

BUSINESS PLAN 2017-20

Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

This business plan was prepared under my direction, taking into account the government's policy decisions as of March 31, 2017.

Original signed by

Barb Martini, Executive Director
Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee (OPGT) is a branch of the Justice Services Division, Alberta Justice and Solicitor General.

OPGT endeavours to help all Albertans achieve personal autonomy, live with dignity and maximize their potential. It does this by providing information, education and support to help Albertans plan for the future and make the most of today using a variety of options, such as guardianship and trusteeship, if decision-making support is needed. It may also assist in settling the affairs of persons who are deceased if no one else is willing or able to do so, and it manages and protects funds for minors in special situations.

The Public Guardian and Public Trustee have mandated roles under several pieces of legislation, including, but not limited to, the *Adult Guardianship and Trusteeship Act* (AGTA), *Personal Directives Act* (PDA), the *Public Trustee Act* (PTA), the *Minor's Property Act* (MPA) and the *Estate Administration Act* (EAA)

OPGT works with partners such as Persons with Developmental Disabilities, Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped, Alberta Health Services, Children's Services, Community and Social Services, and a variety of community-based service provider partners to meet the needs of Albertans.

A more detailed description of the services of the OPGT can be found at: www.justice.alberta.ca.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The outcomes and key strategies identified in this business plan are aligned with the strategic direction of the Government of Alberta, including the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General, as well as, legislative requirements and the operational context of the OPGT.

Alberta's population is growing and aging, which has resulted in a growing demand for service. At the same time, the needs of the individuals OPGT works with are becoming increasingly complex. Family structures are evolving, the population is culturally diverse, and mental health issues are increasingly common. Many clients access service or support from more than one ministry, such as Alberta Human Services, Alberta Health, and Alberta Justice and Solicitor General. Public expectations are also rising. A tech-savvy public wants to navigate services online and all Albertans expect and deserve client-centric programs that deliver timely, transparent results.

Meeting these needs in the current environment where the public service must do more with less is a challenge. However, OPGT remains committed to providing excellent service for its clients, many of whom they act as legal representative and advocate for. It believes all Albertans have a right to personal autonomy, to live with dignity and to achieve their potential.

OUTCOMES, KEY STRATEGIES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Outcome 1: Albertans receive quality service designed to meet their needs.

The Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) and the Office of the Public Trustee (OPT) merged in 2014 to streamline and improve service to Albertans. The impact of this move was especially significant for represented adults, many of whom were receiving service from both organizations. Since then, OPGT has made substantial changes. It piloted a new role where guardianship and trusteeship support is provided by one representative instead of two. Trusteeship files were redistributed to encourage more face-to-face contact and a new client intake process was developed to make it easier for people to apply for public guardianship and trusteeship representation at the same time. OPGT's commitment to innovation and excellent client service continues. Integrated guardianship and trusteeship service will expand where it makes sense, tailored to meet regional needs. Additional program areas within OPGT will consider what they, too, could be doing to meet the changing needs of Albertans and to find efficiencies, beginning with their intake strategies. By working with its strong network of service providers and community partners like Alberta Health Services, Alberta Disability Services and the justice system, OPGT will continue to enhance service delivery.

For OPGT, quality service includes a fiduciary responsibility to manage and protect client assets, of which there are many. It administers approximately 20,000 trust accounts for represented adults, minor children and deceased or missing persons. These assets are held separate from OPGT operating funds and the money is invested in a common fund. The common fund has two parts: the clients' guaranteed accounts and an accumulated surplus (valued at \$432M and \$79M respectively, as of March 31, 2017). Through prudent management, the accumulated surplus is able to supplement interest paid to clients' guaranteed accounts. That's higher than what a similar account in a bank would generate and it's stable. This protects OPGT's vulnerable population, many of whom could be adversely impacted by small market fluctuations in interest.

Key Strategies:

- 1.1 Evaluate the current intake strategy for each OPGT client group (i.e., represented adults, official guardian minors and deceased estates).

