

# Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

## 2023/24 Annual Service Plan Report

August 2024



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## Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction 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, appearing to read 'SM', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Honourable Sheila Malcolmson  
Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction  
August 6, 2024

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## Letter from the Minister

We all want people to have the supports they need to live good lives. That's why our government has made reducing poverty a top priority and we are continuing to take action to make housing more affordable, boost access and lower the cost of child care, lower barriers to opportunity through investments in skills training, improve wages, and give people a hand with rising costs.

We've been making progress - there are now thousands fewer people living in poverty in our province. But global inflation has made life more expensive across Canada, and climate-related emergencies hit hardest for people with low incomes and those living in poverty. That's why we continue to work hard to help people in B.C. by investing in people and making life more affordable.

This spring, we passed the [Social Development and Poverty Reduction Statutes Amendment Act 2024](#), paving the way for the renewal of our [Poverty Reduction Strategy](#). We have set ambitious 10-year targets to reduce overall poverty by 60%, child poverty by 75%, and seniors' poverty by 50%.

Renewing the strategy started with listening to people: over the past year more than 10,000 people throughout the province told us their views on what would make a difference in reducing poverty. It's especially meaningful that over 70% of the people who participated have lived experience of poverty. What we learned from them has been invaluable.

The legislation passed this spring also updated our income and disability assistance laws to reduce barriers for those who can work, while continuing our supports for those who can't.

In 2023/2024, we expanded supports for people to find and keep meaningful employment through skills training and employment services. We also helped families and people all over B.C. put good affordable food on the table. Through a historic investment of over \$50 million in food security, we have funded hundreds of projects that helped people and families in need get healthy, nutritious food.

Non-profits and community organizations have helped our government deliver on cross-government priorities that support poverty reduction, including affordable and supportive housing, advancing Indigenous and racial justice, and better coordinating integrated social, health, housing and cultural supports to people who are at risk of or are experiencing homelessness. In recognition of their pivotal role, in 2023-24 we funded \$60 million to help non-profits do their crucial work and declared October 30 Non-Profit Recognition Day.

To be an inclusive province, we must integrate accessibility into all aspects of our lives. This past year, our government continued implementing the [Accessible B.C. Act](#). We asked British Columbians for their advice on the draft standards for accessible service delivery and employment that our Provincial Accessibility Committee developed, which will form the basis of future accessibility regulations in B.C.

In the past year, we continued building a system that removes barriers and works to reduce them, a system that supports people toward employment, and ensures people get the help they need to move out of poverty.

I am grateful for the hard work of all ministry staff who show every day their commitment to creating and delivering vital services for British Columbians, making a true difference in the lives of so many people in B.C.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'SM', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Honourable Sheila Malcolmson  
Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction  
August 6, 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 Sheila Malcolmson's [2022 Mandate Letter](#) shaped the goals, objectives, performance measures and financial plan outlined in the [Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction 2023/24 – 2025/26 Service Plan](#) and the actual results reported on in this annual report.

## Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction ([SDPR](#)) is focused on reducing poverty, creating opportunities and increasing inclusion. The purpose of the ministry is to provide quality services for British Columbians in need, to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate fully in their community and to reach their full potential.

SDPR is guided by five pieces of legislation: the [Accessible British Columbia Act](#), the [Employment and Assistance Act](#), the [Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act](#), the [Poverty Reduction Strategy Act](#) and the [Community Living Authority Act](#). The Minister is responsible for the [Community Living BC](#) (CLBC) and is supported by the Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development and Non-Profits and the Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility. The ministry's key priorities (identified in the December 2022 mandate letters) include:

- Updating the [TogetherBC: BC's Poverty Reduction Strategy](#) to continue reducing the number of people, and in particular children, who are in poverty in B.C.;
- Leading work with the Ministry of Finance to continue addressing impacts on low-income people caused by cost-of-living increases related to global inflation;
- Continuing to lead work on food security and dignified access to food in partnerships with food producers, grocery stores, food banks, schools, and non-profits, with support from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food;
- Supporting the work of the Ministry of Housing to better coordinate services to deliver improved outcomes for people living in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, in collaboration with the Ministries of Mental Health and Addictions, Health, and Public Safety and Solicitor General, as well as Indigenous Peoples, external partners and others;

- Ensuring the voices of people living with disabilities are heard in all policy development;
- Continuing work to engage advocates, communities, and businesses to ensure the new *Accessible British Columbia Act* is well understood and effective at making B.C. more accessible and inclusive for everyone – including the implementation of accessible service delivery and employment accessibility standards; and
- Through [Community Living BC](#), continuing work on the Re-imagining Community Inclusion Initiative to improve services for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Further to the above, the following is a priority for the ministry (outside mandate letters):

- Leading collaborative engagement through the [Social Services Sector Roundtable](#) to help strengthen the important community social services that people count on every day.

