

Justice

Business Plan 1997-1998 to 1999-2000

Accountability Statement

This Business Plan for the three years commencing April 1, 1997 was prepared under my direction in accordance with the Government Accountability Act and the government's accounting policies. All of the government's policy decisions as at April 10, 1997 with material economic or fiscal implications of which I am aware have been considered in preparing the Business Plan.

The Ministry's priorities outlined in the Business Plan were developed in the context of the government's business and fiscal plans. I am committed to achieving the planned results laid out in this Business Plan.



Jon Havelock, Q.C.
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
April 12, 1997

Introduction

The stated commitment of Alberta Justice is to foster safer, more secure communities and administer justice effectively. Our 1997 - 2000 Business Plan (including the Research Business Plan, the Information Technology Plan and the Regulatory Reform Review) builds on the framework developed in previous years and supports the Government of Alberta's three core businesses:

People

Through our social programs, we provide support and protection to some of our most vulnerable citizens: victims of crime, families who depend on court ordered maintenance payments, individuals unable to protect their financial interests, and individuals who cannot afford legal counsel;

Prosperity

Maintaining law and order and building safer communities are key to a prosperous Alberta where families, communities and businesses can flourish. Continued public confidence in the justice system is essential to ensure Alberta's prosperity in the future;

Preservation

A key theme of our Business Plan is to focus our efforts on dealing with serious and violent crime, and preserving our quality of life. We will work with our partners in the justice system to examine our handling of less serious offences, continue our efforts to better identify and manage violent offenders, and ensure the continued vigorous prosecution of serious offences.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to ensure equality and fairness in the administration of justice in Alberta.

Goals

The Ministry of Justice has five core business functions: policing, prosecution and trial, sanctions, legal services and social programs — six key goals have been developed:

1: To maintain law and order in Alberta communities

Albertans should have safe and secure communities with peace and good order so they can live, work and raise families without fear of crime or victimization. This goal is achieved by providing a broad range of services including adequate and effective policing, crime prevention programs, support for initiatives that address the problem of family violence, fatality investigations, consultations with and training for police commissions and committees, investigations of complaints against police, and the promotion of diversion and alternative measures. Other services provided in support of this goal include the protection of officials and public property, firearms control, and the incarceration of offenders dangerous to the public.

2: To conduct criminal and civil proceedings in a fair and effective manner

Maintaining a high standard of criminal prosecutions in Alberta courts is essential to ensure public confidence in the judicial system. Court time should be used effectively to ensure fairness in access and resolution of cases. This goal is achieved through the provision of court resources, scheduling mechanisms, and the fair and effective prosecution of criminal matters. In addition, the Ministry is responsible for regulating the activities of private bailiffs, establishing diversion programs, implementing a victim impact statement program, providing pre-sentence reports and pre-disposition reports, and being responsive to the public's needs for information and access.

3: To carry out the sentences of the court in a fair and effective manner

It is the mandate of prisons to carry out the most serious sanction of the court — incarceration — in a manner that protects public safety. In carrying out the sanction of the court, an opportunity is provided for the rehabilitation of offenders — a responsibility which is shared among many stakeholders and the community at large. This goal is achieved by providing for the care and control of offenders and administering community-based corrections programs for low-risk offenders.

4: To provide effective legal services to the Government of Alberta

The legal interests of the Government must be protected. This is accomplished by providing legal advice to Government and representing the Government in litigation.

5: To provide access to social programs administered by Alberta Justice

Justice social programs protect the interests of vulnerable Albertans, enhancing the quality of life in the province. This goal is achieved through the enforcement of maintenance orders, the administration of the estates of dependent adults, decedents and minors, and the provision of support for programs and services for victims of crime.

6: To provide access to legal aid to those persons who are eligible

Legal aid provides individuals with legal services they would not otherwise be able to acquire. To achieve this goal, the Ministry provides grants to the Legal Aid Society of Alberta.

Issues

The Ministry of Justice faces a number of issues that must be addressed to meet the core business goals. Many of these issues represent longer term challenges that the Ministry recognizes as fundamental to its role in society. However, not all issues can be resolved in any one Business Plan; approaches must be developed to ensure that these issues are dealt with in a progressive way.

