



ALBERTA SENIORS ANNUAL REPORT

For the fiscal year ended

March 31, 2002

Note to readers:

For more information about Alberta Seniors, or to obtain copies of this annual report please contact:

Alberta Seniors, Communications
3rd Floor, Standard Life Centre
10405 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5J 4R7
Phone: (780) 415-9950
Fax: (780) 427-1689

This annual report is also available on the Alberta Seniors website:
www.seniors.gov.ab.ca

ISSN: 1703-7646

Preface

The Public Accounts of Alberta are prepared in accordance with the *Financial Administration Act* and the *Government Accountability Act*. The Public Accounts consist of the annual reports of each of the 24 ministries.

The annual report of the Government of Alberta released June 25, 2002 contains the Minister of Finance's accountability statement, the consolidated financial statements of the province and a comparison of the actual performance results to desired results set out in the government's business plan, including the *Measuring Up* report.

This annual report of the Ministry of Seniors contains the minister's accountability statement, the audited consolidated financial statements of the ministry and a comparison of actual performance results to desired results set out in the ministry business plan. This ministry annual report also includes:

- **the financial statements of entities making up the ministry including the Alberta Social Housing Corporation, a Crown corporation, for which the minister is responsible, and**
- **other financial information as required by the *Financial Administration Act* and *Government Accountability Act*, either as separate reports or as a part of the financial statements, to the extent that the ministry has anything to report.**

Minister's Accountability Statement

The ministry's annual report for the year ended March 31, 2002, was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Government Accountability Act* and the government's accounting policies. All the government's policy decisions as at September 20, 2002 with material economic or fiscal implications of which I am aware have been considered in the preparation of this report.

original signed by

Stan Woloshyn
Minister, Alberta Seniors

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Minister	1
Management's Responsibility for Reporting	3

Overview

Ministry Entities	4
Operational Overview	5
Summary of Key Activities	8

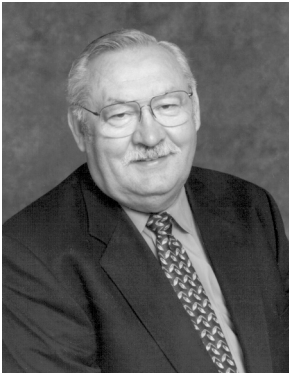
Results Analysis

Introduction	11
Core Businesses, Goals, Strategies, Results and Performance Measures	11
Corporate Initiatives	29
Financial Performance Highlights	31

Financial Information

Financial Statements	35
Alphabetical List of Entities' Financial Information in Ministry 2001-02 Annual Reports	105

Message from the Minister



I am pleased to present to Albertans the first annual report for the ministry of Alberta Seniors. The establishment of Alberta Seniors in March 2001 re-affirmed the government's commitment to seniors and to Albertans in need of housing supports, and I am proud to have been appointed minister.

Throughout this first year of operation, we focused on advancing the ministry's core businesses by supporting the independence and well being of seniors and providing families and individuals in need with access to basic shelter. This was done through the delivery of established programs and services and by developing new plans and projects to improve access to housing and to prepare Alberta for an expected increase in the seniors population. As our tasks and mandate have evolved, we have faced challenges, encountered opportunities, and had cause to celebrate many achievements.

The Alberta Seniors Benefit program is one of the key Alberta programs of the new ministry. For many low-income seniors, this program is critical in helping them optimize their independence and quality of life. Despite economic and financial challenges, we enhanced the program's cash benefit levels to help low-income seniors with the rising cost of living and with increases in long-term care accommodation fees. As well, we continued to provide funding through the Healthy Aging Partnership Initiative to increase the supply of supportive housing units that help seniors to age in place.

One of the central challenges my ministry faced in 2001-02 was the shortage of low-cost housing, especially in areas of high growth. In addition, overall housing pressures brought the plight of Alberta's homeless people to the forefront. To provide low-income families, persons with special needs, and homeless people with access to basic shelter, we capitalized on a number of partnership opportunities to foster the development of local solutions to housing needs. For example, we transferred selected government land to a municipality for the construction of affordable housing. As well, we were able to sell housing stock that was no longer suited to our housing portfolio, and use the proceeds to develop additional affordable housing in a high-need community.

I am pleased to report that we achieved our business plan targets while operating within our approved budget. Further, our performance measures indicate that our clients and stakeholders express a high level of satisfaction with our services. This is a reflection of the commitment and dedication of ministry staff to providing excellent client service. That commitment was affirmed when my ministry achieved the Senior Friendly™ designation from the Alberta Council on Aging. To receive this designation, more than 60 per cent of staff must complete the Senior Friendly™ course, which focuses on raising awareness and understanding of issues that affect seniors, and experiencing the daily challenges that many seniors face.

During this fiscal year, we celebrated receiving our one-millionth telephone call to the Alberta Seniors Information Line. Launched in 1994, the information line receives between 300 and 1,500 calls per day from seniors, their family members, agencies and the general public on programs, services and matters important to seniors. Other events we celebrated during the year included the Minister's Seniors Service Awards and the launching of the *If in Doubt, Check it Out* fraud awareness campaign, the details of which are described later in this report.

In the following pages, you will read about the many achievements of my ministry over the past year. These have been accomplished through the diligent efforts of ministry staff, stakeholder groups and our many partners, who together have helped to lay a solid foundation for current and future initiatives. This foundation will help us in addressing new challenges and opportunities in 2002-03, while remaining fiscally responsible and ensuring our services remain sustainable into the future. We will continue to study and analyze social and economic trends to help guide the activities of the ministry and the government as a whole in regard to seniors and Albertans in need of housing. Our mission remains to make Alberta a vibrant province where seniors and other Albertans live with dignity and experience the best possible well being and independence.

original signed by

Stan Woloshyn
Minister, Alberta Seniors

Management's Responsibility for Reporting

The Ministry of Seniors includes the Department of Seniors, and the agency and corporation listed on the ministry entities chart on page four.

The executives of the individual entities within the ministry have the primary responsibility and accountability for the respective entities. Collectively, the executives ensure the ministry complies with all relevant legislation, regulations and policies.

Ministry business plans, annual reports, performance results and the supporting management information are integral to the government's fiscal and business plans, annual report, quarterly reports and other financial and performance reporting.

Responsibility for the integrity and objectivity of the consolidated financial statements and performance results for the ministry rests with the Minister of Seniors. Under the direction of the minister I oversee the preparation of the ministry's annual report, including consolidated financial statements and performance results. The consolidated financial statements and the performance results, of necessity, include amounts that are based on estimates and judgments. The consolidated financial statements are prepared in accordance with the government's stated accounting policies.