## Operating Environment

The ministry provided income and disability assistance to an average of 238,000 people each month in 2023/24, including 49,000 dependent children and 148,000 people with the Persons with Disabilities designation.

Inflation averaged 3.2% in 2023/24, down from 7% the previous year. Inflation averaged 2.8% in the first three months of 2024. While overall inflation has fallen, costs for necessities like food and rent continued to create affordability challenges for low-income British Columbians. Food prices increased by 5.7% and rental accommodation prices by 7.7% in 2023/24. Inflation has been a major challenge for all British Columbians, but especially so for people living on low income who often cannot change their purchasing patterns or use savings to offset rising prices. Food insecurity has increased significantly as food prices soar, with Food Banks BC reporting that the number of people visiting foodbanks increased by 20% in 2023 compared to the previous year.

The Province continued to take action to reduce poverty in 2023/24, such as historic investments in food security, childcare, and housing. The increase in the minimum wage to \$16.75 from \$15.65 on June 1, 2023 also helped working clients as many work in sectors that pay minimum wage. The ministry provided rate increases to the ministry's BC Employment and Assistance (BCEA) program. Working in partnership with food banks and other community food programs to implement the historic investment of over \$50 million made in March 2023. This funding provided support to numerous food access organizations over the course of the 2023/24 fiscal year to promote food security and increase access to food. Additionally, throughout spring and summer 2023, the ministry consulted broadly with individuals, organizations and partners across sectors to inform the ministry's food security mandate, as part of the engagement to inform the renewed Poverty Reduction Strategy.

The dramatic increase in immigrants that Canada has experienced over the last two years has also impacted British Columbians as the demand for services has increased significantly. The



ministry saw an increase in office, phone line, and online traffic, as well as outreach connections. This is especially true for refugee claimants who frequently must turn to income assistance for support. The number of refugee claimants receiving assistance increased by 77% in 2023/24 and is over three-times higher than in 2018/19. WorkBC Employment Services delivered case management services to approximately 32,000 immigrants, including self-reported refugees, which is an increase of nearly 9,000 people since the previous year and represents 42% of all people served through WorkBC Employment Services (5% higher than 2022-23). Additionally, the ministry worked with community partners to support international refugees to access community resources and ministry assistance.

## Report on Performance: Goals, Objectives, and Results

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

### Goal 1: Reduce Poverty in British Columbia

#### Objective 1.1: Implement the cross-government, province-wide Poverty Reduction Strategy

As the lead on British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy, the ministry must work across government to ensure that the requirements and targets as set out in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Act are achieved.

##### Key results

- Increased shelter rates by \$125 in August 2023 to reduce the risk of homelessness, the first increase to the shelter rate since 2007.
- Increased the rates for key supplements to reflect the increased cost of essentials, such as food and clothing, and to support people with emergent or specific needs, such as medical transportation or dietary restrictions.
- Increased the earnings exemption so people on income and disability assistance can keep their earnings without having assistance payments reduced.
- In October 2023, the \$60 million [Stronger Community Services Fund](#) was launched to support non-profit organizations across B.C. in their critical work of supporting communities, reducing poverty and advancing social inclusion and racial equity, and October 30, 2023 was declared as B.C.'s first Non-Profit Recognition Day.
- Supported new funding opportunities for non-profits and Indigenous communities that focused on infrastructure to increase the distribution of fresh food to people in need.

- Supported the First Nations Wellbeing Fund that provides funding to First Nations and Tribal Councils for projects that promote well-being, increase quality of life, and reduction of poverty.

