregulated toxic drugs and many others experienced tremendous harm and loss. In every year of this public health emergency, Indigenous Peoples have been disproportionately impacted and overrepresented in toxic drug poisoning events and deaths.⁴

After implementing British Columbia's agreement with Health Canada to decriminalize the possession of small amounts of certain illegal drugs for personal use under the federal Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Province began hearing growing concerns about public drug use from local governments, the police, and the public. In response, the Province passed the Restricting Public Consumption of Illegal Substances Act (RPCISA) in November 2023 to restrict drug use in certain public spaces commonly frequented by families and other vulnerable people. Shortly after, a constitutional challenge was filed against the RPCISA, and a

³ Following the extensive legislative development work completed in 2023/24, [Bill 17 – Police Amendment Act](#) received Royal Assent on April 25, 2024. The bill includes over 80 amended sections and 40 new sections as well as numerous consequential amendments to 22 other provincial statutes.

⁴ Further information on data sources and trends regarding the drug toxicity crisis and Indigenous Peoples can be found [here](#).

temporary injunction was issued by the Supreme Court of British Columbia that has prevented the RPCISA from being brought into force. The Province continued to defend the constitutionality of the RPCISA through the remainder of 2023/24; however, these legal proceedings remained ongoing. While there are many complex factors that contribute towards perceptions of public safety, visible drug use and its related consequences is commonly cited as a concern of many British Columbians.

Over the past five years, there has been a rising trend in fire-related deaths across the province as documented in the Office of the Fire Commissioner's (OFC) [annual reports](#). In 2023, 62 fire-related deaths and 262 fire-related injuries were reported in British Columbia.⁵ People over the age of 65 are over-represented in fire-related deaths. A working smoke alarm was present in only 45 per cent of reported residential structure fires. In working to reverse the trend in fire-related deaths and injuries, the priorities of the OFC are informed by trends in the natural environment (e.g., impacts of climate change; wildfire incidents), the built environment (e.g., aging building stock; increases in building density; building development in rural areas), and the population (e.g., an aging population; increasing vulnerable populations).

Lastly, the rising frequency and intensity of natural disasters resulting from climate change continue to affect British Columbians and the work of the ministry, as is indicated by the frequent implementation of states of emergency and emergency orders over recent years.

Report on Performance: Goals, Objectives, and Results

The following goals, objectives and performance measures have been restated from the ministry's 2023/24 – 2025/26 service plan. For forward-looking planning information, including current targets for 2024/25 to 2026/27, please see the ministry's latest service plan on the [BC Budget website](#).

Goal 1: The justice and public safety sector in British Columbia protects people

Objective 1.1: Improved public safety for all British Columbians

A foundational role of British Columbia's justice and public safety sector is to protect people, especially those who are most vulnerable. Throughout 2023/24, PSSG continued to advance strategies to improve public safety through a broad range of program areas, including policing; crime prevention and reduction; support for integrated, community-based mental health and social services; road safety; structure fire prevention and safety; and other core

⁵ There may be differences between OFC and BC Coroners Service (BCCS) fire fatality reporting. The information presented here is based on fire reports submitted to the OFC on fire-related incidents, injuries, and deaths. Fire categories include outdoor fires, structure fires, vehicle fires, and person fires (accidental or otherwise involving a person and fire, (e.g. refueling, fireworks, campfire, etc.). The OFC and the BCCS work together on an ongoing basis to reconcile their data sets.

functions such as corrections and coroners' services. Safe communities, along with positive public perceptions of safety, are central to the well-being of British Columbians.

Key results

- Since the Province launched ReVOII on May 1, 2023, nearly 400 individuals who repeatedly commit violent offences have been prioritized into the program for interventions through the 12 ReVOII hubs operating in the province.⁶ Through ReVOII, identified individuals are connected to supportive services to help break the cycle of offending.
- In 2023/24, there were 59 [SITE](#) projects funded across the province. The SITE program provides supplemental funding to enhance police capacity in targeting violent offending and supports a more effective and coordinated response across jurisdictions.
- The Province invested \$608,000 in Situation Tables in 2023/24 through grants to communities to support public safety, health, and social service agencies to work collaborative to identify vulnerable people and connect them to the services they need.⁷
- The [Intimate Images Protection Act](#) came into force on January 29, 2024, and the [Intimate Images Protection Service](#) (IIPS) was launched to assist people who have had their intimate images or videos shared without consent to get them off the internet, stop their distribution, and seek monetary compensation.
- In 2023/24, \$8.2 million in one-time grant funding was provided to 164 organizations across the province through the [Civil Forfeiture Crime Prevention and Remediation Grant Program](#).⁸

Summary of progress made in 2023/24

During 2023/24, the Province advanced implementation of the Safer Communities Action Plan (SCAP) to strengthen enforcement to keep those who commit repeat violent offences off our streets, and strengthen services to build safe, healthy communities for everyone.

ReVOII specifically focuses on individuals who repeatedly commit violent offences, due to the degree of fear that these offences instill in communities and the harm that these crimes inflict upon citizens. Individuals who commit property offences that contain a component of violence, intimidation, or the threat of violence also meet the criteria for ReVOII.

ReVOII hub members work with various service providers in the community to connect the individuals prioritized under the program with the services required to meet their complex needs. This includes working with health partners to facilitate access to mental health and substance use supports and referrals to other support services; contacting emergency shelters

⁶ The 12 ReVOII hubs are located in Abbotsford, Cranbrook, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, New Westminster, Prince George, Surrey, Terrace, Vancouver, Victoria, and Williams Lake, and each hub supports the surrounding region.

⁷ A total of \$2.9 million has been provided to B.C. communities to implement Situation Tables since 2018.

⁸ The program has the following funding streams: crime prevention; Indigenous healing; restorative justice; gender-based violence prevention; domestic violence prevention/intervention programming; [Child and Youth Advocacy Centres](#); and other priority projects.

to secure a bed upon release from custody; following release, driving participants to services and appointments; and working with partner ministries to coordinate access to funds and/or housing.

ReVOII is supported by the SITE program. As part of SCAP, the Province invested over \$5.3 million in 2023/24 so that law enforcement can strengthen targeted investigations of repeat violent offending cases and improve information sharing between police agencies. SITE expands police investigative resources and targeted enforcement capacity and allows police agencies to enhance coordination and share information more quickly. The funding is enabling more effective enforcement, improving information gathered for prosecutors and boosting police capacity for collaboration.

There are 36 Situation Tables operating in the province, serving 42 communities. Situation Tables help frontline staff from the public safety, health, and social service sectors to identify vulnerable people and collaboratively and rapidly connect them to services before they experience a negative or traumatic event (for example, victimization, overdose, eviction, etc.). They empower agencies to reduce a broad range of risks that can impact a person's well-being and safety, thereby also reducing long-term demand on emergency and police resources.

With the Intimate Images Protection Act, the Province, in partnership with the AG's [Civil Resolution Tribunal](#) (CRT), launched services to help people who have had their intimate images shared without their consent quickly access self-help tools to diagnose their legal issues, get information about their rights, and connect to supports.

Under this new legislation, the CRT can order a person, a social media company or website to stop distribution and remove an intimate image from its platform. These applications can be made without notice and without naming a respondent. To ensure that victims have dedicated services to support them, the Province launched the IIPS. This service provides emotional support, information, and resources; help with applying to the CRT; and assistance in communicating protection orders issued by the CRT. The IIPS works collaboratively with the tribunal to ensure trauma-informed information and support are available to victims throughout the process.

The ministry continues work to improve road safety, with a focus on high-risk driving behaviours (alcohol, drugs, speeding and/or distraction), increasing the efficacy of traffic enforcement, and ensuring that B.C.'s licensing system supports safe driving. During 2023/24, 9,680 90-day Immediate Roadside Prohibitions (IRPs) were issued, along with 4,489 IRP warnings and 1,290 Administrative Driving Prohibitions.