As Deputy Minister, in addition to program responsibilities, I establish and maintain the ministry's financial administration and reporting functions. The ministry maintains systems of financial management and internal control which give consideration to costs, benefits, and risks that are designed to:

- provide reasonable assurance that transactions are properly authorized, executed in accordance with prescribed legislation and regulations, and properly recorded so as to maintain accountability of public money,
- provide information to manage and report on performance,
- safeguard the assets and properties of the Province under ministry administration,
- provide Executive Council, Treasury Board, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Seniors any information needed to fulfill their responsibilities, and
- facilitate preparation of ministry business plans and annual reports required under the *Government Accountability Act*.

In fulfilling my responsibilities for the ministry, I have relied, as necessary, on the executive of the individual entities within the ministry.

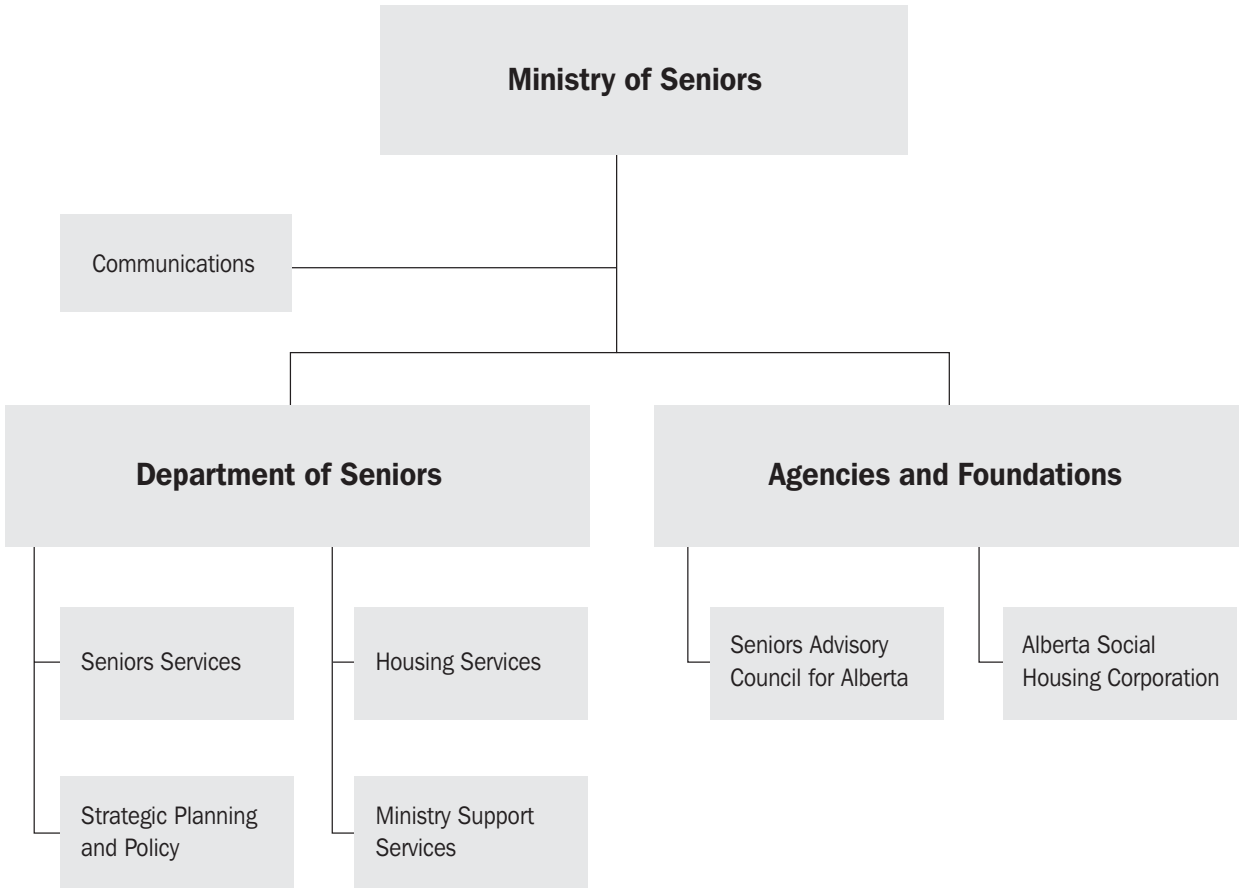
original signed by

Ken J. Wilson
Deputy Minister, Alberta Seniors
September 13, 2002

OVERVIEW

Ministry Entities

The Ministry of Seniors as at March 31, 2002



Operational Overview

In March 2001, the Government of Alberta established Alberta Seniors, with the mandate of providing programs and services to seniors, and managing the province's portfolio of housing for seniors, low-income families, and persons with special needs.

Alberta Seniors' mission for 2001-02 was: *Through leadership, teamwork and innovation, we advance the quality of life for Alberta's seniors and people in need of housing by providing information, programs and services.* During this first year, the ministry's two core businesses were:

1. Supporting the independence and well being of seniors; and
2. Supporting family and special purpose housing needs.

The Department

In its first year, Alberta Seniors structured its internal organization to align staff, resources and functions to meet the mandate of the ministry. The structure of the new organization, as outlined below, was substantially complete by July 2001.

The two core businesses were delivered through Seniors Services, Housing Services and Strategic Planning and Policy, with support provided by Communications.

Seniors Services

Seniors Services is responsible for delivering the ministry's financial support programs to low-income seniors, and providing information to the public on seniors' programs and services. It is comprised of three branches and also provides the administrative responsibility for the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta.

The Seniors Financial Assistance Branch administers the Alberta Seniors Benefit program under the *Seniors Benefit Act*. Through this program, the branch delivers income-based, monthly cash benefits to eligible seniors and determines the level of exemption from Alberta Health Care premiums for low-income seniors. To ensure that supports continue to be targeted at seniors most in need of assistance, the branch monitors issues relating to seniors' financial situations, and provides support to long-term policy, planning and research on seniors' incomes.

The Special Needs Assistance for Seniors Branch administers the Special Needs Assistance for Seniors program. This is an income-based program that provides a lump-sum cash payment to eligible low-income seniors who demonstrate that they are experiencing financial difficulties or unexpected expenses above their basic living requirements. The maximum payment in any one year is \$5,000, but the actual amount received is based on income and the amount of an applicant's allowable extraordinary expenses.