## Summary of progress made in 2023/24

In March 2024, the B.C. government introduced and passed the [Social Development and Poverty Reduction Statutes Amendment Act \(Bill 7\)](#), which amended the [Poverty Reduction Strategy Act](#), the [Employment and Assistance Act](#), and the [Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act](#), creating opportunities to improve outcomes for people receiving government income support. To inform this work, the ministry completed a comprehensive public engagement process that began in March 2023 and continued through the spring and summer, including regional virtual town hall sessions, a public survey, and online submissions. This also included a distinctions-based Indigenous engagement concluding in Fall 2023. In total, over 10,000 people provided input, at least 70% with lived experience of poverty.

The updated B.C. legislated poverty reduction targets in the [Poverty Reduction Strategy Act](#) included new 10-year targets to reduce the overall poverty rate by 60%, the child poverty rate by 75% and the seniors' poverty rate by 50%.

To advance B.C.'s commitment to reconciliation, B.C. implemented a broad income and asset exemption for Indigenous financial settlements that took effect on April 6, 2023, ensuring that past and future payments made as compensation for past government wrongdoings against Indigenous Peoples do not affect eligibility for assistance. Additionally, the legislative changes made to the [Employment and Assistance Act](#) and [Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act](#) included new provisions that recognize Indigenous Peoples' inherent rights of self-government and self-determination, and enables joint and consent-based decision making with Indigenous governing bodies.

Two [What We Heard](#) reports summarizing the public and Indigenous engagement processes were released in December 2023 and February 2024 respectively. These reports informed the development of BC's 2024 Poverty Reduction Strategy.

## Performance measures and related discussion

Performance Measures	2021 Actuals	2022 Actuals	2023/24 Target <sup>2,3</sup>
[1a] Change in Total Poverty Rate from 2016 <sup>1</sup>	-45.0%	-27.5%	-25.0%
[1b] Change in Child Poverty Rate from 2016	-54.6%	-36.8%	-50.0%

Data source: Statistics Canada. [Table 11-10-0135-01 Low income statistics by age, sex and economic family type](#)

<sup>1</sup>As a result of a delay in the federal reporting of poverty statistics and the time it takes for investments to impact poverty rates, there are no interim targets.

<sup>2</sup>The poverty statistics for 2023 will be released in early 2025.

<sup>3</sup>The reporting of the Poverty Reduction Strategy performance has changed in the Service Plan. The percentage reduction in poverty is now reported instead of the actual poverty rates. This is consistent with the actual targets.

Poverty rates increased in 2022 compared to 2021 across all family types except non-elderly single females as increases in incomes did not keep pace with global inflation. Poverty rates increased in all provinces. The Province continued to meet its target to reduce the total poverty rate by 25% (actual decline was 27.5%) but did not meet its target to reduce the child poverty rate by 50% (actual 36.8%). While the inflation rate declined in 2023 to 3.9% from 6.9% in 2022, it was still above the Bank of Canada's 2% to 3% target range. Inflation higher than the target range often means that costs for people living in low income are rising faster than their income, putting further pressure on poverty rates. The ministry expects to see these pressures reflected in the 2023 poverty rates. It is important to note that the poverty statistics for 2023 will be released by Statistics Canada in early 2025.

## Goal 2: British Columbians in need have services, supports and opportunities that make life better

### Objective 2.1: Deliver reliable, responsive, consistent, accessible and secure income and disability assistance services

Delivering modern and consistent service with a focus on reliability, responsiveness and relationship-building remains a key priority. The ministry continues to expand and improve online self-service options, which increases accessibility of services for clients regardless of their location in British Columbia.

#### Key results

- Increased community presence and expanded outreach by hiring an additional 33 Community Integration Specialists.
- Created the Community Integration Services (CISB) Referral tool to ensure community partners, agencies and ministry staff can access CISB services.
- Worked with community partners to support international refugees to access community resources and ministry assistance, including 30 international refugee families (141 individuals) transferred from Ontario to British Columbia.
- Expanded eligibility requirements and available supplements for some of the Province's most vulnerable members, such as individuals experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness, Persons with Disabilities, low-income individuals and families, international refugee claimants, and all other British Columbians in need.
- Increased monthly earning exemption amounts for income assistance and annualized earning exemption amounts for disability assistance.