Legislation

Changes to federal and provincial legislation impact the Ministry, often with direct financial consequences. For example, changes to the administration of sentences, the *Young Offenders Act* and the registration and control of firearms will have a significant impact on the Ministry's resources.

Accessibility to Justice Services

If fairness and equity are cornerstones of the social fabric, it is essential that the public have access to these fundamental justice programs when needed. Over the next few years, the Ministry must continue to develop ways to ensure those who need justice services can access them in a timely way that is also cost effective and fair. A particular concern is ensuring that the developmental needs of youth at risk for involvement in the criminal justice system are addressed through interdepartmental planning and a community focus on prevention.

Public Safety

The reported crime rate has decreased in each of the last four years; however, the fear of crime continues to be a concern of the public that must be addressed. Accordingly, programs must be developed so that deterrence, education, community involvement and the reinforcement of social values maximize the safety of the public.

Cost Effectiveness

Programs must not only exemplify excellence in the level of service delivery, they must do so at a reduced cost. The Ministry must control costs without compromising services or the public's confidence in the administration of justice.

Managing the Prison Population

The public has become increasingly concerned about violent crime and expects the justice system to deal firmly with serious offenders. As sentences increase in length and higher risk offenders spend longer periods of time in custody, accommodating prisoners becomes a greater challenge. In order to avoid capital building costs, a coordinated approach must be taken among all components of the criminal justice system to identify, monitor, and supervise the highest risk offenders while providing community based alternatives for selected low risk offenders. In implementing these initiatives, public security must remain a priority.

First Nations

A good deal of public attention has been focussed on the disproportionate involvement of Aboriginal people with the justice system. A continuing theme for the Ministry is to develop culturally sensitive programs that recognize the needs of the Aboriginal community, while ensuring public safety.

Complexity of the Justice System

For many citizens, the justice system is complex and forbidding. The Ministry recognizes that a major challenge is to provide greater clarity regarding how the justice system operates, how it can be accessed, and the public's role and options in the justice system.

Central Agency Requirements

Some government functions and costs, such as telecommunications and financial and human resource systems processing, were centralized responsibilities in the past but are now being delegated to Ministries. The funds transferred to the Ministry to handle these new responsibilities must be at an appropriate level to maintain services. Therefore, it is essential that the Ministry develop approaches that meet central agency requirements, while still supporting the Ministry's core businesses.

Strategies and Initiatives

To accommodate the expectations of the public in the administration of justice, a number of strategies are proposed for the next three years. These strategies are general approaches that will be taken to ensure our programs continue to meet Ministry goals.

1. To Re-focus the Resources of Alberta Justice on Serious and Violent Crime

A highlight of last year's business plan was the Ministry's commitment to address the public's concerns about serious and violent crime. This strategy, which has yielded a number of positive changes, will continue in the present business plan. Through cooperation with key stakeholders in the criminal justice system, the Ministry will focus resources on those crimes which pose the greatest risk to public safety. The following initiatives reflect an increased commitment to deal with those crimes in a way that reinforces deterrence, while respecting the traditions of fairness and equity.

Initiatives:

- ◆ Develop and implement, under the auspices of the Ministry's Serious and Violent Crime Committee and in conjunction with the police, strategies whereby Alberta Justice resources can be appropriately focussed on serious and violent crime.
- ◆ Hire additional crown prosecutors.
- ◆ Implement the approved recommendations of the Task Force Report on the administration of the *Young Offenders Act*.
- ◆ Place on the agenda for the Heads of Corrections a strategy for the development of national recidivism data.

2. To Prevent Crime Through Community Policing

The public continues to express great concern regarding crime despite the fact that the reported crime rate has dropped for the fourth consecutive year. This has been attributed to innovative ways in how the police are handling their responsibilities, including community based and problem-solving approaches. The Ministry will seek to encourage police services to continue and expand community policing so that they become even more successful in mobilizing communities to address law enforcement issues. A key strategy of the Ministry will be to better inform the public on the incidents of crime and the level of citizen safety.