The Client and Information Services Branch develops, coordinates and delivers information on provincial and federal programs that benefit seniors, and provides administrative support to the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta. The Client and Information Services Branch also plays a role in educating the public and service providers about seniors' issues, and promotes public and professional knowledge and understanding of seniors and their contributions.

Housing Services

Housing Services provides housing assistance to lower-income seniors, families, and individuals with special needs, and ensures that provincially owned and supported housing is effectively managed and coordinated by housing management bodies, non-profit organizations, and municipalities. It also manages the affairs of the Alberta Social Housing Corporation. These services are delivered through three branches.

The Housing Innovation and Policy Branch recommends programs, policies and procedures, and legislation to help house Albertans in need of basic shelter. The branch also works on housing-related research, business planning, and performance measurement, and federal/provincial/territorial housing activities.

The Major Housing Initiatives and Program Delivery Branch provides support in the areas of social housing, affordable housing, seniors' housing, and remote housing as well as homelessness. The branch is also responsible for operational services and direct contact with housing operators, and provides analysis and assessments of the viability and effectiveness of current programs.

The Housing Programs Administration Branch is responsible for managing the recovery of federal funding for cost-shared housing programs, accounting for provincially owned housing assets, and the delivery of several grant programs related to housing.

Strategic Planning and Policy

Strategic Planning and Policy has primary responsibility for long-range planning, research and policy development, and corporate and business planning for the ministry. Strategic Planning and Policy consists of three sections.

The Strategic Planning and Research Section monitors demographic, economic and social trends, gathers statistics and research information, and undertakes research to assist the ministry in developing policy and program responses to issues affecting seniors and Albertans in need of housing supports. In 2001-02, this section led and coordinated the development of the cross ministry Seniors Policy Initiative.

The Policy and Issues Management Section analyzes, evaluates and manages issues related to seniors and Albertans in need of housing supports to assist in developing policy responses and recommendations. The section works with

other government departments and with stakeholders to ensure that seniors and housing issues are considered and represented in interdepartmental and non-government initiatives. As well, the section coordinates federal/provincial/territorial activities relating to seniors.

The Departmental Planning Section coordinates the development of the ministry three-year business plan and performance measures, the annual and quarterly reports, the ministry human resources plan, and the performance management system. The section also coordinates ministry-wide initiatives, such as legislative and regulatory reviews and corporate planning.

Communications

Communications assists the ministry in communicating initiatives identified in the ministry's business plan to target audiences. In addition, Communications provides consulting services in the areas of issues management, media relations – including acting as ministry spokesperson – strategic writing and technical support and expertise.

Ministry Support Services

Support services within the ministry include certain corporate services, such as information technology (which Alberta Seniors also provided to Alberta Community Development), and administration of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. During 2001-02, the ministry received some strategic support services through a contract with Alberta Community Development's Strategic Corporate Services Division. These included financial services, internal auditing, human resources, and records management. Alberta Corporate Services Centre was contracted to provide all transactional services and support for the ministry's computer hardware and network infrastructure.

Agencies and Foundations

Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta

The Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta brings the views of seniors to the attention of government. The council makes recommendations to the government on the coordination of policies and programs relating to seniors. The council also responds to government reports and specific requests for advice, and is responsible for coordinating annual Seniors Week celebrations.

Alberta Social Housing Corporation

The Alberta Social Housing Corporation is a Crown corporation operating under the authority of the *Alberta Housing Act*. The corporation operates primarily as a legal entity and administrative device for holding government housing assets and mortgages. The officers of the corporation are all employees of the Alberta government.

Summary of Key Activities

To achieve its business plan goals, the newly created Ministry of Seniors focused its key activities on ensuring seniors and those in need of basic shelter received the supports required to live as independently as possible. A number of initiatives were undertaken, including those related to financial support, developing partnerships with various levels of government and private and non-profit organizations, consulting with clients and key stakeholders and improving operational efficiency.

The ministry reaffirmed its commitment to assisting low-income seniors by providing a minimum four per cent increase to all seniors receiving cash benefits under the Alberta Seniors Benefit program. As well, residents of long-term care facilities receiving cash benefits were provided with additional assistance towards increased accommodation fees.

Alberta's strong economic growth through 2001-02 led to housing pressures in many areas of the province, often making it difficult for low-income Albertans to find suitable accommodation at rents they could afford. Alberta Seniors responded to these pressures by partnering with all levels of government and non-profit organizations through a number of funding programs, including the provincial Homelessness Initiative and the Healthy Aging Partnership Initiative. The ministry also played a leading role in federal/provincial/territorial discussions, ensuring that the Federal Affordable Housing Program was responsive to the unique housing situations of individual provinces and territories.

The ministry's emerging leadership role was assisted by the priority status given to the cross ministry Seniors Policy Initiative, which helped to enhance collaboration across government on issues relating to seniors and planning for the aging population. One of the outcomes of the Seniors Policy Initiative was the Healthy Aging and Seniors Wellness Strategic Framework, 2002-12, which resulted from a partnership with Alberta Health and Wellness, and included consultations with representatives from health authorities and the seniors community.

A variety of other consultations provided stakeholders with an opportunity to express their ideas on government programs and policies. For example, the ministry consulted with seniors organizations to gather information for a study on the current and future roles and needs of seniors centres in Alberta. Regular joint meetings between senior ministry staff and the Alberta Council on Aging's Policy Advisory Network were established to assist in keeping the Minister informed of important issues affecting seniors. In addition, the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta was active in consulting with seniors and service providers across the province.

The ministry continued to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its programs. One achievement of note was an improvement in processing time for applications to the Special Needs Assistance for Seniors program. Following the introduction of a simpler application process, program staff succeeded in eliminating a backlog of applications. Staff continue to assess applications within one week of the date of receipt.

Other efficiency measures included upgrading the ministry's information technology systems to increase operational value, improve administrative efficiency and reduce costs. The ministry's new website was designed to make it easy to read. Forms required for the Alberta Seniors Benefit and Special Needs Assistance for Seniors programs were made available on the website. In addition, detailed information about the Alberta Seniors Benefit program was made available on a CD-ROM and distributed to stakeholder groups and seniors' organizations.



**Report of the Auditor General on the Results of Applying
Specified Auditing Procedures to Key Performance Measures**

To the Members of the Legislative Assembly:

I have performed the following procedures in connection with the Ministry of Seniors' performance measures included in the *2001-2002 Annual Report of the Ministry of Seniors*.

1. Information obtained from an independent source was agreed with the information supplied by the stated source. Information provided internally was agreed to the reports from the systems used to develop the information.
2. The calculations which converted source information into reported measures were tested.
3. The appropriateness of the description of each measure's methodology was assessed.