#### Summary of progress made in 2023/24

Community Integration Specialists were able to establish trust, make valued connections and build positive relationships with at-risk individuals by providing small items to meet their immediate needs, and provide fire safety and fire suppression items to individuals residing in encampments or vehicles to reduce the chance of injury or loss of life.

To address the growing cost of living crisis and improve access to financial supports to British Columbians in need, the ministry increased the amount of earning exemptions for income assistance, increased the annual earning exemptions for disability assistance, as well as the scope of eligibility for some of the following supplements: Crisis Food & Clothing Allowances, Winter Supplement, Medical Transportation, Shelter, School Start-up, Nutritional, and Natal & Diet.

The ministry considered the diverse needs of clients and responsiveness of ministry services through various process improvements to facilitate access to health supports, such as expediting dental surgeries for children, supporting clients accessing transplants, and streamlining the process to support ministry clients transitioning from ministry assistance to OAS/GIS.

The ministry increased accessibility to services by installing refreshed public computer kiosks in 35 Community Services offices and 11 Service BC locations throughout British Columbia and enhancing self-service options by implementing new automation processes within the My Self Serve Application. In addition, the ministry improved the digital self-serve options for clients using My Self Serve by implementing new automation processes and updating the terminology within the application to align with current acceptable language standards for referring to disabilities and persons who are Indigenous.

The quality of ministry services was improved through a continued focus on training for new hires, and refresher training for all front-line ministry staff. Additionally, SDPR ensured administrative fairness by aligning policy and regulation to permit Persons with Disability (PWD) adjudication without financial assessment and procuring a new consulting Health Professionals contract to support adjudicators in their decision making on complex medical equipment and device request. The ministry updated training modules for front-line decision makers on the reconsideration, appeals, and administrative fairness topics. A formalized feedback loop ensures decision makers are provided with ongoing learning opportunities to improve how decisions are documented and that the principles of administrative fairness are in the forefront.

## Objective 2.2: Job seekers have access to high quality services and supports they need to find and keep meaningful employment

High quality employment services and supports are needed so B.C. is ready to meet the future demands of a skilled workforce and fill millions<sup>1</sup> of jobs over the next decade. These services support Indigenous people, women, people of colour, people with disabilities and other underrepresented people participate in the labour market and help fill labour market needs.

### Key results

- [WorkBC Employment Services](#) were delivered through 102 centres, and a strong online presence, to about 94,000 British Columbians. This included personalized case management services to approximately 14,000 people with disabilities, 7,000

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<sup>1</sup> British Columbia Labour Market Outlook 2021-2031 Forecast

Indigenous Peoples and 32,000 immigrants. Over 34,000 job seekers were supported through their first year of employment.

- WorkBC Assistive Technology Services complemented WorkBC Employment Services by providing specialized services to about 1,800 people who have work-related barriers due to a disability or functional limitation. Assistive equipment, devices, or other disability supports were provided to help them maintain their employment or accept a job offer.
- WorkBC Apprentice Services supported over 15,800 registered apprentices to access the classroom technical training portion of their apprenticeship trade to achieve journey person status.
- About 9,100 British Columbians received Skills Training and/or Work Experience supports this year through WorkBC and community-driven projects funded by the Community and Employer Partnership program. Approximately 72% of job seekers who participate in these programs achieve sustainable employment.
- WorkBC supported eligible single parents on income and disability assistance who want to pursue employment and move towards financial independence. This year almost 100 single parent clients found employment in a variety of in-demand occupations.

### Summary of progress made in 2023/24

The ministry supported a variety of projects aligned with the ministry’s commitment to poverty reduction. These projects tested new methods of employment service delivery that support vulnerable populations, employers, Black, Indigenous, and other People of Colour (BIPOC), and Persons with Disabilities.

To enable a more modern, streamlined experience for British Columbians, user experience and accessibility improvements were made to the Online Employment Services portal and forms, ensuring compliance with screen reader technologies for low vision, visually impaired and blind clients. Improvements were also made to the overall readability, plain language, and appearance of WorkBC web pages.

Enhancements to align employment services and apprentice services application processes reduced the number of mandatory questions by 80% in both applications, improving the client registration process (from 25 to 5 questions), and making it easier for clients to register for WorkBC services. The enhancements also reduced barriers for clients by enabling service providers to engage with clients faster and increasing options by providing clients with a choice to log in to the portal using either their BC Services card or BCeID.

