

BUDGET 2023

GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA | 2023-26

Ministry Business Plan Seniors, Community and Social Services

Seniors, Community and Social Services

Business Plan 2023-26

Ministry Fact Sheet – Mandate and Structure

The Ministry of Seniors, Community and Social Services provides stability for Albertans and supports participation and inclusion in their communities and the workforce by delivering high-quality social programs to those who need them, when they need them. The ministry works with community partners and civil society to ensure supports and services are delivered in a timely, responsive manner. This approach puts the individual at the centre of an integrated service delivery model and recognizes the unique circumstances, experiences and strengths of individuals, families and communities. The ministry is committed to ensuring services are, effective, accessible and innovative.

Seniors, Community and Social Services provides income support and other benefits to help meet the basic needs of low-income Albertans. The social services system provides supports that enable stability for Albertans, while providing opportunities to foster self-reliance and self-sufficiency. The ministry is helping Albertans deal with the national inflation crisis, improve quality of life and increase supports for families, seniors and vulnerable Albertans. The commitment to index financial benefits to inflation ensures low-income Albertans have the resources to afford their basic needs.

By 2035, Alberta is expected to be home to more than one million seniors. To address the needs of this growing population, the ministry is monitoring trends and implementing policies and programs that are responsive to the emerging challenges and opportunities of an aging population. Seniors' benefits provide financial supports for seniors with low income to meet basic needs, afford essential health and personal supports, and to repair and adapt their homes.

The ministry works with municipalities and civil society to take action on homelessness, making sure everyone has a safe place to stay and can be connected to housing with appropriate supports. Informed by the advice and recommendation from the Coordinated Community Response to Homelessness Task Force, the Government of Alberta developed the Homelessness Action Plan to reduce homelessness in the province. A key component of the Action Plan and the ministry's overall effort to address homelessness is a recovery-oriented system of care, which is a coordinated network of person-centered, community-based services and supports that builds on the strengths and resilience of individuals, families and communities, to achieve improved health and wellness. The approach involves supporting individuals experiencing homelessness to achieve their goals, address their barriers and strengthen or re-establish connections to natural and social supports. Recovery-oriented programs and services funded by the ministry that address homelessness include elements such as stabilization, detox and treatment services as well as on-site nursing and clinical in-reach from Albert Health Services and other community partners. By implementing a recovery-oriented approach in emergency shelters and other housing programs, frontline staff can better connect those experiencing homelessness with appropriate supports as a means of breaking the cycle of homelessness.

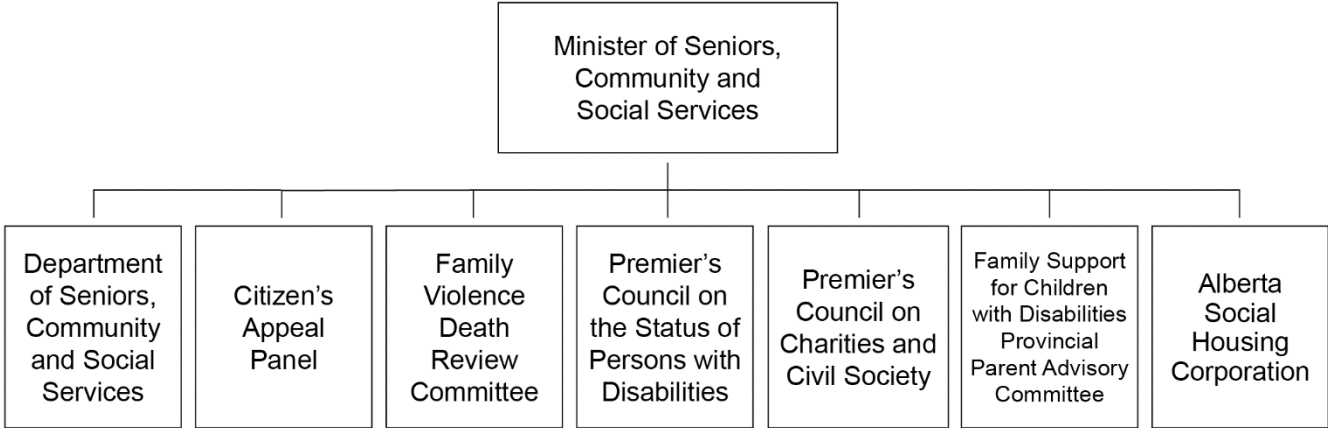
Seniors, Community and Social Services collaborates with civil society organizations, housing management bodies, and other orders of government to build, renew, maintain and operate affordable housing units for Albertans most in need. This includes seniors in lodges and seniors independent living apartments. The ministry has improved and expanded rent assistance and is working to increase the supply for affordable housing, specifically using mixed-use or mixed-income housing models, which will enable longer-term sustainability.