Initiatives:

- ◆ Support and work with police services to further the concepts of community policing and develop measurements to identify its effectiveness.
- ◆ Further develop First Nations policing initiatives in cooperation with First Nations, Canada and the RCMP.

3. To Increase Public Awareness and Consult with Justice Stakeholders

A number of initiatives will focus on educating the public, particularly to changes in the administration of justice, but also in other areas where a need has been identified. It is anticipated that this will result in greater citizen involvement and support of the justice system.

The Ministry has traditionally solicited the views of its stakeholders. This will continue, both to inform them of our plans, and to solicit advice on re-engineering programs to meet their needs. In addition, we will continue dialogue with Aboriginal communities to address their needs to the greatest degree possible.

Initiatives:

- ◆ Provide police commissions and police committee members the opportunity to broaden their knowledge of their role in the justice system and law enforcement community.
- ◆ Review with Aboriginal groups their involvement in the administration of criminal justice.
- ◆ Produce brochures and meet with special interest groups to explain the role of the Public Trustee.
- ◆ While retaining responsibility for the administration of criminal justice programs, ensuring public safety and offender accountability, work cooperatively with departments serving children and

families, and bring increased focus to ensuring the availability of appropriate prevention/early intervention programs for children who are at risk for future criminal involvement.

4. To Streamline the Process

The administration of justice must be streamlined in order for it to be as effective as possible. Accordingly, the Ministry will undertake initiatives to simplify the justice process while ensuring that the system remains accessible, effective, equitable and understandable by the public.

Initiatives:

- ◆ Working with the Federal Government and other provinces to reclassify offences to facilitate the administration of criminal cases.
- ◆ Develop a management information system for each court and work with the judiciary to improve case management and trial coordination services.
- ◆ Increase the monetary jurisdiction and access to small claims court.
- ◆ Maintain the effective and efficient operation of the Court of Appeal, the Court of Queen's Bench, and the Provincial Court.
- ◆ Conduct a joint planning process with Public Works, Supply and Services to redevelop court facilities in Calgary.
- ◆ Implement the approved recommendations of Correctional Services' Efficiency Review initiative.
- ◆ Review and amend Department Regulations according to the Government's Regulatory Review Plan.
- ◆ Streamline the administrative and financial processes of estate administration services.
- ◆ Streamline the administration and service delivery of the Maintenance Enforcement Program.

5. To Develop Appropriate Dispute Resolution Mechanisms

The administration of justice is largely concerned about the resolution of disputes. Over time, procedures were developed to balance fairness and equity between the parties involved in these disputes. In some cases, the formalization of these procedures has become an impediment to a speedy, equitable and effective discharge of justice. The Ministry will develop mechanisms that lead to quick and cost effective dispute resolution. On the criminal side, this will entail greater use of diversion programs for less serious crimes. On the civil side, increased use of mediation and shortened trial type procedures will facilitate the objective of obtaining timely and equitable resolutions to disputes.

Initiatives:

- ◆ Implement Bill C-41 amendments to the Criminal Code.
- ◆ Implement an Alternative Measures Program for adult offenders and expand the Alternative Measures Program for young offenders.
- ◆ Assess the options available for the implementation of alternative dispute resolution in civil cases.
- ◆ Promote the use of appropriate dispute resolution techniques as a means of resolving legal disputes involving the government.

6. To Examine Program Delivery Alternatives

Several innovative approaches in service delivery will be employed to address many of the issues facing the Ministry. These alternatives will ensure the same high level of service to the public, albeit in a different and more cost effective way.