### Performance measures and related discussion

Performance Measure	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Target	2023/24 Actual
[2a] Number of clients using My Self Serve	125,551	103,000	141,175

Data source: Service Delivery Division, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

The ministry has exceeded its target for the number of clients using online services. The ministry continued to promote the My Self Serve Application for client easy access when extreme weather events take place throughout the province or other events prevent them from accessing ministry services in-person at a community service office.

Performance Measure	2022/23 Baseline	2023/24 Target	2023/24 Actual
[2b] WorkBC Client Satisfaction Score <sup>1</sup>	75	76	72

Data source: Employment and Labour Market Services Division, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, WorkBC Employment Services Client Intake Survey, In-Progress Survey and Exit Survey.

<sup>1</sup> WorkBC Client Satisfaction Score represents the overall client satisfaction with WorkBC services. Scores range from 0 to 100, with higher scores being considered better. The score represents the number of clients responding "satisfied" or "very satisfied" out of all survey respondents. 2024/25 and 2025/26 targets in the 2023/24 plan were 77 and 78 respectively.

To measure progress towards Goal 2, the ministry has automated surveys in place to receive feedback directly from WorkBC on their experience and their overall satisfaction with the services received. The ministry experienced small changes in satisfaction scores since its implementation, but expected to see overall increased satisfaction year over year as program improvements became established over time.

In 2023/24, the client satisfaction score was 72, missing the ministry target of 76. The ministry is reviewing survey results to determine the root cause of the decrease. While overall satisfaction declined this year, the ministry continues to see higher than average satisfaction for some marginalized client groups such as Indigenous Peoples (76), older clients (77), and people with high school education or less (74).

The ministry began planning new employment programs specifically designed to help people experiencing multiple barriers to employment. Customized programming to meet the needs of our job seekers is expected to improve client satisfaction.

## Goal 3: Persons with Disabilities live, work and participate in their communities on an equal basis with all British Columbians

### Objective 3.1: Support a comprehensive and integrated system of supports and services for Persons with Disabilities

People with disabilities routinely experience barriers that impede their ability to participate fully in their communities. The types of barriers people with disabilities experience varies greatly depending on the nature of their disability and other intersecting factors. Working in the spirit of "Nothing About Us Without Us" the ministry will continue to advance programs and policies that support Persons with Disabilities in British Columbia to meaningfully participate in their communities.

## Key results

- Made accessibility improvements to Online Employment Services portal and key WorkBC forms.
- Conducted partial accessibility testing of Integrated Case Management system to identify gaps and develop an improvement plan.
- Worked with partners as an active member of the [Re-Imagining Community Inclusion \(RCI\)](#) Steering Committee to make progress across all four priority areas: developing flexible housing options, more and better employment opportunities, improving access to health and mental health services, and that services for Indigenous Peoples be self-determined.
- Continued to implement the [Accessible British Columbia Act](#). Progress to implement the Accessible British Columbia Act is reported on annually in the Accessible BC Act Progress Report.

## Summary of progress made in 2023/24

Accessibility improvements were made to the WorkBC Online Employment Services portal to ensure compliance with screen reader technologies for low vision, visually impaired, and blind clients. Changes to labels and navigation flows for screen readers to announce text fields, check boxes, radio buttons and drop-down menus allowed clients to move through the registration with screen readers with greater ease. After testing accessibility with a client with low vision, WorkBC forms were improved, and a plain language review was done to increase overall readability and appearance of the WorkBC web pages. This enabled clients with low vision or blindness to tab through links and identified further barriers to be addressed in future forms platform updates for all social sector forms. Partial accessibility testing was also completed on the Integrated Case Management system to identify accessibility gaps, which will be addressed by the Spring 2024 upgrade and subsequent releases.

## Performance measure and related discussion

Performance Measure	2022/23 Baseline	2023/24 Target	2023/24 Actuals
[3a] Total amount of earnings exemptions reported by Persons with Disabilities cases	\$180 million	\$176 million	\$180 million

Data source: Research, Innovation and Policy Division, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

The total amount of exempted earnings exceeded the target as the labour market performed better than anticipated for Persons with Disabilities, especially in the first half of 2023/24. The high number of job vacancies in key sectors where many Persons with Disabilities work was able to reduce job losses. However, during the latter half of the year the labour market did slow and there was a noticeable decline in the proportion of Persons with Disabilities reporting earnings.