The ministry will continue to work with individuals, families, and community-based supports and resources to promote inclusion and improve the lives of Albertans with disabilities. Ministry programs provide supports and resources to help connect Albertans with disabilities to jobs, benefiting the economy while making government programs more sustainable.

Seniors, Community and Social Services focuses on helping unemployed Albertans and people with disabilities or other barriers find meaningful work, and works with the social services sector to address workforce challenges. The ministry works with employment partners to provide supports and services to help Albertans find and explore career, employment, and training options. The Alberta at Work initiative focuses on solving labour challenges that were highlighted during the pandemic, and providing meaningful employment support to help Albertans find jobs, build skills and advance their careers.

The ministry provides investments to community-based groups that raise awareness and help prevent and respond to family violence, sexual violence and abuse. In July 2022, Seniors, Community and Social Services released a five-year strategy that updates the government’s approach and guides how all Albertans can work together to prevent elder abuse. Community partnerships, including ones with municipalities and civil society, are important to enable quick, appropriate responses to community needs.

Seniors, Community and Social Services is working with community partners and civil society to identify and address Albertans’ changing needs. Through collaborative action and partnerships with civil society, the ministry will continue to help improve Alberta’s capacity and resilience, ensuring families and communities have opportunities to grow and thrive.



A more detailed description of Seniors, Community and Social Services and its programs and initiatives can be found at: <https://www.alberta.ca/seniors-community-and-social-services.aspx>

The Ministry of Seniors, Community and Social Services remains committed to regulatory approaches and program delivery that reduces unnecessary government oversight and emphasizes outcomes, in order to improve access to government services, attract investment, support innovation and competitiveness, and grow Alberta businesses.

Ministry business plans should be considered in conjunction with all budget documents - including the Fiscal Plan, Government Strategic Plan, and Estimates - which work together to provide a complete overview of government’s commitment to responsible fiscal management.

2023-26 Business Plan

Outcome 1

Stability - Albertans are safe and have timely and consistent access to supports to meet their basic needs

Supporting vulnerable Albertans with financial benefits, access to housing supports and emergency benefits ensures that all Albertans can meet their basic needs.

Key Objectives

- 1.1 Continue to address affordability concerns of seniors with low income and vulnerable Albertans.
- 1.2 Work to strengthen Alberta’s network of food banks to assist vulnerable Albertans and their families in need.
- 1.3 Continue to modernize and digitize financial support systems to improve access, simplify processes and enhance service delivery for Albertans, to ensure sustainable, high-quality services are provided to those who need them.
- 1.4 Continue to ensure that personal and financial decisions made for Albertans by the Public Guardian and the Public Trustee are made in their best interests.
- 1.5 Work with the social services sector to create capacity within the Persons with Developmental Disabilities program to bring more individuals into services and address work force challenges, including assessment and actions with respect to social sector worker wages.
- 1.6 Implement the *Action Plan on Homelessness* and support a recovery-oriented and housing focused delivery model.
- 1.7 Continue to implement *Stronger Foundations: Alberta’s 10-Year Strategy to Improve and Expand Affordable Housing*, to make the housing system financially sustainable, accessible and equitable for Albertans.
- 1.8 Enable civil society organizations, including women’s emergency shelters, to provide timely and culturally appropriate services, supports and resources to Albertans impacted by family and sexual violence.

