

Branch Business Plan

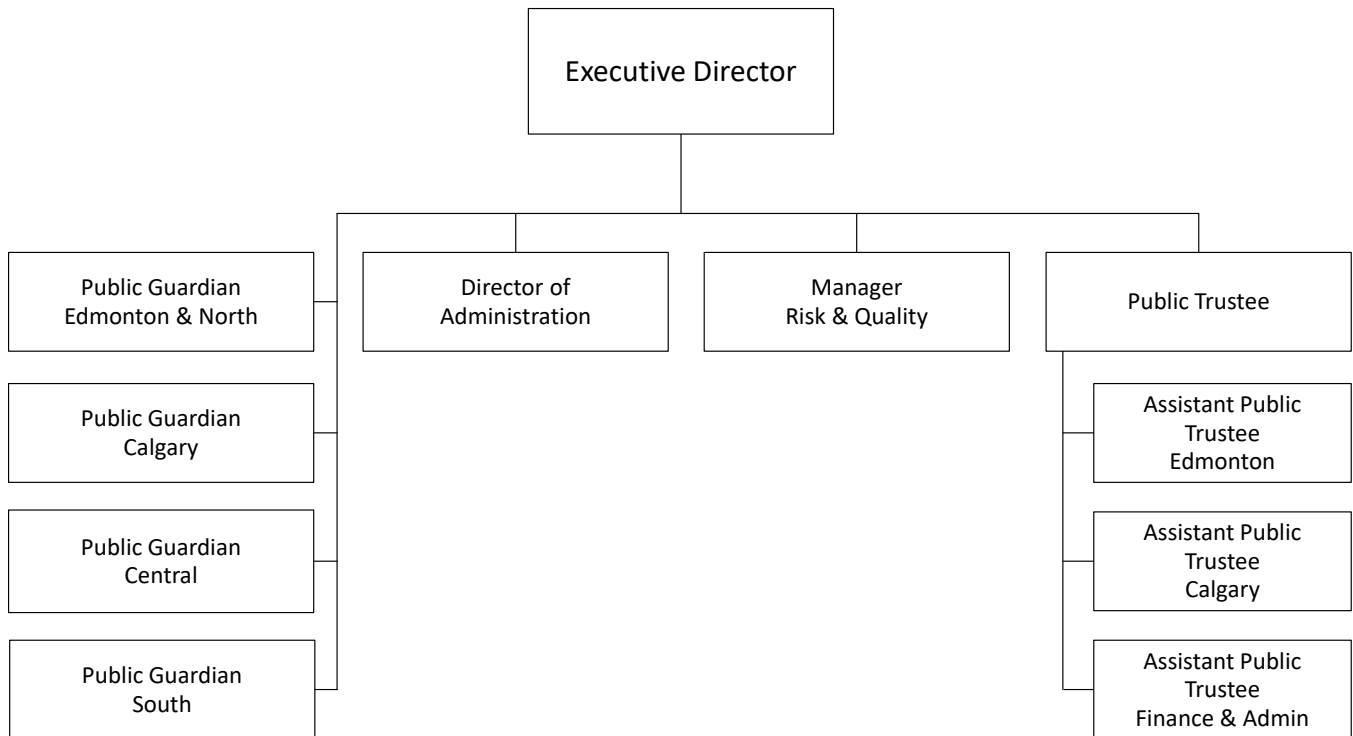
Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee

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Business Plan 2021-24

Branch Mandate and Structure

The Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee (OPGT) is a branch of the Justice Services Division in the Ministry of Alberta Justice and Solicitor General (JSG). OPGT advocates for vulnerable Albertans and provides them decision-making support including legal guardianship, property administration, information and education. Specific OPGT responsibilities include: guardianship and trusteeship; provision and enablement of decision-making options; management of the property of minors; administration of estates of the deceased; client asset management; promotion of advance planning; capacity assessment; and investigations.



A more detailed description of OPGT and its services can be found at <https://www.alberta.ca/office-public-guardian-trustee.aspx>.

Branch Strategic Direction

Values

The four words boxed below are the Alberta Public Service’s fundamental values. The values of OPGT, shown beneath the boxes, align with these central values and provide the foundation for our roles and actions.

Respect	Accountability	Integrity	Excellence
Responsive Cooperative Professional	Committed Transparent Responsible	Honest Reliable Evidence-Driven	Creative Innovative Knowledgeable

Mission

To ensure the sustainable and efficient delivery of guardianship, trusteeship and related services to Albertans, while managing quality and risk and employing a sound evidence basis for our activities.

Vision

Making and supporting personal and financial decisions that allow Albertans to live with dignity, maximize their autonomy, and realize their full potential.

Intended Outcomes

1. Albertans receive guardianship, trusteeship and related services that are quality-driven and sustainable.
2. Albertans experience modernized guardianship, trusteeship and related services.
3. Albertans benefit from supported, engaged and empowered OPGT employees.