# Financial Report

## Financial Summary

	Estimated (\$000)	Other Authoriz- ations <sup>1</sup> (\$000)	Total Estimated (\$000)	Actual (\$000)	Variance (\$000)
<b>Operating Expenses</b>					
Income Assistance <sup>2</sup>	3,289,354	0,000	3,289,354	3,141,771	-147,583
Employment <sup>3</sup>	30,273	0,000	30,273	31,322	1,049
Community Living Services	1,410,433	0,000	1,410,433	1,555,429	144,996
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	1,915	0,000	1,915	1,627	-288
Executive and Support Services	13,356	0,000	13,356	15,182	1,826
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>4,745,331</b>	<b>0,000</b>	<b>4,745,331</b>	<b>4,745,331</b>	<b>0,000</b>
Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual <sup>4</sup>	0,000	0,000	0,000	-235	-235
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,745,331</b>	<b>0,000</b>	<b>4,745,331</b>	<b>4,745,096</b>	<b>-235</b>
<b>Capital Plan</b>					
Executive and Support Services <sup>5</sup>	1,824	417	2,241	497	-1,744
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,824</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>2,241</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>-1,744</b>

<sup>1</sup> "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.

<sup>2</sup> Ministry accessed \$304.7 million from Housing Priority Initiatives Special Accounts in 2023/24 for eligible expenditures related to housing and shelter programs under Income Assistance.

<sup>3</sup> Reflects WorkBC costs, net of recoveries from the federal government. The total expense in 2023/24 was \$370.5 million, which included \$31.3 million in provincial spending and \$339.2 million recovered from the federal government.

<sup>4</sup> The Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual of \$0.235 million is a reversal of accruals in the previous year.

<sup>5</sup> Capital expenditures represent vehicles for Community Integration Specialists serving clients in the province. The capital Information Technology budget to support WorkBC was re-profiled to future years.



## Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations

As of August 31, 2024, the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction is responsible and accountable for the following organizations:

### [Community Living BC](#)

Community Living British Columbia (CLBC) is a Crown agency that provides supports and services to meet the disability-related needs of two groups of eligible individuals and their families in British Columbia:

- Adults with a diagnosis of developmental disability. Criteria include age of onset, intellectual functioning, and adaptive behavior; and
- Adults who have a diagnosis of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder or autism spectrum disorder (also known as pervasive developmental disorder) and significant limitations in adaptive functioning.

### [Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal](#)

The Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal is an administrative tribunal established under the authority of the Employment and Assistance Act to provide clients with an efficient and transparent appeal process that is independent from the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. The Tribunal hears appeals on decisions made by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction to refuse, reduce or discontinue certain benefits or supplements. The Tribunal also hears appeals on decisions made by the Ministry of Children and Family Development to refuse, reduce or discontinue a subsidy under the [Child Care Subsidy Act](#).

## Appendix B: Progress on Mandate Letter Priorities

The following is a summary of progress made on priorities as stated in Minister Sheila Malcolmson’s 2021 and 2022 Mandate Letters.

2021 and 2022 Mandate Letter Priority	Status as of March 31, 2024
<p>Update the Poverty Reduction Strategy by March 2024, to continue reducing the number of people, and in particular children, who are experiencing poverty in our province.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Minister tabled the most recent (2022) Annual Report on TogetherBC on October 5, 2023, which noted that B.C. continues to meet its legislated targets and outlined an extensive list of B.C.’s cross-ministry poverty reduction actions in 2022.</li> <li>• In March 2024, the B.C. government introduced and passed Bill 7, the <a href="#">Social Development and Poverty Reduction Statutes Amendment Act</a>, which amended the <a href="#">Poverty Reduction Strategy Act</a>, the <a href="#">Employment and Assistance Act</a>, and the <a href="#">Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act</a>. This legislation was the result of extensive public and distinctions-based Indigenous Peoples engagement process to inform the renewal of the poverty reduction strategy and a comprehensive review of the legislation governing income and disability assistance. This review considered the recommendations outlined in the final report from the Expert Panel on Basic Income.</li> <li>• Worked to update Poverty Reduction Strategy that will be released in summer 2024.</li> </ul>
<p>Lead work with support from the Minister of Finance to continue addressing impacts on low-income people caused by cost-of-living increases related to global inflation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To help address the impacts on low-income people, Budget 2023 provided rate increases to the ministry’s BCEA program including to the shelter rate, earnings exemptions, and supplementary assistance.</li> <li>• In 2023, the ministry allocated over \$50 million in year-end funding that will be allocated over multiple years to strengthen food banks, food distribution and food access via Food Banks BC, United Way BC (UWBC) and smaller community partners.</li> </ul>