- 1.2 Introduce integrated guardianship and trusteeship service where appropriate, which is tailored to meet regional needs.
- 1.3 Monitor and track the annual rate of return paid to clients' guaranteed accounts.

Performance Measures:		Last actual 2015-16	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-20
Satisfaction	1.a Percentage of service providers, private guardians, former official guardian minors and their parents who are satisfied with services provided by OPGT. ¹	89%	90%	NA	94%
Fiduciary responsibility	1.b Percentage of OPGT client paid interest rates at or above those stipulated by the Public Trustee Regulation.	100%	100%	100%	100%

1. This measure is based on a biennial survey with results available every other year.

Linking Performance Measures to Outcomes:

- 1. a Satisfaction results provide an overall indicator of OPGT's ability to provide a level of service that meets the increasingly complex needs of clients and service providers.
- 1. b The ability to pay this interest rate is a reflection of OPGT's ability to meet its fiduciary responsibility and effectively manage the common fund.

Performance Measures under Development:

A measure related to service provider perceptions of the new Public Guardian and Trustee Representative role is under development to demonstrate the OPGT's commitment to improving the quality of clients' lives.

Outcome 2: OPGT's operating systems and processes support excellence and foster public trust.

OPGT is motivated by a sincere desire to help and support its clients. To accomplish this, OPGT needs a strong foundation intentionally designed to support operational excellence, with well-designed policies and procedures, processes and tools that help staff perform important tasks in the best way possible.

Key Strategies:

- 2.1 Develop and implement a risk-based OPGT quality management system.
- 2.2 Pilot a data mining approach to inform OPGT of current operational risks related to trust administration.
- 2.3 Implement standardized project management protocols for OPGT initiatives, where appropriate.

- 2.4 Select and implement an IT trust accounting software system that allows OPGT to better manage client assets and track outcomes.
- 2.5 Develop and implement standardized policies, procedures and guidelines throughout OPGT.

Performance Measures:		Last actual 2016-17	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-20
Operations	2.a Percentage of deceased estate intake decisions that are made and documented within 21 days.	83%	85%	87%	90%
	2.b Percentage of official guardian minors who are paid their funds within seven days of receiving documentation.	84%	85%	87%	90%

Linking Performance Measures to Outcomes:

- 2. a, b The timeliness of intake decisions and payments are an indicator of whether the operational systems that support them are functioning well.

Outcome 3: Albertans have easy access to resources to help them make informed choices about personal and financial decisions in the future.

OPGT encourages all Albertans to consider the decisions that lie ahead. By preparing three important documents – a personal directive, an enduring power of attorney and a will – adults can choose someone they trust to make personal and financial decisions on their behalf if and when it’s needed. Similarly, OPGT encourages official guardian minors to make a financial plan in preparation for final receipt of funds held in trust by the OPGT on their behalf.

Key Strategies:

- 3.a Create and implement a public education strategy to promote advance planning and capture measurable outcomes.

Performance Measures:		Last actual 2016-17	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-20
Presentations	3.a Number of presentations delivered by OPGT on topics related to advance planning.	42	50	60	75
	3.b Number of individuals who attended a presentation by OPGT on topics related to advance planning.	1,712	2,000	2,400	3,000

Linking Performance Measures to Outcomes:

3. a Number of presentations is an indicator of the internal resources aligned with the promotion of advance planning.

3. b Number of individuals is an indicator of whether presentations are an effective way to reach Albertans.

Performance Measures under Development:

A measure related to perceptions of former official guardian youth and whether they found the financial planning information provided by OPGT useful is under development.

RISKS TO ACHIEVING OUTCOMES

The following key risks to achieving OPGT outcomes have been identified:

- **Workload:** OPGT's caseload is growing and client files are increasingly complex. This becomes a challenge when resources are diverted to the development of new initiatives.
- **Performance Measures:** OPGT is in the early stages of setting and refining appropriate performance measures.