As a result of applying the above procedures, I found no exceptions. However, these procedures do not constitute an audit, and therefore I express no opinion on the performance measures included in the *2001-2002 Annual Report of the Ministry of Seniors*.

Original Signed by Fred J. Dunn, CA

Auditor General

Edmonton, Alberta
August 2, 2002

RESULTS ANALYSIS

Introduction

The fiscal year 2001-02 represented a transitional period for Alberta Seniors, beginning with its establishment in March 2001. The new ministry's 2001-04 business plan was developed by removing the two core goals relating to seniors and housing from the Alberta Community Development business plan and consolidating them into two core businesses for Alberta Seniors' transitional business plan.

The following are the results of strategies and activities the ministry engaged in during 2001-02 to meet the goals of its two core businesses as described in the ministry's 2001-04 business plan. The report groups strategies and results under the core businesses and goals of the ministry. This is consistent with the formatting of previous reports on seniors and housing in Alberta Community Development annual reports, and with the Alberta Seniors business plan for 2002-05.

Core Businesses, Goals, Strategies, Results and Performance Measures

Core Business 1: Supporting the Independence and Well-Being of Seniors

Goal: To enable seniors to access the supports they need to live as independently as possible in a secure and dignified way. This goal is supported through:

- Coordination of seniors' issues across government,
- Communication with seniors about programs and services,
- Administration of income support programs for seniors in need,
- Coordination of housing support to lower-income seniors, and
- Supporting the activities of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta.

CORE BUSINESSES, GOALS, STRATEGIES, RESULTS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Strategy:

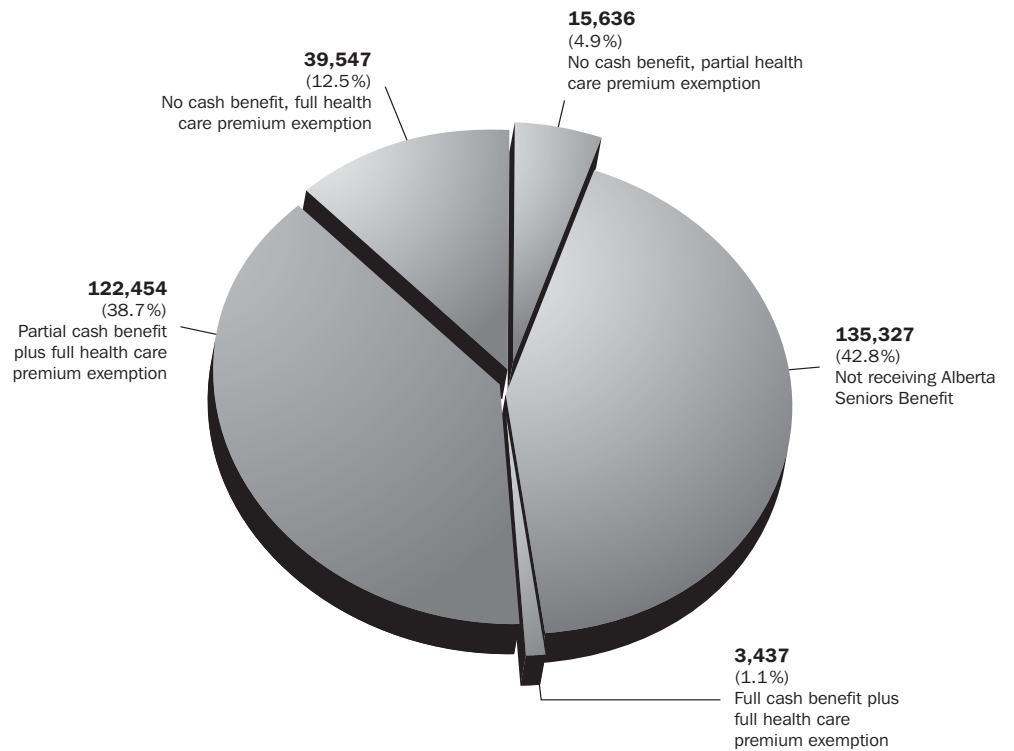
Increase assistance to lower-income seniors through the Alberta Seniors Benefit and through the provision of operational funding for additional seniors lodge units under the Lodge Assistance Program.

As of March 2002, there were 181,074 seniors receiving benefits from the Alberta Seniors Benefit program, a decrease of 572 from 2000-01. Of these, 125,891 received a monthly cash benefit, averaging approximately \$123 per household (consisting of one or two seniors). This was an increase of \$13 from the 2000-01 average of \$110. These seniors also received full exemption from their health insurance premiums. The remaining 55,183 beneficiaries received full or partial exemption from their health insurance premiums.

Effective July 1, 2001, all seniors eligible for a cash benefit received an increase of at least four per cent. In addition, beginning January 1, 2002, 6,723 seniors residing in long-term care facilities received increased cash benefits to assist them in covering increases in accommodation fees. The maximum increase was \$85 per month with an average increase of \$52 per month.

The graph below presents data derived from a total of 316,401 seniors recorded in the Alberta Seniors Benefit database.

Percentage of seniors receiving Alberta Seniors Benefit (as of 2002)



Source: Alberta Seniors, Alberta Seniors Benefit Database

In 2001-02, the ministry received 10,622 applications for the Special Needs Assistance for Seniors program. The program provided benefits to approximately 7,800 senior households for a total expenditure of \$16.4 million. Over the year, approximately 9,400 seniors received support from this program (the number of seniors is greater than the number of grants because couples submit one application). Benefits ranged from \$100 to \$5,000; the average amount per benefit was \$2,200, an increase of \$200 over the previous year.

Strategy:

Improve long-range planning based on data from Alberta Seniors Benefit, Alberta Health and Wellness, Canada Customs and Revenue Agency and Statistics Canada to predict/analyze scenarios seniors may encounter.

Strategy:

Develop strategies, including greater use of information technology, to increase access to information and services of the ministry and related organizations.

The Lodge Assistance Program provides grants to management bodies operating senior citizens lodges to assist them in maintaining affordable rents for seniors lodge accommodation. The number of seniors lodge units approved for Lodge Assistance Program funding increased by 124 to 8,093.

The ministry produces *Statistics on Seniors* on a regular basis for use in internal government planning. This report provides comprehensive information on seniors who are receiving benefits from the Alberta Seniors Benefit and Special Needs Assistance for Seniors programs.