2021 and 2022 Mandate Letter Priority	Status as of March 31, 2024
<p>Given rising costs of food, continue to lead work on food security and dignified access to food in partnership with food producers, grocery stores, food banks, schools, and not-for-profits, with support from the Minister of Agriculture and Food and the Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development and Non-Profits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Throughout 2023/24, the ministry continued to implement the \$50-million multi-year investment supporting food security across B.C., such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ UWBC – \$14M to develop a critical food infrastructure fund to support community-led food infrastructure projects across B.C. that enhance food security locally.</li> <li>○ UWBC – \$7.5M to support and expand regional community food hubs from 20 – 40 over 5 years, including new hubs in northern BC and southern Vancouver Island.</li> <li>○ Food Banks BC – \$15M to provide continued financial support for food banks, support emergency food access, and support food security in northern BC.</li> <li>○ Loaves and Fishes - \$7M for a warehouse in Nanaimo to support food redistribution.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The ministry also co-chairs a cross-government Food Security Steering Committee (FSSC) focused on developing a long-term, coordinated approach across sectors to reduce food insecurity.</li> </ul>

2021 and 2022 Mandate Letter Priority	Status as of March 31, 2024
<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 Public Safety and Solicitor General, as well as Indigenous Peoples, external partners, and others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ministry has a strong presence in the Downtown Eastside that includes a dedicated team of three in-person Ministry offices, 17 Community Integration Specialists and a WorkBC employment centre.</li> <li>• Working with BC Housing, the ministry provides a one-stop access to services for income and other supports and information at the Community Connections Hub at Orange Hall.</li> <li>• The ministry is involved in integrated teams across the neighbourhood (e.g., HEART and HEARTH, Coordinated Access Tables, Vancouver Community and Drug Courts and with the Vancouver Intensive Supervision Unit).</li> <li>• The ministry works closely with the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society, All Nations Outreach, Aboriginal Front Door, Lu’ma Native Housing Society, and Kilala Lelum to provide Indigenous specific supports and services.</li> <li>• The ministry provided funding to community organizations such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ SPARC BC: Welcome Home Kits and Accessibility Week Initiatives</li> <li>○ Disability Alliance BC</li> <li>○ Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre</li> <li>○ Wish Drop-In Centre</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The ministry also provided food security funding for inflation response and long-term provincial capacity building.</li> </ul>
<p>Build on the work of so many around the province to make B.C. a global leader in the fight to end period poverty by creating a multi-sectoral Period Poverty Task Force to develop a comprehensive, long-term response to period poverty in B.C.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In March 2024, the Task Force submitted their final report with cross-sector recommendations to reduce or eliminate period poverty, to inform future actions across government.</li> </ul>

<b>2021 and 2022 Mandate Letter Priority</b>	<b>Status as of March 31, 2024</b>
<p>Continue work on the Re-imagining Community Inclusion Initiative to improve services for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress on the Re-Imagining Community Inclusion 2022/23 – 2024/25 Work Plan is underway across all four priority areas: developing flexible housing options, more and better employment opportunities, improving access to health and mental health services, and services for Indigenous Peoples are self-determined.</li> </ul>
<p>Parliamentary Secretary – Accessibility</p> <p>Ensure the voices of people living with disabilities are heard in all policy development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility directly engaged with senior leaders and officials from other ministries, including CITZ, EDUC, HOUS, TRAN, and ENV, to advance accessibility and inclusion priorities.</li> <li>During the National AccessAbility Week in 2023, learning opportunities were made available to further educate BC Public Service employees on accessibility and inclusivity.</li> <li>Since the launch of the Accessibility Feedback Tool in October 2022, the B.C. government has received 241 submissions and feedback has been shared with 18 ministries.</li> </ul>
<p>Parliamentary Secretary – Accessibility</p> <p>Continue work to engage with advocates, communities, and businesses to ensure the new accessibility legislation is well understood and effective at making B.C. more accessible and inclusive for everyone – including the implementation of accessible service delivery and employment accessibility standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In April 2024, the Provincial Accessibility Committee, where the Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility sits as co-chair, put together recommendations to address barriers to employment and access to goods and services experienced by Persons with Disabilities.</li> <li>Between January and March 2024, the Provincial Accessibility Committee gathered input on planned public consultation on accessibility standards from 50 groups within and outside of the BC Public Service, which included Persons with Disabilities, representatives of disability-serving organizations, industry associations, Crown agencies, and representatives from other B.C. ministries.</li> </ul>