The Province recognizes the funding challenges that small and rural communities face in delivering fire suppression and prevention services, and acknowledges the increasing challenges associated with recruitment, retention, and training for volunteer and rural fire services. To help better understand those challenges, the OFC conducted a survey of volunteer and composite fire departments to contribute to a better understanding of the current and potential future challenges facing volunteer and rural fire services. The survey ran from June 30, 2023, to August 15, 2023, and collected a total of 586 individual responses. The OFC is currently assessing the results of the survey and determining next steps.

Objective 1.2: Improved outcomes for Indigenous Peoples across the justice and public safety sector through strengthened partnerships with Indigenous leadership and communities

Social and economic disparities persist in B.C. with disproportionate impacts on Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Peoples continue to be overrepresented in the justice and public safety sector as both offenders and victims, while being underrepresented in positions of leadership, and face unique challenges to their physical, social, and economic well-being.

Key results

- In partnership with the AG, the federal government, and Indigenous communities, PSSG continued to work with the [BC First Nations Justice Council](#) (BCFNJC) to advance the [BC First Nations Justice Strategy](#) and work with [Métis Nation BC](#) (MNBC) to develop, endorse and advance the Métis Justice Strategy. Advancement of both strategies aligns with the Province's commitments under the Declaration Act Action Plan.
- In 2023/24, funding from the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills allowed BC Corrections to implement a pilot program, in two correctional centres, to provide culturally-based employment training to Indigenous individuals and support their employment placement upon return to community.⁹
- The [New Relationship Trust](#) (NRT) received \$1.25 million in February 2024 to continue administering the [B.C. Indigenous Cannabis Business Fund](#) (ICBF).

Summary of progress made in 2023/24

On January 16, 2024, the second Annual Tripartite Ministers' Meeting was held, as per the [Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) between the BCFNJC and the Governments of Canada and British Columbia, to discuss how to advance the justice issues outlined in the BC First Nations justice Strategy.¹⁰

During the meeting, the BCFNJC, B.C. and Canada discussed how the BC First Nations Justice Strategy aligns with and informs provincial and federal Indigenous justice initiatives, and how Canada and the Province envision supporting the restoration of First Nations legal traditions and structures. Additionally, discussions focused on how the provincial strategy can inform the development of a federal Indigenous Justice Strategy to address systemic racism and over-representation of Indigenous Peoples in the Canadian justice system.

⁹ Though funding for this pilot initiative has concluded, opportunities for future partnerships continue to be explored. Additionally, as reported in PSSG's 2023/24 – 2025/26 Service Plan, BC Corrections had planned to implement a Restorative Living Framework pilot in two correctional centres with the aim of providing guidance and structure on how to live restoratively in a correctional environment and supporting both staff and individuals in custody. Due to staffing and resource challenges, these pilot projects have been paused; however, once resources allow, they may be revisited.

¹⁰ In August 2021, the Department of Justice Canada, the Government of B.C. and the BCFNJC signed an MOU, committing to work together to advance shared First Nations justice priorities, including through the BC First Nations Justice Strategy and Canada's development of a federal Indigenous Justice Strategy. In May 2023, Public Safety Canada joined the Department of Justice in signing on to the Tripartite MOU.

The BC First Nations Justice Strategy is being advanced by PSSG through changes to the Police Act (see Objective 4.1), and through priority work underway by BC Corrections to enhance the role of culture in healing and rehabilitation.

Throughout 2023/24, BC Corrections continued work to support the delivery of culturally safe programming, practices and policies, and to educate staff about the lasting impacts of colonization. This included partnering with Indigenous communities and justice programs to develop the Guidebook to Working Effectively with Indigenous Clients and Communities – a resource that helps staff understand the impacts of colonization and the reasons for the current socioeconomic realities of Indigenous clients, as well as the importance of supporting a connection to culture and community.

The work of BC Corrections also included the development of MOUs with First Nation communities to support reintegration; operating Indigenous Cultural Liaison Programs in all correctional centres; funding 33 Indigenous Justice Programs to deliver culture-based justice services in communities; offering experiential cultural safety training for staff; and supporting implementation of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy and finalization of the Métis Justice Strategy.

During 2023/24, the BCCS continued to provide comprehensive mortality data and analyses to the [First Nations Health Authority](#) and First Nation communities to inform community-based initiatives that reduce health and safety risks and support wellness. BCCS also continued work with First Nations in investigating suspected remains on the sites of former residential schools and hospitals.

The ministry continued to support Indigenous interests and participation in the regulated cannabis sector by collaborating with First Nations and key Indigenous partners.¹¹ After five engagement sessions were held in the spring of 2023, a "what we heard" report was developed and circulated to all First Nations, summarizing the contributions from over 50 First Nations and Indigenous organizations regarding cannabis-related governance and jurisdiction. The FNLC partnered with PSSG to design and deliver the engagement sessions and contributed to the final report.

In addition, from April to August 2023, the ministry met on a recurring basis with various partners, including First Nations with [Cannabis Control and Licensing Act](#) section 119 agreements, the Alliance of BC Modern Treaty Nations, and the FNLC to continue discussions around cannabis governance and jurisdiction. Throughout 2023/24, PSSG also met with section 119 partners on an as-needed basis to support advancing interests as they relate to government-to-government agreements.

The ICBF was co-developed in partnership with the FNLC and the federal government and is administered by the NRT and participating Aboriginal Financial Institutions. It provides financial and business planning support to First Nation communities and Indigenous

¹¹ This is in alignment with action 4.47 of the Declaration Act Action Plan: Advance a collaborative approach to cannabis-related governance and jurisdiction between First Nations and the Province that reflects common objectives to protect youth, prioritize public health and safety, strengthen First Nations governance capacity and secure economic benefits for First Nations.

entrepreneurs in B.C. that want to participate in and advance cannabis-related economic development opportunities. In 2023/24, the Province contributed \$1.25 million to the fund.¹²

Objective 1.3: Strengthened prevention, protection and support for victims of crime, and marginalized and vulnerable women and children

Gender-based violence (GBV) happens in communities of every kind, urban and rural. It happens at work, at school and in the home. Indigenous women and girls, immigrants and newcomers, racialized people, transgender, gender diverse people and others in the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, as well as those with disabilities, are especially targeted with violence.

Key results

- In June 2023, PSSG released a [status update](#) on the 28 commitments set out in the Path Forward: Priorities and Early Strategies for British Columbia to combat violence against Indigenous women, girls, two-spirited and gender diverse people.
- In December 2023, the Province released [Safe and Supported: British Columbia's Gender-Based Violence Action Plan](#), a three-year plan to address the systemic issue of GBV.
- During 2023/24, PSSG procured 70 new Sexual Assault Services Programs across B.C., 18 of which are Indigenous focused, and procured five Sexual Assault Centres located in Victoria, Vancouver, Surrey, Kamloops, and Prince George which provide wraparound services to survivors of sexual assault.
- Amendments to the [Crime Victim Assistance Act](#) and its corresponding regulation were brought into force in December 2023, ensuring wider access to support for those seeking assistance through the [Crime Victim Assistance Program](#).

Summary of progress made in 2023/24

PSSG is committed to a path forward to end violence against Indigenous women, girls, two-spirited, and gender-diverse people that is directly informed by survivors, family members and communities.

In June 2023, the ministry released a status update that highlights progress on the cross-ministry actions set out in the Path Forward: Priorities and Early Strategies for British Columbia. The Path Forward document reflects community-based priorities that align with the 28 mandate commitments related to the provincially relevant [Calls for Justice](#) of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.¹³ The 28 commitments recognize the interconnected, multi-dimensional nature of the inequities facing Indigenous Peoples and the multi-layered response that is needed to address the issues identified

¹² Since the program was launched in December 2022, the Province has contributed \$4.75 million to the fund.