Preliminary work began on the development of a seniors data model, which will bring together statistical information on seniors from several sources in order to highlight the current status of the seniors population and project future trends. The model will assist the ministry in developing strategic plans for meeting the needs of seniors, and will include information on areas such as income, residence, and health status.

Providing information about programs and services is important to help seniors to live in a secure and dignified way as independent, contributing members of society. The ministry has a number of avenues for providing access to a wide range of information that is of benefit to seniors.

The *Programs and Services for Seniors* booklet is a guide to programs, benefits and services available to seniors in Alberta from the provincial and federal governments and a number of agencies. The booklet was updated for 2001, and 105,000 copies were distributed to seniors and seniors' organizations and made available on the ministry website. The ministry also distributed Alberta Seniors Benefit and Alberta Seniors Programs Quick Facts brochures, and information about the Minister's Seniors Service Awards.

The Alberta Seniors Information Line provides information to seniors, their caregivers and seniors' organizations on programs and services available to seniors in the province, including the Alberta Seniors Benefit and Special Needs Assistance for Seniors programs. In 2001-02, the toll-free telephone line received its one-millionth call. Overall, it responded to 132,522 calls in 2001-02, between 300 and 1,500 each day. In 2000-01, the line responded to 150,150 calls.

Regional Seniors Service Offices provide walk-in and outreach services to seniors in various parts of Alberta. In 2001-02, Seniors Service Offices in Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, St. Paul and Stony Plain provided assistance to 35,894 clients in person, by telephone, or directly in an individual's home. The ministry worked with Alberta Community Development to coordinate the transfer of responsibility for providing these services to Alberta Seniors.

A CD-ROM was developed to provide detailed information on the Alberta Seniors Benefit program. This resource was distributed to key stakeholder groups and seniors' organizations to use in helping seniors in their communities understand and benefit from the program.

Strategy:

Provide leadership and organizational assistance to seniors and housing organizations (Core Businesses 1 and 2)

The ministry maintained Alberta's entries in the *Seniors Policies and Programs Database* which was launched in 2000 by the federal, provincial and territorial Ministers responsible for Seniors. The database is an Internet-based source of up-to-date information on federal, provincial and territorial government programs and policies relating to seniors. There are now more than 400 entries on the database from across Canada, 36 of which describe Alberta programs and policies.

One way that Alberta Seniors provides leadership and assistance to the community, to seniors' organizations, and to seniors and their families is by producing and distributing key publications relating to seniors' issues.

In 2001-02, the ministry distributed a number of publications prepared by the federal/provincial/territorial forum of Ministers responsible for Seniors. Alberta Seniors contributed to these publications through its participation in the forum. *An Inventory of Canadian Programs for the Prevention of Falls Among Seniors Living in the Community*, and *A Best Practices Guide for the Prevention of Falls Among Seniors Living in the Community* aim to enhance safety and security for older persons through fall prevention. *Fact Sheets on Technology and Aging* aim to provide basic information on technological items.

The ministry helped a number of organizations to enhance their services through the provision of financial assistance. For example, with the assistance of a grant of \$46,820, the Alberta Senior Citizens' Housing Association was enabled to advance its activities, including providing advice, consultation on issues, surveys and networking opportunities to its membership of over 100 housing organizations. Provision of a \$150,000 grant allowed the Métis Nation of Alberta Association to enhance its activities on behalf of the housing needs of Alberta's Métis population.

Housing registry services for low-income and hard-to-house persons were supported in six communities with a total amount of \$260,000. Each housing registry maintains a current list of landlords, and is aware of vacant units within its own communities that will house the client group it serves.

As part of its leadership role with seniors' organizations, the ministry supported a study on seniors centres conducted through a partnership of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta and the Policy Advisory Network of the Alberta Council on Aging. The study, which included consultation with seniors centres across the province, examined current and future roles and needs of seniors centres, and developed recommendations for presentation to the Minister.

The ministry hosted the 2001 Seniors Services Workshop, a two-day provincial conference on seniors programs offered in Alberta, for 280 participants from 59 municipalities throughout the province. The workshop provided information on current seniors' programs and services, networking opportunities and examples of effective organizational models.

Strategy:

Collaborate with Alberta Health and Wellness to form a Health and Housing Partnership, as recommended in the Broda Report, to work with stakeholders to identify and develop policies, standards and strategies required to expand supportive housing as an alternative to institutionalization to meet the needs of aging Albertans.

Strategy:

Facilitate the development of new supportive housing for seniors through the Healthy Aging Partnership Initiative that provides one-time capital funding to regional health authorities that enter into agreements with housing providers.

Strategy:

Lead the cross ministry Seniors Policy Initiative, in partnership with Alberta Health and Wellness, to strengthen the coordination of provincial government programs and services for seniors. Replace the *Government of Alberta Strategic Business Plan for Seniors* with a new strategic framework and 10-year action plan, with the goal of ensuring that programs and services meet the needs of current and future seniors and promote their quality of life, independence and choice. Incorporate the response to the *Government-Wide Study on the Impact of the Aging Population* into the 10-year plan to address the effects of an aging population on provincial programs and services.

Work together with ministries, seniors' service providers, seniors' organizations, and other stakeholders to develop and implement the cross ministry Seniors Policy Initiative.

In November 1999, the Long Term Care Policy Advisory Committee released *Healthy Aging: New Directions for Care* (the Broda Report). To address the report's recommendation for a Health and Housing Partnership, Alberta Seniors partnered with Alberta Health and Wellness, regional health authorities and the Alberta Mental Health Board to establish a Supportive Living Working Group. The purpose of the working group was to develop ways to address issues raised by the growth in supportive living needs of older Albertans, and to identify related policy questions.

This recommendation was further addressed through a full-day Health and Housing Planning Session which brought together 112 representatives of seniors housing management bodies, provincial government departments, private sector housing organizations and regional health authorities.

Another initiative stemming from the recommendations in *Healthy Aging: New Directions for Care* was the continuation of the Healthy Aging Partnership Initiative (HAPI), which was developed in 1999-00 and later transferred to Alberta Seniors from Alberta Health and Wellness. In 2001-02, one-time capital funding was provided to housing management bodies and non-profit seniors housing organizations to support the development of 458 seniors supportive housing units for lower-income seniors. Funding from this program was also used to provide additional capital grants to projects approved under the first round of HAPI funding and the Seniors Supportive Housing Incentive Program, to reduce their development costs and allow for more affordable rates. This additional support was provided to 842 units.