<b>2021 and 2022 Mandate Letter Priority</b>	<b>Status as of March 31, 2024</b>
<p>Parliamentary Secretary – Accessibility</p> <p>Continue work with the Minister of Housing on ensuring the next iteration of the BC Building Code includes changes that will make new buildings more accessible for all people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A New Building Code was adopted in November 2023 that includes enhanced accessibility measures for commercial and public buildings and in large new multi-unit residential buildings, such as condos and apartments.</li> </ul>
<p>Parliamentary Secretary – Accessibility</p> <p>Work with the Minister of Citizens’ Services to ensure government’s digital tools and services are accessible and prioritize user experience for British Columbians of all abilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility worked closely with the Ministry of Citizens Services to improve BC Public Service’s digital accessibility, which included launching a new version of the gov.bc.ca platform that had updated accessibility features, implementing new resources to support BC Public Service employees to use digital accessibility best practices, and conducting digital accessibility audits on government websites.</li> </ul>
<p>Parliamentary Secretary – Accessibility</p> <p>Support the Minister of Education and Child Care to continue providing supports for children and youth with disabilities and special learning needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication and support were provided to school districts to ensure they meet the Accessible BC Regulation requirements.</li> </ul>

2021 and 2022 Mandate Letter Priority	Status as of March 31, 2024
<p>Parliamentary Secretary - Community Development and Non-Profits</p> <p>Continue work to support and engage charitable organizations and the nonprofit sector by acting as their advocate and key point of contact within government.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In October 2023, the Province declared October 30th as Non-Profit Recognition Day to annually celebrate the critical contributions of the non-profit sector to people and communities across B.C.</li> <li>• Following on the \$34 million Recovery and Resiliency Fund in support of non-profits' COVID recovery, the ministry launched the \$60-million Stronger Community Services Fund to further support non-profit organizations across B.C. in their critical work of supporting communities to reduce poverty and advance social inclusion and racial equity.</li> <li>• In March 2023, the ministry funded \$650,000 for Vantage Point to support the development of a provincial Non-Profit Network.</li> <li>• Supported the work of the Ministry of the Attorney General to address key issues with the Lobbyist Transparency Act identified by the sector through legislative amendments passed in March 2024.</li> </ul>
<p>Parliamentary Secretary - Community Development and Non-Profits</p> <p>Work with the co-operative sector to support sector strengthening and modernization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ministry continued to build connections with the sector and supported the current review of the Co-operative Association Act led by the Ministry of Finance.</li> </ul>
<p>Parliamentary Secretary - Community Development and Non-Profits</p> <p>Continue work to support the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction's food security mandate, including recognizing the impacts of global inflation and extreme weather events on household food security for British Columbians.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2023, the Parliamentary Secretary of Community Development and Non-Profits hosted a roundtable in the Fraser Valley to discuss food security and how to create a robust, sustainable food security system. Input from this meeting and others with food security organizations is informing the ministry's food security mandate, as well as the renewed Poverty Reduction Strategy.</li> </ul>

<b>2021 and 2022 Mandate Letter Priority</b>	<b>Status as of March 31, 2024</b>
<p>Parliamentary Secretary - Community Development and Non-Profits</p> <p>Support the work of the Minister of Housing to protect and expand non-profit, non-market, and co-op housing in B.C.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Parliamentary Secretary of Community Development and Non-Profits continues to work with the Ministry of Housing to protect and expand non-profit, non-market, and co-op housing in B.C.</li></ul>