¹³ The Path Forward is also reflected in Action 3.08 of B.C.'s Declaration Act Action Plan.

through the National Inquiry and the Calls for Justice. All 28 mandate commitments are well underway and six are complete.

Released in December 2023, *Safe and Supported: British Columbia's Gender-Based Violence Action Plan* sets out four priority areas to focus action and resources to prevent and respond to GBV in the province. It was informed by initial engagements with community partners, service providers and advocates, and was then further shaped through focused engagement in 2023/24 with Indigenous leadership and communities. "Lifting Up Indigenous-led Approaches," a key priority under the plan, includes actions that respond directly to advice and recommendations from Indigenous partners and communities. Through this priority, the Province firmly commits to supporting Indigenous self-determination by placing resources in the hands of First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and urban and rural or remote Indigenous communities to determine how best to move forward on preventing and addressing GBV in their communities and in ways that build on Indigenous strength.

PSSG provides over \$59 million annually to support 482 victim service and violence against women programs across the province, including 158 police-based and community-based victim service programs, 239 Violence Against Women Counselling and Outreach Programs, nine Domestic Violence Units, one provincial helpline, 70 new sexual assault services programs (18 of which provide Indigenous-focused services), and five sexual assault centres. These programs provide counselling, court support, outreach and crisis support for women and children who experience domestic violence, sexual assault, and other crimes. In 2023/24, over 48,000 new clients were supported/served by the ministry's contracted police-based and community-based victim service programs, and over 19,000 new referrals were made to Violence Against Women Counselling and Outreach Programs.

The 70 new sexual assault services programs deliver coordinated, community-based services throughout British Columbia, while the five sexual assault centres provide wraparound services to survivors of sexual assault, including trauma-informed space for police interviews and medical/forensic examinations, among other services available if the survivor chooses them. The new programs and centres are survivor-centred, trauma-informed, inclusive, and culturally safe. The services are a key component of *Safe and Supported: British Columbia's Gender-Based Violence Action Plan*.

In 2023/24, PSSG provided approximately \$17 million in benefits through the Crime Victim Assistance Program for counselling and other supports to eligible victims, immediate family members, and some witnesses to assist in recovery from the impacts of violent crime. Through amendments to the Crime Victim Assistance Act and its corresponding regulation, brought into force in December 2023, the Province expanded available support by adding new offences that vulnerable victims are eligible to receive support for, including victims of GBV, conversion therapy, and online sexual exploitation; significantly increasing benefit rates to ensure that key services remain accessible to victims; and expanding access to benefits required in some of the most serious cases involving extreme violence or death.

The BCCS Special Investigations Unit continues to conduct investigations into all deaths of women and children related to violence and criminal activity; provide key information to law

enforcement investigators; inform the development of policy and legislation protecting and supporting victims of crime; conduct inquests and death review panels to highlight risks to marginalized and vulnerable populations; and identify opportunities for greater protection and support.

Performance measures and related discussion

| Performance Measure | 2016-2020 Baseline ¹ | 2022 Actual | 2023 Target ² | 2023 Actual ³ |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| [1a] Number, per 100,000 population, of fatalities and serious injuries resulting from a motor vehicle crash where alcohol, drugs, speeding and/or distraction were suspected to be a factor ⁴ | 28.6 | 25.7 | 23.8 | 24.9 |

Data source: Data on the number of traffic fatalities for the 2016-2020 baseline and the 2022 and 2023 actuals are from the Traffic Accident System (TAS) maintained by ICBC, TAS Q2 2022. Population estimates and projections are from BC Stats and are as of July 1 each year. Results are reported by calendar year rather than fiscal year. All numbers have been rounded to the closest tenth.

¹ The baseline is the average rate from 2016 through 2020. The rate for 2020 was artificially low due to decreased traffic volumes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

² The targets for 2024 and 2025 were stated in the ministry's 2023/24 – 2025/26 service plan as 22.8 and 21.8, respectively. These targets have since been updated in the ministry's current, [2024/25 – 2026/27 service plan](#).

³ Annual fatal victim counts are not considered reportable publicly until six months have passed and are based on the annual summary shared by ICBC to the Data and Measurement Committee in July each year. The preliminary 2023 actual is based on the most recent RCMP PRIME data in 2023 Fatal Victims Report - Division (DM Committee) (May 9, 2024) – and is subject to change as the data settle.

⁴ Police attend most crashes occurring on a public road that result in serious injuries or fatalities. At the scene of such crashes, police record in an accident report the factors they believe influenced the crash and assess whether victims have serious or fatal injuries. Serious injuries are assessed by the officer and may differ from hospitalization counts. A fatality or serious injury with more than one of the high-risk driving contributing factors (alcohol, drugs, speeding and/or distraction) will be counted once for each incidence reported.

This performance measure is an indicator of success in protecting the public from high-risk driving behaviours, which are the leading cause of traffic fatalities and serious injuries in B.C. The ministry operates [high-risk driver programs](#) to combat these behaviours and contribute to improved road safety across the province.

Based on the preliminary actual rate for 2023, the 2023 target was not met. The preliminary 2023 rate was driven mainly by an increase in speed-related fatalities. Distraction and impairment-related serious injuries and fatalities remained close to the 2013 to 2022 averages.

| Performance Measure | 2021/22 Baseline ¹ | 2022/23 Actual | 2023/24 Target ² | 2023/24 Actual |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| [1b] Total number of First Nation communities with a Letter of Intent (LOI) to create an MOU to support the successful reintegration of Indigenous Peoples returning to their community and/or remaining connected to their community. ³ | 26 | 26 | 30 | 26 |

Data source: Results for this measure are derived from BC Corrections.

¹ The baseline, actuals and target are cumulative and therefore represent the total number of First Nation communities who have signed LOIs, not the number of First Nations with LOIs signed in a given fiscal year.

² Targets for 2024/25 and 2025/26 were stated in the 2023/24 service plan as 32 and 34, respectively.

³ This performance measure was created when this work with Indigenous communities was first initiated. As many MOUs for Supported Community Reintegration have now been signed or are in development, this performance measure was replaced by a new measure in the ministry's current, 2024/25 – 2026/27 service plan.

Throughout 2023/24, the ministry continued to work with Indigenous partners to develop and implement LOIs and MOUs to support the successful reintegration of Indigenous Peoples returning to their community and/or remaining connected to their community. The MOUs for Supported Community Reintegration between First Nations and BC Corrections strengthen relationships and communication, support community safety, and outline the process to work together to plan for release for those in custody and ensure coordination for supports for those transitioning to community supervision.

Due to the shifting needs and priorities of the communities, the process of drafting LOIs and subsequently developing an MOU with a Nation may not be linear. As communities lead this timeline, the process can, in some cases, take several years. Although no new communities signed an LOI in 2023/24, MOU development work is underway with three Nations, and conversations are actively underway with 11 Nations to initiate new LOIs.

Goal 2: The justice and public safety sector in British Columbia is fair

Objective 2: Regulatory systems that promote public safety and interests, and fair and efficient business practices

Fairness in the justice and public safety sector requires sound regulatory measures that protect public safety and interests while minimizing regulatory impacts on businesses and restrictions on civil liberties. In regulating the liquor, cannabis, and gambling sectors, and overseeing ICBC and consumer protection policy, the ministry works to support and balance business and community interests. This is done through policy development and implementation and by ensuring compliance with regulatory frameworks to reduce related threats to public safety and well-being through public education and enforcement actions.