Building on the foundation laid by the Government-Wide Study on the Impact of the Aging Population, a total of 18 ministries and other partners worked collaboratively as part of the cross ministry Seniors Policy Initiative in 2001-02. Under the leadership of the Ministry of Seniors, and co-championed by Alberta Health and Wellness, the purpose of the Seniors Policy Initiative was to strengthen the coordination of seniors programs and services among ministries, and to prepare Alberta for the expected increase in the senior population. During the year, the participating ministries began developing a draft strategic framework and action plan for Alberta's aging population. This plan will establish the course of government action in key areas such as retirement income, housing, supportive communities, health, education and the workforce.

The momentum of the Seniors Policy Initiative was maintained through the inclusion of key activities developed under the initiative into the ministry's 2002-05 business planning cycle. As well, several health related elements of the initiative, including activities relating to supportive housing and healthy aging, were incorporated into the planning for the 2002-03 cross ministry Health Sustainability Initiative.

Strategy:

Finalize a Seniors Housing Policy Framework.

Strategy:

Upgrade seniors' lodges to address functional obsolescence and health and safety concerns.

Strategy:

Consult with ministry clients about their expectations and needs and seek the views and opinions of Albertans and the organizations that represent them on seniors' concerns.

A draft Alberta Housing Policy Framework was developed. The framework examines the province's role in addressing the housing needs of seniors, low-income households and people with special needs in Alberta, and outlines objectives and actions in relation to these needs.

During the 2001-02 fiscal year, 12 seniors lodges were upgraded through the Lodge Upgrading Program administered by Alberta Infrastructure. Management bodies contributed \$4.9 million toward new or additional lodge units.

The ministry gathered information from stakeholders through participation in meetings and conventions held by the Alberta Senior Citizens' Housing Association, the Alberta Public Housing Administrators' Association, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties. Ministry officials spoke at public meetings, conferences and working sessions about seniors' issues, government programs and strategic policy directions. One result of these meetings was the introduction of maximum basic rents for seniors' self-contained apartments. These will protect seniors from paying more than a reasonable rental rate in government-subsidized housing.

An important product of the cross ministry Seniors Policy Initiative was the development, in partnership with Alberta Health and Wellness, of a Healthy Aging and Seniors Wellness Strategic Framework for Alberta. This identifies key elements of healthy aging, and provides guidelines intended to assist health authorities and community groups in developing strategies to promote healthy aging in their communities. As well, the framework will serve as a resource to health authorities as they develop their 10-year continuing care service plans.

A provincial forum was held in October 2001 to seek feedback on the draft framework from seniors' organizations, regional health authorities, ministries, health professionals, and other organizations with an interest in healthy aging. The forum also provided an opportunity for participants to network with one another, to share experiences of healthy aging strategies, and to discuss ideas for working at the regional health authority and community level to promote healthy aging and seniors wellness.

In 2001-02 the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta consulted with seniors and service providers at approximately 120 meetings and/or events across the province to identify issues of which government should be aware. It hosted three consultations with seniors and service providers in the areas surrounding Edmonton, in the Northwest region, and at the annual Seniors Services Workshop in Edmonton. In conjunction with the consultations, the council conducted facility tours of seniors' centres and housing facilities in the areas surrounding Edmonton and in Grande Prairie, High Prairie, and Peace River and area.

Strategy:

Strengthen existing alliances with other government ministries, municipalities and other levels of government; and community, private sector and non-profit organizations.

To assist in keeping the minister informed of important issues affecting seniors, Alberta Seniors established regular meetings with the Alberta Council on Aging – Policy Advisory Network.

The ministry chaired the 2001 Seniors Fraud Awareness Committee, which developed and implemented the seniors' fraud awareness campaign, *If in Doubt, Check it Out*. The campaign was designed to educate seniors and caregivers about potential fraud situations through a multimedia package, consisting of a video series, presentation materials and tip sheets for seniors. The education package focused on the five most prevalent types of fraud: home renovation fraud, investment fraud, telemarketing fraud, cyber fraud and financial abuse. More than 1,000 packages were distributed to seniors' organizations and individuals, and a 30-second television public service announcement aired on an estimated 500 occasions on local television stations.

Partners of *If in Doubt, Check it Out* with Alberta Seniors included Alberta Children's Services, Alberta Government Services, Alberta Solicitor General, the Calgary and Edmonton Police Services, the RCMP, the Better Business Bureau, the Calgary Seniors Resource Society, the Edmonton Elder Abuse Intervention Team and Kerby Centre for Seniors.

Alberta Seniors, along with other ministries, health authorities, and community stakeholders, participated in the Alzheimer Disease and Other Dementias Working Group. Led by Alberta Health and Wellness, the working group's mandate was to develop a provincial plan to address the needs of Albertans with Alzheimer disease and other dementias. The plan included themes related to public awareness, education and training, support for informal caregivers, services across the continuum, ethical issues, and supportive environments. Health authorities are expected to consult the document as they prepare their 10-year continuing care service plans.

More than 160 Alberta Seniors staff took part in the Senior Friendly™ program, which provides hands-on training to teach an appreciation of the physical and cognitive challenges many seniors face every day. As a result of this commitment by staff, Alberta Council on Aging, the sponsor of the program, awarded the Ministry of Seniors the "Senior Friendly™" designation.

At the national level, the ministry participated in preparations for the federal/provincial/territorial meeting of Ministers responsible for Seniors that was to take place in Toronto in September 2001. Agenda items included planning for Canada's aging society, issues relating to seniors' safety and security (with particular reference to prevention of falls), technology and aging, and family caregiving. Owing to the events of September 11, 2001, the ministers' meeting was cancelled and rescheduled for June 2002.

Strategy:

Identify and develop new partnerships with other government ministries, municipalities and other levels of government; and community, private sector and non-profit organizations.

Strategy:

Review ministry programs and services to identify opportunities for improving accessibility, effectiveness and efficiency. (Core businesses 1 and 2)

In November 2001 ministry officials participated in a federal/provincial/territorial meeting of Ministers responsible for Housing. Based on a recommendation from Alberta, ministers agreed to establish a national Supportive Housing Working Group that will be chaired by the Ministry of Seniors.

New partnerships and working relationships with municipalities, regional health authorities, housing management bodies and non-profit seniors housing developers/operators resulted in a number of seniors housing initiatives.

One example was a partnership between the Capital Health Authority and Greater Edmonton Foundation to house seniors with mild to moderate dementia in South Manor (formerly Ottewell Lodge). Another was the planned replacement of the lodge in Evansburg with a combined long-term care and supportive housing facility, developed and operated by the Good Samaritan Society.