Initiatives Supporting Key Objectives

- In 2023-24, \$275.7 million is allocated to provide affordability payments to seniors and low-income Albertans.
- In 2023-24, \$508.3 million in grants and \$19.7 million in low-interest home equity loans is allocated through seniors financial assistance programs to support more than 178,000 seniors with low income to meet basic needs, afford essential health and personal supports, and age safely in their homes.
- In 2023-24, \$342.5 million is allocated to build, renew, maintain, and operate affordable housing in Alberta through the government-supported affordable housing programs, including rent supplements.
- In 2023-24, of the \$342.5 million total, \$34.3 million is allocated to help grow the supply of affordable housing in priority areas through the Affordable Housing Partnership Program.
- In 2023-24, \$83.5 million is allocated to homeless shelters to provide safe temporary accommodations and basic needs services, and \$101.6 million to provide safe housing and supports to those experiencing homelessness.
- In 2023-24, \$5 million in grants and \$5 million in donation matching is allocated to food banks and civil society organizations supporting food security to assist vulnerable Albertans and their families in need.

Performance Metrics

1.a Performance Measure: Median time between when an Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) application is ready for medical adjudication and an eligibility decision is made (in weeks)

The target processing time of 9.0 weeks to determine AISH eligibility demonstrates the ministry’s commitment to provide Albertans with permanent disabilities timely access to financial supports. This processing time includes the time taken by applicants to provide the required documentation. In 2021-22, the median time between when an AISH application is ready for medical adjudication and eligibility decision was 9.1 weeks.

Targets	2023-24	9.0	2024-25	9.0	2025-26	9.0
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1.b Performance Measure: Online Seniors Financial Assistance (SFA) application utilization

This measure describes the percentage of first-time SFA applications completed online among total applications received within a fiscal year. The target of 35 per cent speaks to the ministry's red tape reduction efforts in providing fast and easy access, and efficiency in application to SFA programs. In 2021-22, the SFA applications completed online represented 25 per cent of the total SFA applications received from first-time applicants.

Targets	2023-24	35%	2024-25	45%	2025-26	50%
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1.c Performance Measure: New Affordable Housing Units and Rental Subsidies Available for Albertans with Low Income

This measure reports on the number of new affordable housing units and new rental subsidies the ministry has funded or supported for Albertans in need. The target of 2,300 is set to reflect progress toward achieving the goal of supporting 25,000 more households by 2032-33, as identified in the 10-year Stronger Foundations strategy. In 2021-22, the first year of reporting on the Strategy, the ministry delivered 2,243 new affordable housing units and new rental subsidies to Albertans with low income.

Targets	2023-24	2,300	2024-25	2,300	2025-26	2,300
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Outcome 2

Participation - Albertans participate in their communities through employment and other opportunities to reach their individual potential

Ensuring Albertans are able to access employment and fully participate in their community promotes individual prosperity and Alberta's economy.

Key Objectives

- 2.1 Provide effective and targeted career and employment information services to improve employment maintenance and to connect Albertans experiencing underemployment and long-term unemployment to the labour market.
- 2.2 Modernize and digitize supports and services for persons with disabilities to further support their participation in community life, and for families to promote the development of their children with disabilities.
- 2.3 Continue to collaborate with Alberta's Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Service Networks to offer a continuum of supports for Albertans impacted by FASD.
- 2.4 Promote awareness of and increase access to culturally sensitive supports and services for Indigenous persons with disabilities living both on- and off-reserve and on Metis Settlements.

Initiatives Supporting Key Objectives

- In 2023-24, \$85.9 million is allocated to connect Albertans, including those with disabilities, to meaningful employment and training opportunities.
- In 2023-24, \$10 million is allocated under the Alberta at Work Initiative to projects that support working families and youth, deliver skills and training, and provide job support for newcomers.
- In 2023-24, \$16 million is allocated to the low-income transit program to help low-income Albertans afford transportation to access jobs, education, community resources and government services.

Performance Metrics

2.a Performance Measure: Percentage of participants employed after receiving Career and Employment Information Services: workshops, exposure courses, job placements, and Disability Related Employment Supports

The target of 65 per cent demonstrates the ministry’s effectiveness in helping Albertans get back to work. In 2021, 66 per cent of participants were employed after receiving Career and Employment Information Services.

Targets	2023	65%	2024	65%	2025	65%
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Outcome 3

Inclusion - Alberta's communities provide a sense of belonging and foster resiliency for individuals and families

Creating inclusive communities ensures Albertans are connected to others and are able to thrive.