Key results

- During 2023/24, the ministry worked with industry partners to develop policy changes to support the liquor and tourism industries and enhance visitor experiences at wineries and other liquor-manufacturing sites.¹⁴ These changes were announced at the March 2024 Wine Growers of BC Conference in Penticton.
- In July 2023, the ministry implemented the recommendation of the [Business Technical Advisory Panel](#) (BTAP) to enable liquor manufacturers and agents to use any authorized private liquor warehouse to both store and distribute import and out-of-province beer and kegged products within the current distribution model, regardless of association with suppliers.¹⁵
- In February 2024, [changes](#) were made to the [Cannabis Control Regulation](#) to improve hospitality and tourism opportunities for the cannabis industry by removing provincial restrictions and allowing the promotion of cannabis-friendly spaces and consumption of cannabis on public patios.
- In December 2023, the Province and the [BC Lottery Corporation](#) (BCLC) renewed their investment of approximately \$1.4 million in the [Centre for Gambling Research](#) at the University of British Columbia, signaling the Province's continued commitment to reduce the potential harms associated with gambling for people in B.C.
- In June 2023, ICBC began offering a new [usage-based discount](#) on auto insurance for British Columbians who drive less than 10,000 kilometres per year, contributing to the goal of keeping rates as affordable as possible.

Summary of progress made in 2023/24

During 2023/24, the ministry continued to support businesses in the winery, liquor-manufacturing and tourism industries across the province. The ministry worked with industry partners to develop changes to policy to create better experiences for visitors of wineries and liquor manufacturers, helping them – and all of B.C. – to be a more competitive and desirable destination for visitors. By partnering with liquor manufacturers, PSSG aims to ensure the long-term sustainability and success of an industry that is vital to the province's economy and identity.

The ministry continued to implement recommendations of the BTAP and made policy, process and systems changes to support the liquor industry. These changes included expanding the level of data sharing and reporting of domestic beer sales data and enabling liquor manufacturers and agents to use any authorized private liquor warehouse (PLW) to both store

¹⁴ The policy changes developed in 2023/24 are aimed at improving customer experiences and include allowing people to sit and enjoy samples while on a guided tour; allowing packaged liquor sales in more places on site, including tours; allowing more flexibility around sampling so liquor manufacturers can customize sampling experiences for visitors; and allowing manufacturers to sell and promote their products in picnic areas and host visitors more effectively.

¹⁵ The BTAP was established in 2018 to advise on possible law and policy reforms to improve efficiency and outcomes in relation to government responsibilities, regulations and oversight roles that intersect with the activities of B.C.'s private liquor businesses. The panel, comprised of industry representatives, met with stakeholders and health and labour experts to provide recommendations that reflect industry consensus. The panel's [report](#) to the Province included 24 recommendations to improve efficiency and business relations between government and B.C.'s liquor industry.

and distribute imported and out-of-province beer and kegged products within the current distribution model, regardless of association with suppliers. Previously, PLWs were only permitted to store and distribute imported products (including out-of-province products) if they had a manufacturer's association with the appointed agent or were the appointed agent themselves.

The ministry also continued to support the growth and development of the regulated cannabis sector in British Columbia while aiming to disrupt the illicit cannabis supply chain and remove illicit product from the market. Overall, B.C. is making progress on reducing the illicit cannabis market. More than 200 illicit stores have closed and over 900 illicit websites involved in the illegal sale of cannabis have been disrupted. Licensed cannabis retail sales are growing each year, and evidence indicates that the majority of people in B.C. who purchase cannabis products buy them from legal sources.

To support the legal cannabis industry in the province, the ministry made changes to improve hospitality and tourism opportunities. With recent changes to the [Cannabis Control Regulation](#), licensees are now able to promote a place for people to consume cannabis or to spend time after consuming cannabis. Additionally, smoking and vaping cannabis on public patios are now permitted where smoking and vaping tobacco are already allowed, subject to local or Indigenous government bylaws and other rules. PSSG remains committed to working with cannabis businesses, Indigenous partners, and local governments to identify where adjustments to the provincial framework can be made to support the legal sector, including gradually enabling further cannabis hospitality and tourism experiences.

The investment of approximately \$1.4 million in the Centre for Gambling Research announced in December 2023 aligns with the Province's continued effort to work toward its commitments of harm reduction and a public-health approach to preventing problem gambling. The Centre for Gambling Research was established to create a central hub for research about responsible and problem gambling in B.C. This is the third consecutive five-year term that the Province and BCLC have provided funding for the centre.

PSSG also advanced steps to address problem gambling risks associated with increased gambling advertising. The Province takes harms from gambling seriously and recognizes that significant exposure to gambling advertising may have negative health implications. The ministry co-chairs a federal-provincial-territorial working group on gambling and has raised concerns about online gambling advertising with the federal government, as they hold most of the levers to limit this form of advertising. The ministry is also exploring options to address unregulated online gambling websites in B.C.

During 2023/24, PSSG continued to make progress on the development of the regulations that will bring the new [Gaming Control Act](#) (2022) into force. These are new regulations under development for the gambling sector and have required significant time to thoroughly consult with the BCLC, gambling companies, charities, and Indigenous partners on a range of regulatory issues, such as prevention of problem gambling, prevention of unlawful activity, advertising, and training.

The usage-rate discount on auto insurance that ICBC began offering in June 2023 will contribute to making the cost of auto insurance in B.C. as affordable as possible. This is in addition to the [British Columbia Utilities Commission's](#) approval of ICBC's application for no overall change to Basic insurance rates for two years – meaning there was no change in Basic rates in 2023/24. PSSG continues to monitor [Enhanced Care](#) to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of British Columbians by delivering affordable auto insurance and providing improved care and recovery benefits to people who are injured in a crash in Canada or the United States, regardless of fault.

The ministry also reviews consumer protection laws on an ongoing basis to ensure that they continue to be responsive to current business practices and meet the needs of British Columbians, while minimizing regulatory impacts on businesses.

Performance measures and related discussion

| Performance Measure | 2021/22 Baseline ¹ | 2022/23 Actual | 2023/24 Target ² | 2023/24 Actual |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| [2a] Percentage of Food Primary liquor licences granted within four months of application ³ | 60 | 84 | 77 | 78 |
| [2b] Percentage of Manufacturer liquor licences granted within six months of application | 71 | 75 | 83 | 91 |
| [2c] Percentage of Liquor Primary licences granted within 12 months of application ⁴ | 68 | 86 | 81 | 83 |
| [2d] Percentage of Cannabis Retail Store applications granted within 13 months of application ⁴ | 69 | 74 | 75 | 67 |

Data source: The case management system of the ministry's Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB).

¹ The 2021/22 baselines for liquor applications are somewhat misrepresentative of the true baselines because 2021/22 was the first year these applications were processed in LCRB's new case management system. The actuals for 2022/23 represent more reliable estimates as liquor application processing in the new case management system was more well established at that time.

² The targets for both 2024/25 and 2025/26 were stated in the ministry's 2023/24 – 2025/26 service plan as 77, 83, 81 and 75 respectively. These targets have since been updated in the ministry's current, 2024/25 – 2026/27 service plan.

³ Food Primary liquor licence application volumes lend themselves to potentially greater gains in processing times.

⁴ The processing times for Liquor Primary licences and Cannabis Retail Store licences can be impacted and made longer because they involve local government processes that are outside the ministry's control.

The LCRB tracks the percentage of licences granted within established service standards for key licence classes as an indicator of the timeliness of service delivery. The established service standards are informed by average processing times and incorporate consideration of the factors that can affect those averages, such as local government processes and the actions of applicants. Average processing times may be skewed by a small number of outliers where processing times were significantly extended through factors not in the control of the LCRB.

The established service standards serve as goalposts for licence applicants with what may be expected regarding processing times. Efficient and timely licensing of liquor and cannabis establishments allows licensees to operate in the legal industry sooner, which ensures that products are sold safely to the public while contributing positively to British Columbia's economy.