Alberta Seniors' demonstrated commitment to cross ministry initiatives resulted in new collaborative relationships and partnerships with other ministries and government agencies. The ministry's lead role in the Seniors Policy Initiative helped to raise awareness and appreciation of issues pertaining to seniors and the aging population on the part of other ministries and government agencies.

The ministry also contributed to the cross ministry Economic Development Strategy through participation on the Labour Force Planning Committee. Led by Alberta Human Resources and Employment, the purpose of this committee was to address issues around ensuring that there are sufficient skilled workers to meet Alberta's needs.

The ministry collaborated with the Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research to develop a pamphlet on seniors injuries. *A Summary of the Alberta Seniors 1997 Injury Data Report*, released in March 2002, provides information on injury-related deaths, hospitalizations and emergency department visits for Alberta seniors.

Through the annual Minister's Seniors Services Awards program, the ministry recognizes the contributions of individuals and organizations that improve the quality of life of seniors in our province through volunteer services. In 2001, William Brown of Berwyn, Jean Innes of Edmonton, Jeanette Vatter of Drayton Valley, the Friends of Seniors Foundation of Calgary and the Grande Prairie and District Golden Age Centre were recognized with a Minister's Seniors Service Award.

A website for the new ministry was developed, providing information on seniors programs and services, and on seniors, family and special purpose housing. The site was designed to make information accessible and easy to read. Forms required for the Alberta Seniors Benefit and Special Needs Assistance for Seniors programs were made available on the website. An automatic e-mail system on the Media Room page was developed to enable media or members of the public to register to receive seniors or housing

news releases or announcements automatically through their e-mail.

The ministry studied, in consultation with stakeholders, a variety of options for funding seniors supportive housing in a way that would direct provincial resources to lower income seniors. The options under consideration are intended to ensure that the Senior Citizens' Lodge Program targets low- and moderate-income seniors, and provides a small subsidy to lodges with 33 units or fewer.

Following administrative changes to the application process, the Special Needs Assistance for Seniors program succeeded in eliminating its backlog of applications.

The initial phase of the national evaluation of the National Framework on Aging (NFA) *Policy Guide* and *Seniors Policies and Programs Database* was completed. The results will be used as a basis for further enhancements of the NFA. Alberta Seniors managed the contract for the evaluation.

Performance Measures for Core Business 1: Supporting the Independence and Well-Being of Seniors

MEASURE: Percentage of eligible seniors receiving the Alberta Seniors Benefit

It is important that seniors are able to receive the benefits for which they are eligible; these benefits help low-income seniors to maintain their independence and live in a secure and dignified way. When fully developed, this measure will determine the ministry's success in communicating the Alberta Seniors Benefit program to its clients.

Because the Alberta Seniors Benefit program is a voluntary program, the ministry's approach to developing this measure is to determine the percentage of seniors who have been given the opportunity to apply for the program. If it can be demonstrated that seniors have been made aware of the program, have received an application package, and have been able to complete and return the application, this will indicate that the ministry has been successful in communicating the program.

The initial methodology for the measure entailed gathering test data by contacting those seniors who had not applied for the program by the time they had reached age 65, to determine whether they had been given the opportunity to apply. Preliminary results indicate that a large majority of those seniors contacted were aware of the program, had received a package, and were either in the process of applying, were not eligible, or chose not to apply. The ministry will continue to develop the methodology to gather appropriate data for this measure.

MEASURE: Percentage of eligible applicants receiving the Alberta Seniors Benefit

The ministry also measured its success in ensuring that eligible applicants are receiving benefits. In each of the past five years, the ministry provided benefits to nearly 100 per cent of eligible applicants. The result for fiscal year 2001-02 is 99.7 per cent. At the time of reporting, 0.3 per cent of eligible applicants were in the process of having their benefits finalized for payment. The ministry target for this measure is 100 per cent.

Although the ministry will continue to monitor the efficiency with which Alberta Seniors Benefit applications are processed, this measure will be discontinued in the 2002-05 Business Plan. It will be replaced with the percentage of eligible seniors receiving the Alberta Seniors Benefit, which is a better indicator of the accessibility of supports.

MEASURE: Satisfaction of seniors with information provided

It is important for the ministry's clients to have access to good quality information about the programs and services that help them live in a secure and dignified way. This measure assesses the satisfaction of clients with the level of service and the quality of information about seniors' provincial programs provided through the Seniors Information Line, the regional Seniors Service Offices, and the *Programs and Services for Seniors* booklet.

In 2001-02 the ministry developed a new six-point rating scale for use in all ministry surveys to facilitate a more consistent methodology. For measures relating to satisfaction with information services, the previous year's rating scale combined the top three categories, and used a different system of response choices. For the Seniors Service Offices survey, a telephone survey replaced a self-administered questionnaire. For these reasons, the results from 2001-02 for measures of satisfaction with information services are not comparable to previous years' results.

Alberta Seniors Information Line

In 2001-02, the Client and Information Services Branch conducted 335 telephone interviews to assess satisfaction of users of the Alberta Seniors Information Line. The interviews were conducted in May and August for two weeks each time. The questionnaire included questions about courtesy, knowledge, promptness of service and overall satisfaction with the services provided.

To evaluate overall satisfaction, the top two categories of the six-point scale, "very satisfied" and "satisfied," were combined for an overall satisfaction rating of 90.4 per cent, based on 335 responses to the question. The target for 2001-02 was established at 90 per cent.

Seniors Service Offices

In 2001-02, 230 telephone interviews were conducted of users of eight regional Seniors Service Offices. The interviews were conducted in May and August for two weeks each time and included questions about courtesy, knowledge, promptness of service and overall satisfaction with the services provided.

To evaluate overall satisfaction, the top two categories of the six-point scale, "very satisfied" and "satisfied," were combined for an overall satisfaction rating of 95.2 per cent, based on 230 responses to the question. The target for 2001-02 was established at 90 per cent.

Programs and Services for Seniors Booklet

The *Programs and Services for Seniors* booklet is a guide to programs, benefits, and services that are available to seniors in Alberta from the provincial government, federal government and other agencies. A voluntary, self-administered questionnaire included with each booklet invited users to evaluate its contents and usefulness. Out of the 105,000 booklets distributed to seniors' agencies, hospitals, lodges, native bands, Seniors Service Offices, interested seniors, and soon-to-be seniors, the ministry received 868 completed questionnaires over a period of 15 months.

To evaluate overall satisfaction, the top two categories of the six-point scale, "very satisfied" and "satisfied," were combined for an overall satisfaction rating of 91.3 per cent, based on 859 responses to the question. The target for 2001-02 was established at 90 per cent.

Respondents must pay for the questionnaire's return postage and this may influence the number of questionnaires returned from year to year.