Initiatives:

- ◆ Work with police services and employers of special constables to examine the role of special constables in policing and determine if they can be made more cost effective and efficient in delivering policing services.
- ◆ Expand the partnership with the RCMP in the administration of the provincial policing agreement to enhance accountability, improve cost effectiveness and citizen satisfaction.
- ◆ Monitor federal government implementation of the federal *Firearms Act*.
- ◆ Review the *Provincial Offences Procedure Act* to find ways to make it more effective.
- ◆ Review transcription services to determine if transcripts can be provided on a more cost effective basis.
- ◆ Expand the adult community based correctional programs.
- ◆ Explore the issues regarding the development of an Aboriginal open custody young offender work camp operated by an Aboriginal organization.
- ◆ Refocus the adult inmate education/vocational program to emphasize employment and provide an adult education model.
- ◆ Develop enhanced programs and services for victims of crime under the new *Victims of Crime Act*, which is to be proclaimed in 1997.
- ◆ Review non core estate administrative sources for opportunities for privatization.
- ◆ Undertake the administration of estates for dependent persons having nominal assets who are in need of trusteeship.
- ◆ Review the future of the Legal Aid Staff Counsel Pilot Project in consultation with the Legal Aid Society and the legal community.

7. To Conduct Cost Sharing Reviews

Many of the Ministry's programs are cost shared with the federal government. Because of restraint and restructuring at the federal level, there has been a need to review and re-negotiate agreements between governments to deal with such matters as young offenders and the exchange of services agreement for the housing of federal prisoners in provincial facilities. In addition, a number of new federal initiatives such as child support guidelines and impending changes to proceeds of crime legislation necessitate a vigorous dialogue on behalf of our citizens to ensure our financial entitlements are respected.

Initiatives:

- ◆ Liaise with the federal government with respect to amendments to the *Young Offenders Act*, issues significant to the juvenile justice system and the federal/provincial cost sharing agreement.
- ◆ Review the existing agreement between Alberta and Canada and develop a strategy regarding the housing of selected federal offenders in provincial correctional centres.
- ◆ Implement federal legislation regarding child support guidelines and the tax treatment of child support.
- ◆ Develop protocols between the levels of government for the sharing of the proceeds of crime.

8. To Integrate Justice Systems

More than ever, the administration of justice requires better coordination of activities among stakeholders. A multi-disciplinary view of the justice system requires an effective exchange of information so that the work of the justice system, social services system and private sector will be facilitated. The initial focus will be on integrating the systems internal to the Ministry. This will be accomplished through the development of information and communication networks and the establishment of better administrative systems between stakeholders.

Initiatives:

- ◆ Complete a feasibility study to combine the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) and the Court Automation Project (CAP) computer systems.
- ◆ Participate in the national consultations for the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group on Integrated Justice.

9. To Participate in Central Agency Initiatives

Alberta government central agencies continue to delegate responsibilities to the ministries. As a general strategy, the Ministry will work closely with those central agencies to ensure the impacts of their actions are understood and procedures are modified to fit the Ministry's needs.

Initiatives:

- ◆ Implement the government financial and human resource systems.
- ◆ Participate in the requirements of the Chief Information Officer.
- ◆ Develop an approach to deal with delegated authority for support of the Ministry's telecommunications.
- ◆ Review the administration of the Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Program.

Performance Measures

To monitor the Ministry's progress in achieving its six goals, the Ministry has come up with 43 Performance Measures. For each Goal, one or two Performance Measures were selected for publication. Although one or two performance measures cannot fully reflect the success of the Ministry in achieving its goals, we are confident that each performance measure will provide a reasonable perspective of the Ministry's performance.

Key Measure for Goal 1: Public satisfaction with the justice system which is defined as the percentage of Albertans who are satisfied with the justice system and the Department of Justice. This measure is a gauge of the public's confidence in the system and the Department and is one way to assess how well the Department is doing in maintaining law and order.

92/93	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97 Target	97/98 Target
n/a	n/a	n/a	49%	55%	60%

Key Measure for Goal 1: Public safety which is defined as the percentage of Albertans who have reported being a victim of crime in the past year. The victimization rate tells us how Albertans compare to the rest of Canada (**average 24%**) and gives us an historical perspective of victimization. This measure is a gauge of public safety and is another way to assess how well the Ministry is doing in maintaining law and order.

92/93	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97 Target	97/98 Target
n/a	n/a	n/a	21%	21% or less	21% or less

Key Measure for Goal 2: Court delays which is measured by the availability of Provincial Criminal Court for trial in Calgary and Edmonton. It is defined as the average number of weeks in the future a trial date is available. The Ministry must ensure that there is access to the courts in a reasonable amount of time. This is one measure of fair and effective court proceedings.