The volume of cannabis retail store applications has decreased significantly in the last two years, presenting a smaller pool of applications reaching approval in 2023/24. The applications falling outside of the established service standard for timeliness were delayed by the required local government recommendations and complex security screenings. Local government delays can be attributed to a small number of applications being held in abeyance pending the local government's decision to start accepting cannabis retail store applications as well as a few changes made by applicants during the recommendation process requiring further information for consideration. Manufacturer applications exceeded the estimated service delivery target due largely to the staggered implementation of components of a streamlining project aimed at reducing excess processes for these applications.

Goal 3: The justice and public safety sector in British Columbia is sustainable

Objective 3: Strengthened sustainability of the justice and public safety sector to deliver accessible and effective programs and services

The justice and public safety sector must be innovative, adaptive, well-managed, and efficient to remain sustainable. PSSG continues efforts to ensure that appropriate resource levels are sustained to facilitate the successful delivery of core public safety services, with resources and decision making oriented to optimize public safety benefits to British Columbians.

Key results

- During 2023/24, PSSG actively engaged with RCMP "E" Division to identify and prioritize police vacancies and resource pressures within the PPS and monitored implementation of the Province's 2023/24 investment of \$48 million to allow the RCMP to work toward reaching full staffing levels in British Columbia. By the end of March 2024, the number of positions that were fully staffed and operational exceeded the year one, 2023/24 provincial targets.
- In 2023/24, 77 per cent of traffic violation tickets were issued through electronic ticketing (eTicketing). eTicketing leverages technology with a process that is more efficient, facilitating faster identification of drivers and enforcement against unsafe driving behaviours and allowing police officers more time for additional enforcement activities.

- The ministry undertook implementation of a systems transformation project to reduce backlogs in B.C.'s [Driver Fitness Program](#) and enable faster removal of unsafe drivers from the province's roads.
- As part of the continued implementation of the [Justice and Public Safety Sector Digital Strategy](#), a Justice Application Modernization Project commenced with approximately \$2.7 million in funding in 2023/24. The project will set the foundation for modernizing the aging core justice and public safety sector information systems over the next several years.
- In January 2023, a cohort of 46 PSSG employees began the second edition of the Leadership Development Program developed for the justice and public safety sector to build leadership capacity within the sector and support succession management. In addition, 140 positions within the ministry have been identified as succession priority positions through the Succession Management Program.

Summary of progress made in 2023/24

During 2023/24, the ministry continued to work with RCMP "E" Division and national partners to address issues pertaining to PPS vacancies. Under the SCAP, the Province invested \$48 million in funding in 2023/24 to support the PPS in addressing existing gaps in staffing and resource pressures within the PPS in specialized functions, such as Major Crime Section and B.C. Highway Patrol, and in remote/rural provincial detachment units.

As well as enabling the RCMP to work toward ultimately reaching its full authorized strength of 2,602 members in B.C., the funding also enables the RCMP to support member wellness in rural and remote communities by allowing more reasonable scheduling of police officers, thereby reducing overtime, and decreasing reliance on Reserve Constables to deliver day-to-day policing services. While the provincial investment applies to the PPS, it is anticipated that its positive impacts will benefit public safety for all communities in B.C.

The ministry continued to enhance and support digital roadside tools for police through eTicketing, digitization of roadside forms, and enhanced and automated enforcement across the province. These tools and supports help police officers to intervene more quickly with dangerous drivers while allowing officers to spend more time on other enforcement activities and enabling more efficient information sharing between agencies.

The systems transformation project undertaken by the ministry to improve driver medical fitness processes includes a new case management system that will increase the efficiency of the Driver Fitness Program and assist with managing increased volumes. The new case management system will also improve the experience of medical practitioners, drivers, and ICBC staff, through online portals.

The ministry also took additional steps, including policy changes, to address the backlog in Driver Fitness Program processing times that are primarily the result of the resumption of aged-based Driver Medical Examination Reports after they were paused during the COVID-19 pandemic to protect the health of the province's senior population. These reports were previously issued to drivers every two years from age 80; however, as data shows that most

drivers between age 80 and 85 are determined medically fit to drive, these reports are now issued to drivers who are 80, drivers who are 85, and every two years thereafter. This new schedule will allow for an estimated annual reduction of 25,000 reports with no measurable impact to road safety. Extended timeframes are also being provided for all drivers to complete their medical assessments from 45 days to 120 days along with additional extensions when required and where possible.

The multi-year Justice and Public Safety Digital Strategy, released in 2019, was developed as a long-term strategy to unify digital transformation efforts and coordinate investments in data, technology, and resources to optimize how sector programs and services are delivered. As part of its ongoing implementation, approximately \$2.7 million was invested in 2023/24 for the first phase of the Justice Application Modernization Project that targets an iterative modernization of core justice and public safety sector information management/information technology (IM/IT) systems. Modernizing these 25+ year old legacy applications, which are accessed by more than 15,000 users, will improve the efficiency for employees using the systems while directly serving citizens, saving time and effort for all involved. Examples of initial steps taken in 2023/24 include the creation of a dedicated team to advance the work; substantial discovery and application analyses completed; and progress made on the modernization of specific IM/IT applications.

During 2023/24, the ministry continued to strengthen evidence-based workforce planning with a focus on leadership development and succession management. Through the Succession Management Program for the justice and public safety sector, succession priority positions are identified as essential to building organizational capacity and ensuring the continuity of key functions required for program and service delivery. As well, the PSSG and AG Workforce Plan 2023 - 2026 includes a focus on recruitment, retention, succession management, and leadership and supervisory development, to ensure the ministries have the talent required to deliver on their strategic goals and objectives.

The Leadership Development Program, also established for the justice and public safety sector, is a voluntary 18-month program that includes group coaching; mentor moments and leadership panels; a competency assessment and a 360 assessment, both which improve self-awareness; experiential learning; and formal learning through [B.C. Public Service Agency](#) professional development courses, the [House of Indigenous Learning](#), and the [Harvard Manage Mentor](#).

Performance measure and related discussion

| Performance Measure | 2021/22 Baseline ¹ | 2022/23 Actual | 2023/24 Target ² | 2023/24 Actual ³ |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| [3] Percentage of traffic violation tickets issued through eTicketing | 56 | 65 | 75 | 77 |

Data source: The eTicket adoption dashboard

¹ The 2021/22 baseline is from the November 2021 calculation in the eTicket Adoption Dashboard.

² The 2023/24 target was based on a five per cent year-to-year increase. The targets for 2024/25 and 2025/26 were stated in the ministry’s 2023/24 – 2025/26 service plan as 80 and 90, respectively. These targets are based on ongoing training and adoption of the system throughout the province. It is anticipated that by 2025/26, the maximum rate for eTicketing will have been achieved at 90 per cent, as all police cars that enforce traffic will have adopted the system. The additional ten per cent includes traffic violation tickets that are issued by officers from police boats, horses, and foot patrols, which will remain paper-based tickets at this time.

³ The actual rate for 2023/24 is based on the most recent data available, as of January 2024. It is considered preliminary, allowing time for data entry of paper tickets, and may change slightly when the data has settled and is fully approved.

During 2023/24, police officers continued to leverage technology through eTicketing. During the eTicketing process, police officers scan drivers’ licence information into an online ticket template that auto-populates offence details, ensuring accuracy while saving time. The vehicle-mounted equipment then rapidly shares this information with justice and public safety sector partners like ICBC, eliminating the need to mail tickets to these partners and for them to re-enter details. The process is more efficient than paper-based ticketing and facilitates faster enforcement against unsafe driving behaviours.

Preliminary results suggest that the 2023/24 target established for this performance measure was surpassed.