Key Objectives

- 3.1 Implement the Family and Community Support Services Accountability Framework to support municipalities and Metis Settlements to design and deliver preventive social programs which help to address the key social issues facing Albertans.
- 3.2 Plan and deliver initiatives and programs that support aging well at home and in community by collaborating with community-based seniors-serving organizations, health and other sectors, and all orders of government.
- 3.3 Raise awareness on matters relating to persons with disabilities through the Premier’s Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities and the Office of the Advocate for Persons with Disabilities.
- 3.4 Promote the prevention of family and sexual violence and elder abuse by raising awareness, supporting coordinated community responses, and system coordination.
- 3.5 With support from the Premier’s Council on Charities and Civil Society, expand civil society capacity to address emerging social issues and improve supports for Albertans.

Initiatives Supporting Key Objectives

- In 2023-24, \$105 million is allocated through Family and Community Support Services to communities and Metis Settlements to develop and deliver preventative social services programming.
- In 2023-24, \$23.3 million is allocated to support a continuum of services for Albertans impacted by family and sexual violence.

Performance Metrics

3.a Performance Measure: Satisfaction of families/guardians of clients accessing the Persons with Developmental Disabilities program that services are helping the client to be a part of their community

The target of 88 per cent demonstrates the ministry’s commitment to support adult Albertans with developmental disabilities to be included in their community as much as they want to be. In 2021-22, 86 per cent of families/guardians were satisfied Persons with Developmental Disabilities services helped the client be a part of their community as much as they want to be.

Targets	2023-24	88%	2024-25	N/A ¹	2025-26	88%
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¹ This is a biennial survey. No targets included for years when the survey is not conducted.

3.b Performance Indicator: Seniors’ sense of belonging to local community

This indicator is a proxy for social inclusion and community connectedness, and is tied to the ministry’s work related to social isolation, age-friendly communities, ageism, and aging in community.

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Percentage of Alberta seniors reporting positive sense of belonging to local community	74%	76%	73%	72%

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable		2023-24 Estimate	2024-25 Target	2025-26 Target
	2022-23 Budget	2022-23 Forecast			
REVENUE					
Labour Market Development	85,128	85,128	85,128	85,128	85,128
Services on First Nations Reserves	53,143	53,143	53,643	54,143	54,643
Other Transfers from Government of Canada	162,933	162,933	159,475	163,457	158,653
Investment Income	1,737	1,737	1,822	1,907	1,997
Premiums, Fees and Licences	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Other Revenue	53,275	53,875	67,072	76,587	76,102
Ministry Total	361,216	361,816	372,140	386,222	381,523
Inter-Ministry Consolidation Adjustment	(2,546)	(2,546)	(2,228)	(2,228)	(2,228)
Consolidated Total	358,670	359,270	369,912	383,994	379,295
EXPENSE					
Ministry Support Services	18,235	18,235	21,005	21,005	21,005
Employment and Income Support	816,453	814,653	804,382	804,571	805,471
Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped	1,371,218	1,407,889	1,538,451	1,650,188	1,750,988
Disability Services	1,414,086	1,396,346	1,551,241	1,611,141	1,675,441
Homeless and Outreach Support Services	193,208	224,158	243,808	243,808	243,808
Community Supports and Family Safety	137,637	153,827	161,577	135,577	135,577
Seniors Services	26,631	21,931	27,531	28,031	28,331
Alberta Seniors Benefit	476,158	429,958	493,958	520,758	545,958
Housing	10,305	10,305	10,745	10,745	10,745
Public Guardian and Trustee Services	23,586	24,686	27,265	27,265	27,265
Services Provided to Other Ministries	2,546	2,546	2,228	2,228	2,228
Affordability Supports and Inflation Relief	-	275,200	275,700	-	-
Alberta Social Housing Corporation	297,330	309,188	333,494	338,310	430,737
Ministry Total	4,787,393	5,088,922	5,491,385	5,393,627	5,677,554
Inter-Ministry Consolidation Adjustment	(27,546)	(27,546)	(25,228)	(25,228)	(25,228)
Consolidated Total	4,759,847	5,061,376	5,466,157	5,368,399	5,652,326
Net Operating Result	(4,401,177)	(4,702,106)	(5,096,245)	(4,984,405)	(5,273,031)
CAPITAL INVESTMENT					
Disability Services	572	1,846	572	572	572
Public Guardian and Trustee Services	4,500	4,400	3,500	3,500	3,500
Alberta Social Housing Corporation	44,535	63,246	56,898	34,373	39,453
Consolidated Total	49,607	69,492	60,970	38,445	43,525