92/93	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97 Target	97/98 Target
11.0	11.4	11.6	12.2	13.0	13.0

Key Measure for Goal 3: Escapes from secure custody which measures how effective Alberta Justice is at keeping incarcerated offenders in custody. It is defined as the number of escapes from secure custody. This is one measure of how effective we are in carrying out the sentences of the court.

92/93	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97 Target	97/98 Target
1	0	0	0	0	0

Key Measure for Goal 3: Per diem cost per offender which measures how efficiently correctional facilities are operated. It is defined as the per diem cost per offender in adult custody. This measures how efficient we are at keeping offenders incarcerated.

92/93	93/94	94/95*	95/96	96/97 Target	97/98 Target
\$79.07	\$73.30	\$68.76	\$64.63	lower than Canadian average of \$107.26	lower than Canadian average of \$107.26

* The 1994-95 Canadian average was \$107.26

Key Measure for Goal 4: Client satisfaction with legal services which measures how satisfied client departments are with the Ministry's provision of legal services. It is defined as the level of client satisfaction from a survey conducted by Civil Law. This is one way to measure the effectiveness of legal services provided by the Ministry.

92/93	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97 Target	97/98 Target
n/a	n/a	n/a	On average, all client departments were "more than satisfied" to "very satisfied"	Majority of client departments are "more than satisfied" to "very satisfied" and all client departments are at least "satisfied".	Majority of client departments are "more than satisfied" to "very satisfied" and all client departments are at least "satisfied".

Key Measure for Goal 5: Client satisfaction with the Maintenance Enforcement Program

which, when developed, will measure client satisfaction on services provided by the Program. This measure, when developed, will gauge the effectiveness of the Program and measure how well the Program is in providing access to its services.

92/93	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97 Target	97/98 Target
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	to be developed	to be developed

Key Measure for Goal 5: Client satisfaction with the Public Trustee's Office which measures client satisfaction with services provided by the Public Trustee's Office. It is defined as the percentage of "satisfied" and "very satisfied" clientele from a survey conducted by the Public Trustee's Office. This will monitor how well the Public Trustee is doing in providing its services and is one measure of access.

92/93	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97 Target	97/98 Target
n/a	n/a	86.2%	82.4%	80%	80%

Key Measure for Goal 6: Legal Aid volume which measures the demand for legal aid. It is defined as the number of eligible people receiving legal aid services.

92/93	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97 Target	97/98 Target
95,181	85,313	84,703	80,514	to be developed	to be developed

Justice

Ministry Consolidated Income Statement

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable 1992-93 Actual	Comparable 1993-94 Actual	Comparable 1994-95 Actual	Comparable 1995-96 Actual	Comparable 1996-97 Forecast	1997-98 Estimates	1998-99 Target	1999-2000 Target
REVENUE								
Department	109,813	113,950	132,428	112,631	101,680	98,810	96,940	94,785
Victims of Crime Fund	977	662	631	540	435	4,500	6,465	6,465
Consolidation Adjustments	(114)	(53)	(43)	-	-	-	-	-
Consolidated Revenue	110,676	114,559	133,016	113,171	102,115	103,310	103,405	101,250
EXPENSE								
Program								
<i>Voted</i>								
Department	411,289	393,004	343,546	336,363	332,891	337,362	337,601	335,101
<i>Statutory</i>								
Department	13,940	19,578	21,735	24,140	27,500	26,750	27,250	27,750
Victims of Crime Fund	596	666	894	823	805	4,500	6,465	6,465
Consolidation Adjustments	(114)	(53)	(43)	-	-	-	-	-
Consolidated Expense	425,711	413,195	366,132	361,326	361,196	368,612	371,316	369,316
GAIN (LOSS) ON DISPOSAL OF CAPITAL ASSETS	-	-	-	(20)	-	-	-	-
NET REVENUE (EXPENSE)	(315,035)	(298,636)	(233,116)	(248,175)	(259,081)	(265,302)	(267,911)	(268,066)