Goal 4: The justice and public safety sector in British Columbia has the public’s confidence

Objective 4: Increased public confidence in the justice and public safety sector

British Columbians must have confidence in the integrity and effectiveness of the justice and public safety sector for it to function effectively and to ensure continued public participation and support. As well as supporting the above goal, this objective is linked to the three previous goals. For the public to have confidence in the justice and public safety sector, it must protect people and it must be fair and sustainable.

Public confidence in the police is of particular importance. How police are viewed affects the public’s willingness to report crimes, to cooperate with police investigations, to contact the police if victimized, and to abide by laws and police orders. A positive perception of police among British Columbians is a critical aspect of public safety and contributes to lower levels of crime.

Key results

- During 2023/24, the ministry worked with key partners to complete the development of the first phase of Police Act legislative amendments made as part of the Policing and Public Safety Modernization initiative. The amendments are focused on municipal police governance, oversight, and superintendence and represent an interim step towards longer-term and broader policing modernization.
- A total of \$1.536 million in funding was provided by the ministry in 2023/24 to interested First Nations (each of the more than 220 BC First Nations and MNBC were invited to apply), the FNLC, the BCFNJC, and community organizations to support capacity and engagement for the second phase of policing policy co-development.
- The Unexplained Wealth Order (UWO) regime was enacted by the Province in May 2023, enabled by amendments to the [Civil Forfeiture Act](#) and providing an important investigative tool to combat money laundering and organized crime. A UWO is a court order that requires a person to explain how they acquired their assets if there is evidence of illegality.
- On June 19, 2023, the BCCS released its [report](#) Youth Unregulated Drug Toxicity Deaths 2017-2022, and on November 1, 2023, the BCCS Death Review Panel released its [report](#) to the chief coroner. The panel was convened by the chief coroner in response to the continued increase in unregulated drug-related deaths in the province.¹⁶

Summary of progress made in 2023/24

The ministry committed to making changes to the Police Act to improve governance and oversight of policing as part of the Province's work to make systemic improvements to the policing and public safety landscape in British Columbia. Citizens count on police to respond in difficult situations to keep communities safe and there are ongoing conversations on how to change policing to keep pace with a changing world, particularly for many Indigenous, Black, and other people of minority communities who have had negative experiences with the police.

During 2023/24, the ministry worked with key partners to develop amendments to the Police Act which made changes to municipal police governance, oversight, and police superintendence and set the foundation for a modern policing system that is fair, equitable, and responsive to all communities. The amendments address recommendations from the 2022 Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act and the [2019 Special Committee to Review the Police Complaint Process](#), and address legislative changes requested by the [Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner](#).

The phased work being undertaken in Police Act reform is aligned with Action 3.11 of the Declaration Act Action Plan.¹⁷ The Province is committed to developing and implementing

¹⁶ A [letter of response](#) to the report was provided to the chief coroner from the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

¹⁷ Action 3.11 states: Develop and implement comprehensive policing reforms to address systemic biases and racism. This will include updating the Police Act, BC Provincial Policing Standards and mandatory training requirements; enhancing independent oversight; clarifying the roles and responsibilities of police officers in the context of complex social issues such as mental health, addiction and homelessness; and contributing to the modernization of the federal First Nations Policing Program.

policing reform that is responsive to the diverse needs of all communities and fosters increased public trust in policing, particularly for Indigenous and racialized communities.

The new policing and oversight legislation is being co-developed with interested First Nations, Modern Treaty Nations, and Indigenous leadership organizations, such as the FNLC and the BCFNJC. Capacity funding is available to support this work, with a total of \$1.086 million in funding provided by the ministry in 2023/24. Engagement undertaken in 2023/24, with support from Deloitte's Nation Building Advisory Services team, included eight in-person regional sessions held in late March 2024 to launch the cooperation and consultation process with rightsholders.

Separate [amendments](#) to the Police Act were also made in 2023/24 to clarify the process any municipality must follow when they wish to change their Police of Jurisdiction, actioning the Province's commitment to remove uncertainty, enhance public confidence, and keep people safe throughout British Columbia.¹⁸

The Province enacted the UWO regime in May 2023, thereby fulfilling one of the key recommendations of the [final report](#) of the Cullen Commission into Money Laundering. UWOs are a powerful investigative tool to help the Civil Forfeiture Office build a stronger asset forfeiture case, thus helping the Province combat high-level organized crime and pierce common money-laundering techniques, such as hiding assets with family members or associates.¹⁹ UWOs are currently employed in more than 100 jurisdictions, including the UK, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand.

The ministry also continued other ongoing work with police to address serious and organized crime, including targeting high-level and mid-level drug traffickers, through the [Firearm Violence Protection Act](#) (FVPA)²⁰; continued operation of the [BC Provincial Forensic Firearms Laboratory](#); and continued implementation of the BC Organized Crime Strategy through the Organized Crime Agency of British Columbia. By the end of 2023/24, under the direction of their board, the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit – BC announced its first three-year strategic plan to realize its mission to target organized crime groups posing the highest risk to public safety in B.C. (see Appendix B).

Throughout 2023/24, the BCCS continued fulfilling its key role of conducting objective, impartial, and culturally-safe investigations into unexpected, sudden, and unnatural deaths that identify the circumstances of deaths and enhance public safety in British Columbia; and informing the public of findings and recommendations of coroners, juries, and review panels to promote health and safety and reduce deaths.

¹⁸ The [Police Act Amendment, 2023](#) received Royal Assent on October 26, 2023.

¹⁹ The UWO is an investigative tool, not a seizure tool. The Civil Forfeiture Office can start forfeiture proceedings against a property without an UWO.

²⁰ The FVPA received Royal Assent on March 25, 2021. Work is underway to develop accompanying regulations. Once complete, both the FVPA and its regulations will be brought into force. The FVPA responds to recommendations made by subject matter experts in the [2017 Illegal Firearms Task Force Report](#) to address gang and gun violence.

Performance measure and related discussion

| Performance Measure | 2021/22 Baseline ¹ | 2022/23 Actual ² | 2023/24 Target ³ | 2023/24 Actual ⁴ |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| [4] Median time, in months, to conclude coroner investigations ⁵ | 20 | 16 | 11 | NOT AVAILABLE |

Data source: BCCS

¹ The 2021/22 baseline was reported as 13 months in the ministry's 2023/24 – 2025/26 service plan. The 2021/22 baseline of 13 months was estimated using the prior year median time to close a case (2020/21) as most cases were open for the 2021/22 year. The baseline has since been revised to 20 months as the BCCS now has actual cases closed to draw upon to report more accurate median closure times for 2021/22. The increase in median case closing months from the original estimate of 13 months to 20 months was due to the impacts of several factors, including an unusually large, 12.3 per cent year-over-year increase in the number of deaths reported to the BCCS, which included the more than 600 deaths resulting from the unexpected heat dome in summer 2021; anticipated staff hiring that took longer than anticipated; implementation of a new case management system; transition to a new organizational structure; and changes in processes leading to delays in file closures.

² The 2022/23 actual is subject to change as the data is finalized.

³ The 2023/24 target was established based on historical actuals and anticipated additional staffing hires. The targets for 2024/25 and 2025/26 were stated in the ministry's 2023/24 – 2025/26 service plan as 9 and 7, respectively. These targets have since been updated in the ministry's current, 2024/25 – 2026/27 service plan.

⁴ Preliminary results for 2023/24 are not yet available as many investigations from that fiscal year remain active.

⁵ The median time from when the BCCS is notified of a death until the investigation is closed, after which the coroner's report is distributed.

Through its impartial and independent investigations, the BCCS continues to support public safety and confidence in the justice and public safety sector by providing information about individual deaths and aggregated data reporting to inform evidence-based public safety legislation, policies, and programs.