The following sections expand on our three intended outcomes. Context, key objectives and initiatives are provided for each outcome. Performance metrics including measures, targets and indicators are also offered where relevant. A performance *measure* is a yardstick for OPGT progress. We use performance measures to establish targets specific to given periods of time. Finally, performance *indicators* allow us to track important related influences and their impact on Albertans.

Business Plan – Core

Outcome 1

Albertans receive guardianship, trusteeship and related services that are quality-driven and sustainable

OPGT activities have evolved and expanded over the years in tandem with the rising volume and diversity of its clients. To manage the strain on resources and ensure sustainability, OPGT must align its business model with legislation and ensure it is driven by quality. OPGT’s Quality Management System (QMS) generates data and processes that can be utilized to improve the organization, to ensure OPGT continues to deliver high quality services into the future.

This outcome aligns with the ministry’s current business direction. JSG, along with OPGT, continues to review programs to ensure that Albertans receive efficient and client-focused services, by reducing regulatory requirements and eliminating administrative burden through more efficient processes. Further, the ministry has outlined that continued collaboration with key stakeholders will allow JSG to identify and action a collective approach to supporting guardianship and trusteeship clients, particularly when it comes to meeting their housing and support needs within the community.

Key Objectives

- 1.1 Ensure that OPGT’s service offering is in alignment with its legislatively mandated scope of services.
- 1.2 Strengthen OPGT services to ensure clarity and consistency regarding decision-making criteria.
- 1.3 Manage clients’ assets within OPGT’s risk management framework.

Initiatives Supporting Key Objectives

- **Scope alignment.** This initiative involves: assessing our current services, seeking revisions in legislation and regulations where appropriate, and adjusting our activities accordingly.
- **Intake.** This is a review and revision of client intake policies, procedures and decision-making criteria.
- **Partners.** Consists of communicating and collaborating with others to ensure client-centric coverage.
- **Asset management.** OPGT is procuring an asset liability model (ALM) and will prepare for a subsequent study.

Performance Metrics

1.a Performance Measure: Average annual interest rate paid to OPGT clients

OPGT strives to manage clients’ invested assets in the clients’ best interests. At the close of 2019-20, the minimum regulated rate (MRR)¹ was 1.33% and OPGT clients received an interest rate of 2.75%.

Targets	2021-22	MRR	2022-23	MRR	2023-24	MRR
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¹ MRR on a particular day is the average of the effective annual rate on the Government of Canada five-year benchmark bond for each day during the immediately preceding five-year period for which the Bank of Canada publishes rates.

1.b Performance Measure: Percentage of health care decisions under specific decision-making that are made within three working days of all the information being received

The speed with which OPGT is able to make time-sensitive decisions is a reflection of operational efficiency and quality management. Certain decisions, of course, require additional time to ensure the best decision is made given the circumstances. In 2019-20, 84% of health care decisions under specific decision-making were made within three working days of all the information received.

Targets	2021-22	90%	2022-23	90%	2023-24	90%
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1.c Performance Indicator: Adult Albertans with private guardians or private trustees as a percentage of all represented adult Albertans

OPGT encourages the use of private guardians or trustees over a Public Guardian or Public Trustee in all cases for which it is feasible. In 2019-20, 13,572 adult Albertans had a private guardian or trustee, which was 66.6% of all adult Albertans with a guardian or trustee.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Proportion of represented adult Albertans with a private guardian or trustee	61.3%	60.5%	60.3%	61.1%	66.6%
Proportion of represented adult Albertans with a public guardian or trustee	38.7%	39.5%	39.7%	38.9%	33.4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

1.d Performance Indicator: Annual financial audit recommendations

Annually, the Auditor General of Alberta conducts an independent examination, or audit, of OPGT's financial statements. Any recommendations arising from the audit must be promptly addressed. This indicator tracks the number of recommendations arising annually. The intent is for no recommendations to be triggered.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Audit recommendations	0	0	0	0	0

Outcome 2

Albertans experience modernized guardianship, trusteeship and related services

OPGT activities have evolved and expanded over the years in tandem with the rising volume and diversity of its clients. To manage the strain on resources and ensure sustainability, OPGT must align its business model with legislation and ensure it is driven by quality. OPGT's Quality Management System (QMS) generates data and processes that can be utilized to improve the organization, to ensure OPGT continues to deliver high quality services into the future.

This outcome aligns with the ministry's current business direction. JSG, along with OPGT, continues to review programs to ensure that Albertans receive efficient and client-focused services, by reducing regulatory requirements and eliminating administrative burden through more efficient processes. Further, the ministry has outlined that continued collaboration with key stakeholders will allow JSG to identify and action a collective approach to supporting guardianship and trusteeship clients, particularly when it comes to meeting their housing and support needs within the community.

Key Objectives

- 2.1 Realize the benefits of an integrated information system.
- 2.2 Leverage technology to enhance efficiency and extend our capability to serve clients in a timely manner.
- 2.3 Improve how we handle inquiries from clients and the general public.
- 2.4 Achieve deeper integration of data into OPGT decision-making processes.