Under the [Coroners Act](#), the BCCS is mandated to investigate all sudden and unexpected, unexplained, or unattended deaths in the province, including:

- deaths which appear to be the result of violence, injury, or self-harm;
- deaths in which the cause of death is unexplained;
- deaths that do not meet the above criteria but where the deceased person has not been under the care of a physician;
- all deaths which occur in provincial correctional facilities, federal penitentiaries, or other facilities where a person is involuntarily detained, such as those committed to a facility under the [Mental Health Act](#); and
- all deaths of children under the age of 19 years.²¹

At the conclusion of each investigation, a coroner's report is completed that confirms the identity of the decedent and how, where, when and by what means their death occurred. These reports determine the facts surrounding the death, do not determine fault or blame and, where appropriate, may include recommendations aimed at preventing future similar

²¹ In 2023/24, 13,895 deaths were reported to the BCCS; of those, 7,086 – or approximately 51 per cent – met at least one of these criteria and proceeded to an investigation.

deaths. Every investigation is unique, and individual timelines for completion can be impacted by the complexity of the case, parallel investigations by other agencies, case loads, and other factors.

Due to these factors, many investigations from 2023/24 remain active and preliminary results for that fiscal year are not yet available. It is anticipated that the 2023/24 actual will represent a reduction in median times for case completion resulting from the hiring of more investigating coroners and support staff, and identification of efficiencies in the file closing process.

Financial Summary

Financial Report

| | Estimated (\$000) | Other Authorizations ¹ (\$000) | Total Estimated (\$000) | Actual (\$000) | Variance (\$000) |
|--|----------------------|---|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Operating Expenses | | | | | |
| Corrections | 296,131 | 27,107 | 323,238 | 322,633 | (605) |
| Policing and Security | 534,024 | 20,525 | 554,549 | 555,637 | 1,088 |
| Victim Services and Crime Prevention | 78,374 | 1,668 | 80,042 | 77,590 | (2,452) |
| BC Coroners Service | 22,696 | 2,154 | 24,850 | 26,741 | 1,891 |
| RoadSafetyBC | 29,244 | 7,212 | 36,456 | 35,761 | (695) |
| Liquor and Cannabis Regulation | 7,616 | 1,752 | 9,368 | 8,954 | (414) |
| Gaming Policy and Enforcement | 20,445 | 0 | 20,445 | 20,651 | 206 |
| Cannabis, Consumer Protection and Corporate Policy | 3,712 | 1,250 | 4,962 | 5,302 | 340 |
| Office of the Fire Commissioner ² | 3,173 | 60 | 3,233 | 2,981 | (252) |
| Executive and Support Services | 17,604 | 324 | 17,928 | 18,819 | 891 |
| Statutory Services ³ | 15,194 | (634) | 14,560 | 13,696 | (864) |
| Sub-total | 1,028,213 | 61,417 | 1,089,630 | 1,088,766 | (864) |
| Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual ⁴ | 0 | 0 | 0 | (6,315) | (6,315) |
| Total | 1,028,213 | 61,417 | 1,089,630 | 1,082,452 | (7,178) |
| Ministry Capital Expenditures | | | | | |
| Corrections | 1,062 | 2,363 | 3,425 | 4,359 | 934 |
| BC Coroners Service | 12 | 0 | 12 | 12 | 0 |
| Executive and Support Services | 1,514 | 0 | 1,514 | 580 | (934) |
| Total | 2,588 | 2,363 | 4,951 | 4,951 | 0 |

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.

²Office of the Fire Commissioner was established as a new core business area in the 2023/24 Estimates.

³Statutory Services includes Civil Forfeiture Account, Corrections Work Program Account, Criminal Asset Management Fund, and Victim Surcharge Special Account.

⁴The Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual of \$6.315 million is a reversal of accruals in the previous year.

Capital Expenditures

| Major Capital Projects (over \$50 million in total) | Targeted Year of Completion | Project Cost to Mar 31, 2024 (\$m) | Estimated Cost to Complete (\$m) | Anticipated Total Cost (\$m) |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|---|------------------------------------|
| Nanaimo Correctional Centre Replacement Project | 2024 | 170 | 11 | 181 |
| <p>Objective: The Nanaimo Correctional Centre (NCC) Replacement Project will replace the current aging and outdated 190-cell correctional centre located in Nanaimo, B.C. The new centre is being constructed on the existing site while the current centre remains operational, after which the existing centre will be deconstructed. The new NCC will be a 202-cell, multi-security level facility, including a 12-cell unit for short-term accommodation of women from Vancouver Island.</p> <p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new centre will better support staff and enhance the NCC's unique, effective programs, including the Guthrie Therapeutic Community and vocational and educational programs delivered in partnership with Vancouver Island University. The project is expected to bring major regional economic benefits, including approximately 1,000 jobs during construction (650 direct and 275 indirect jobs, plus nearly 100 additional jobs associated with spending by workers). <p>Risks: Not applicable</p> | | | | |

Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations

As of August 12, 2024, the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General is responsible and accountable for the following organizations:

[BC Liquor Distribution Branch](#)

The LDB is one of two branches of government that provide oversight for the beverage alcohol and cannabis industries; the other is the LCRB. The LDB is responsible for the wholesale distribution and retail sale of beverage alcohol and cannabis.

The [Liquor Distribution Act](#) gives the LDB the sole right to purchase beverage alcohol both within B.C. and from outside the province, in accordance with the federal [Importation of Intoxicating Liquors Act](#).

The [Cannabis Distribution Act](#) establishes a government wholesale distribution model for cannabis, public cannabis retail stores, and a publicly run e-commerce retail channel.

[Consumer Protection BC](#)

CPBC is responsible for administering British Columbia's consumer protection laws, namely the [Business Practices and Consumer Protection Act](#), the [Cremation, Interment and Funeral Services Act](#), the [Ticket Sales Act](#), and the [Motion Picture Act](#), along with a variety of associated consumer protection regulations. It is a not-for-profit corporation that protects consumers and promotes a fair marketplace in the province.

[Insurance Corporation of British Columbia](#)

ICBC's mandate is to provide universal compulsory (basic) automobile insurance for all British Columbian motorists and compete with private insurance companies to offer various optional vehicle insurance coverages. ICBC also provides non-insurance services on behalf of the provincial government, including driver licensing, vehicle registration and licensing, and fines collection. ICBC's board has the power and authority given to it by the [Insurance Corporation Act](#) and, subject to the Act, manages and supervises the affairs and business of ICBC.

[Municipal Police Boards](#)

Independent municipal police departments are overseen by appointed police boards made up of civilian members of the community. The role of these police boards is to provide general governance, oversight, and direction to the department, in accordance with relevant legislation and in response to community needs.

[Organized Crime Agency of British Columbia and Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit – British Columbia](#)

See Appendix B

Appendix B: Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit – British Columbia

Purpose of the Organization

In 1999, the [Organized Crime Agency of British Columbia](#) (OCABC) was created as an independent Designated Policing and Law Enforcement Unit under the provincial Police Act.

In 2004, the [Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit – British Columbia](#) (CFSEU-BC) was developed in consultation with the provincial government as an initiative to integrate the OCABC, the municipal police departments, and the RCMP.

In 2024, CFSEU-BC concluded its first three-year strategic plan, setting out its mission to facilitate the disruption and suppression of organized crime that poses the highest public safety risk to British Columbians. Its mandate is to investigate, support the prosecution of, disrupt, and suppress criminal organizations, consistent with local, regional, national, and international priorities. The CFSEU-BC also supports other agencies by assisting in organized crime and major crime investigations.

Governance Overview

The Board of Governance for the OCABC also acts as the Board of Governance for the CFSEU – BC.

The board is currently comprised of two civilian members who are community leaders in the areas of finance and governance, the Chief Constable of the Vancouver Police Department; the Chief Constable of the Victoria Police Department; the Deputy Commissioner Pacific Region and Commanding Officer “E” Division RCMP; the Assistant Commissioners of the “E” Division RCMP; and the Associate Director of Police Services of PSSG’s Policing and Security Branch. The Director of Police Services sits as an ex officio member of the board.

The board determines the strategic direction of the CFSEU-BC and ensures its operational priorities are aligned with the policing priorities for British Columbia. The CFSEU-BC operates under the RCMP policies and procedures.

The Chief Officer in charge of the CFSEU-BC leads an executive team comprised of civilian members, in addition to regular RCMP and municipal officers seconded from across the province. The CFSEU-BC Gang Enforcement Unit, Investigation Teams, and the Joint Illegal Gaming Investigation Team are just a few of the teams that fall under the responsibility of the CFSEU-BC. Offices for the CFSEU-BC are located in the Lower Mainland, Prince George, Kelowna, and Victoria.

Appendix C: Progress on Mandate Letter Priorities

The following is a summary of progress made on priorities as stated in Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General Mike Farnworth’s 2022 Mandate Letter.

| 2022 Mandate Letter Priority | Status as of March 31, 2024 |
|--|--|
| <p>Implement the recommendations of the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act, including working with the support of the Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives to address systemic racism, including interim and long-term policy, regulatory and legislative changes.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In progress (see Objective 4.1) • Progress to March 31, 2024, includes drafting of Bill 17 – Police Amendment Act, representing the first phase of Police Act legislative amendments; and \$1.536 million in funding provided to interested First Nations, the FNLC, the BCFNJC, and community organizations to support capacity and engagement for the second phase of policing policy co-development. |
| <p>Convene roundtables with community leaders across the province on safety issues in their communities to identify ways to work in partnership on these issues.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • The Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General and ministry representatives meet regularly with community leaders as community engagement is an essential driver of key public safety initiatives, such as the SCAP. • As of March 31, 2024, the Minister had held roundtables with local governments, First Nations, and community stakeholders in Campbell River, Creston, Grand Forks, Greenwood, Kamloops, Midway, Nanaimo, Nelson, Oliver, Osoyoos, Penticton, Port Hardy and Prince George. |

| 2022 Mandate Letter Priority | Status as of March 31, 2024 |
|---|--|
| <p>Lead work to improve public safety in our communities, including the implementation of the SCAP, to address repeat and violent offending, with the support of the Attorney General and the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In progress (see Objective 1.1) • 12 ReVOII hubs are operating in B.C., serving the communities in which they are located along with the surrounding regions. By March 31, 2024, nearly 400 individuals had been prioritized into the program to be connected to supportive services to help break the cycle of offending. • 59 SITE projects were funded across the province in 2023/24 with an investment of over \$5.3 million. These projects enhance police capacity to target violent offending and support a coordinated response across jurisdictions. • The Province invested \$608,000 in Situation Tables in 2023/24, for a total of \$2.9 million since 2018. The 36 Situation Tables operating in the province are helping frontline staff from the public safety, health and social service sectors to identify vulnerable people and connect them to the services they need. |
| <p>Continue to advocate for federal government reforms related to public safety.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • The ministry is engaged in federal-provincial-territorial discussions on an ongoing basis on issues related to public safety, including PPS staffing levels; the federal First Nations and Inuit Policing Program; high-level organized crime and drug trafficking; international port security; anti-money laundering legislation and enforcement; unregulated online gambling and gambling advertising; foreign interference; bail reform; and auto theft. |

| 2022 Mandate Letter Priority | Status as of March 31, 2024 |
|--|---|
| <p>Work with ICBC to improve the experience of pedestrians and cyclists involved in vehicle collisions.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In progress • The Motor Vehicle Amendment Act, which received Royal assent on May 11, 2023, established a minimum safe-passing distance law and other protections for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists. |
| <p>Work with the Attorney General and the BCFNJC to address the disproportionate incarceration of Indigenous Peoples through the implementation of the First Nations Justice Strategy.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In progress (see Objective 1.2) • Progress to March 31, 2024, includes engaging the federal government in the work of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy; and ongoing work with the BCFNJC to inform development of new community-based justice programming. |
| <p>With support from the Attorney General, explore coordination of provincial regulatory enforcement teams, including for tobacco, liquor, gambling and cannabis.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In progress • The ministry continues to explore options for enhancement and increased coordination of enforcement in these areas. |
| <p>Work with the Minister of Finance to target proceeds of crime for high level organized criminals, in line with Cullen Commission recommendations.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In progress (see Objective 4.1) • The UWO regime was enacted by the Province in May 2023, providing an important investigative tool to combat money laundering and organized crime. • The Province continues to participate in ongoing consultations with the federal government regarding anti-money laundering legislation and enforcement. |

| 2022 Mandate Letter Priority | Status as of March 31, 2024 |
|--|--|
| <p>With support from your Cabinet colleagues, continue work to implement the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In progress (see Objective 1.3) • The ministry released a June 2023 status report for A Path Forward: Priorities and Early Strategies for B.C. The Path Forward document reflects community-based priorities aligned with the 28 mandate commitments related to the provincially relevant Calls for Justice. All 28 commitments are well underway or completed. |
| <p>Work with the Law Foundation of British Columbia to develop a proposal to enhance and expand restorative justice programs across the province.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • The recipients of the Province’s 2022/23 investment of \$3 million were announced in March 2024. The funds were allocated through the Law Foundation of British Columbia to several restorative justice organizations throughout B.C. who were selected through extensive community and partner engagement. |

| 2022 Mandate Letter Priority | Status as of March 31, 2024 |
|--|---|
| <p>Support police efforts to combat gangs and criminal organizations that fuel the toxic drug supply and increase support for initiatives that are proven to prevent and reduce serious crime.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In progress (see Objective 4.1 and Appendix B) • The UWO regime was enacted by the Province in May 2023 to combat money laundering and organized crime. • The Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit – BC completed development of its first three-year strategic plan targeting organized crime groups that pose the highest risk to public safety in the province. • The BC Provincial Forensic Firearms Laboratory operates as a centralized firearms intelligence hub, helping increase police capacity to analyze illegal firearms that were used for criminal activity and seized by police. • The B.C. Witness Security Program continues to prove its success using innovative and witness-centric approaches leading to convictions in a number of serious, high-profile criminal cases. |

| 2022 Mandate Letter Priority | Status as of March 31, 2024 |
|--|---|
| <p>Support the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions to free up police to focus on serious crime through provincial investments in community-based mental health and social service frontline workers, such as Peer-Assisted Care Teams (PACTs).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In progress • As of March 31, 2024, three PACTS were operational in the North Shore, New Westminster and Victoria and three more were being implemented in the Comox Valley, Kamloops and Prince George. PACTs are civilian-led and support people in distress by connecting them to mental-health and substance-use supports. • Six Mobile Integrated Crisis Response (MICR) Teams were launched between October 2023 and January 2024 in Abbotsford, Port Coquitlam/Coquitlam, Burnaby, Chilliwack, Penticton and Vernon. As of March 2024, three additional teams were in the process of being implemented in Squamish, Prince Rupert and the Westshore. These are specialized mobile crisis response units that partner a police officer with a mental-health professional to respond to mental-health police calls where an individual needs mental health or substance use crisis intervention or assistance. |
| <p>Support the work of the Minister of Housing to better coordinate services to deliver improved outcomes for people living in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, in collaboration with the Ministers of Mental Health and Addictions, Health, and Social Development and Poverty Reduction, as well as Indigenous Peoples, external partners, and others.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In progress • The ministry continues to support the Province’s work in the areas of Urgent Homelessness Response planning and Complex Care Housing. |