Initiatives Supporting Key Objectives

- **Information System.** This initiative includes the replacement of the Public Trustee Information System (PTIS).
- **Technology Supports.** This initiative comprises the deployment of hardware and applications including reduced use of paper and increased placement of information and services online.
- **Call Tree.** Implementation of a call tree service delivery model for inquiries.
- **Data Management.** Implementation of the OPGT Information Management Strategy (IMS) ensuring protection of data and improved decision-making.

Performance Metrics

2.a Performance Measure: Percentage by which the project plan to upgrade OPGT's website has been implemented

Improving OPGT's website will lead to a number of benefits, including expanded access of the public to information and services, improved user experience, and increased efficiency. In the coming three years (2021-24), OPGT will: assess the current state; engage subject matter experts; collaborate with Service Alberta to achieve improvements; and evaluate progress with a focus on continuous improvement. Delays have arisen due to COVID-19 mitigation, but the bulk of the changes will still be accomplished in 2021-22. Upgrades are expected to be complete by the end of this planning period, after which the website should need only routine maintenance.

Targets	2021-22	70%	2022-23	90%	2023-24	100%
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Outcome 3

Albertans benefit from supported, engaged and empowered OPGT employees

OPGT employees are the face of the branch. They bear significant responsibilities and face considerable workloads. The pandemic exacerbated the challenge to deliver services and we are proud of the team's very positive and sustained response under trying conditions. OPGT is as responsive as possible to employee needs to ensure that we continue to optimize our service to Albertans over the long term.

This OPGT outcome reinforces the ministry's continuing commitment to providing accessible, innovative, citizen-focused justice services to Albertans.

Key Objectives

- 3.1 Achieve balanced caseload sizes across all functions to improve service delivery.
- 3.2 Ensure regular and meaningful internal communication.
- 3.3 Support staff in their career development and succession opportunities.
- 3.4 Provide a healthy and safe work environment for staff.

Initiatives Supporting Key Objectives

- **Reorganization & Boundary Realignment.** This initiative is about restructuring teams and realigning regional boundaries to balance caseload.
- **Employee Engagement.** We will foster increased engagement by emphasizing aspects of performance management including recognition, goalsetting, accountability, and training & development.
- **Communication.** Implementation of a communication strategy including an online discussion board and continuation of quarterly roadshows.
- **Professional Growth.** Preparation for staff retirement and succession through the creation of meaningful opportunities for staff to be involved in leadership opportunities.
- **Occupational Health & Safety.** Continuation of occupational health and safety (OH&S) initiatives.

Performance Metrics

3.a Performance Measure: Agreement level with the statement "As an OPGT employee I feel supported, engaged and empowered"

Employee surveys have been carried out for many years, but the approach was modified beginning in 2019-20 with the implementation of periodic short, confidential online polls. This measure captures, on a 1-5 agreement scale where 1=Strongly Disagree and 5=Strongly Agree, the percentage of respondents who responded with either a 4 or 5.

Targets	2021-22	75%	2022-23	80%	2023-24	85%
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3.b Performance Indicator: Percentage of the OPGT workforce with performance plans in place

Exiting 2019-20, 56% permanent OPGT employees had a performance plan in place. The performance plan is a critical tool because it sets out a road map for individual development. Our aim is to equip ultimately 100% of permanent employees with a performance plan.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Performance plan coverage	n/a	n/a	n/a	~33%	56%

3.c Performance Indicator: Number of near-miss incident forms completed by OPGT employees

Employees are encouraged to document near misses as part of a comprehensive safety culture. Near miss forms were counted on a fiscal year basis beginning in 2018-19. In 2019-20, 20 near-miss forms were filled in. OPGT aims through tracking these forms is to sensitize all employees to workplace safety and better inform adjustments leading to a safer workplace overall.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Near-miss forms completed	n/a	n/a	n/a	30	20

Risks to Achieving Outcomes

OPGT’s Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) system continues to mature. OPGT has a robust, comprehensive system for identifying, assessing and treating risk in a manner that drives decision-making, performance management, resource allocation, improved client service, employee job satisfaction and more. Categories include strategic, operational and project risks; they are captured in the OPGT Risk Register.

OPGT’s ERM governance and infrastructure ensure accountability. The formal ERM structure includes: OPGT Business Area Management Leadership Team; OPGT Governance, Risk and Compliance Committee (GRC); OPGT Project Oversight and Accountability Committee; Government of Alberta risk management consultation; and external assurance and audit. The duty to manage risk falls on OPGT and each individual employee has a role to play.

As identified in the Risk Register, three of the more substantial strategic risks to OPGT’s successful delivery of services and our achievement of intended outcomes are:

- Failure to make an appropriate strategic decision in the absence of a formalized strategic decision-making framework.
- Strategic goals and controls may not be adequately grounded in evidence, due to a lack of consistent and robust available data.
- A project does not achieve intended outcomes within the forecasted time and/or budget, due in part to incomplete application of project management methodology.

OPGT’s annual report will summarize how we have acted to manage these strategic risks.