MEASURE: Satisfaction of seniors housing clients with quality of accommodation and, where appropriate, services provided

This measure assesses the satisfaction of seniors living in self-contained apartments and lodges. It provides a means of verifying that seniors housing clients are receiving safe, adequate, suitable and affordable housing that is properly managed and maintained.

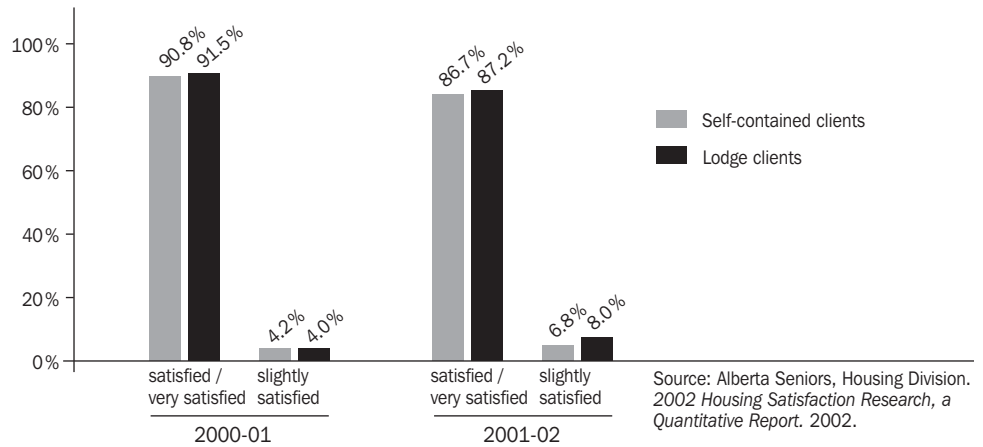
Satisfaction was determined through a survey conducted for Housing Services by a private research company. A random sample of clients from the ministry's seniors housing programs was surveyed by telephone about their overall satisfaction with the quality of their accommodation. Four hundred telephone interviews were completed with residents of senior citizens' self-contained apartments and another 400 with residents of senior citizens' lodges. The survey also measured a number of variables to assess the quality of accommodation, including overall condition, safety and affordability, and the services provided by the housing management body. The research was conducted in February and March 2002 over a two-week period. Results based on the sample size of 400 are accurate within +/- 4.9 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

CORE BUSINESSES, GOALS, STRATEGIES, RESULTS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The results from the top two categories of a six-point rating scale, “very satisfied” and “satisfied,” were combined to obtain an overall rating of satisfaction for respondents for both seniors self-contained apartments and lodges. The results indicate that 86.7 per cent of apartment residents and 87.2 per cent of lodge residents were satisfied with their accommodation.

In 2000-01, 90.8 per cent of apartment residents and 91.5 per cent of lodge residents were satisfied, with the same confidence level. The difference in satisfaction rates between the two years is within the margin of error for the sample and is therefore not statistically significant. However, it may be noted that the difference between the two years’ results is largely accounted for by a higher percentage of respondents in 2001-02 registering “slightly satisfied” (6.8 per cent versus 4.3 per cent in 2000-01 for apartment residents; 8.0 per cent versus 4.0 per cent in 2000-01 for lodge residents).¹

Overall level of satisfaction of seniors housing clients with quality of accommodation and, where appropriate, services provided



MEASURE: Satisfaction of departments and agencies with the ministry’s leadership and collaboration, and with the information, advice and analysis received

One way the ministry ensures seniors have access to the supports they need is by providing other government departments and community agencies with policy information, advice and leadership for the coordination of programs and services that affect seniors. This helps to ensure that government policies effectively anticipate and address the needs of seniors.

In March 2002, questionnaires were distributed to 144 stakeholders to assess their satisfaction with the courtesy, accessibility, responsiveness, knowledge and leadership of staff, as well as the quality, accuracy, completeness and timeliness of information received. Respondents were also asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the services provided.

¹ No target for this measure was established in 2001-02 owing to a lack of sufficient baseline data following a change in methodology. A target of 93 per cent was subsequently established for 2002-03.

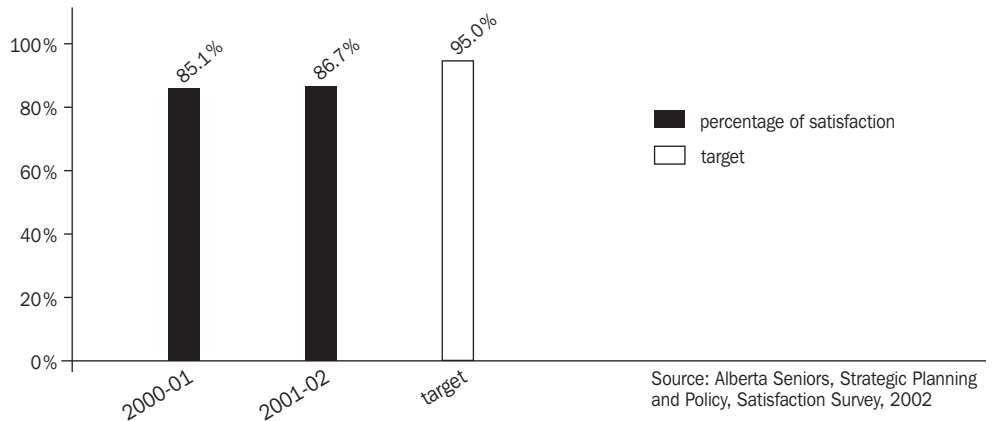
CORE BUSINESSES, GOALS, STRATEGIES, RESULTS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Survey participants included Alberta government employees, employees of other provinces' provincial governments and the federal government, and representatives of organizations and agencies that work with, or on behalf of, seniors. The population surveyed varies from year to year, reflecting changes in the nature of work undertaken.

A total of 47 completed questionnaires were returned by 23 provincial government employees and 24 other stakeholders. Since only 45 responses were received to the question rating overall satisfaction, the numbers of responses are reported as well as the percentages. Results from the top two categories of a six-point rating scale, "very satisfied" and "satisfied," were combined to obtain an overall rating of satisfaction. Results indicate that 39 respondents, (86.7 per cent) were satisfied overall with services provided. Five respondents (11.1 per cent) were "slightly satisfied," and one respondent (2.2 per cent) was "slightly dissatisfied." The target for this measure for 2001-02 was 95 per cent "very satisfied" or "satisfied."²

Results for 2000-01, based on 47 responses to the survey question on overall satisfaction indicated that 40 respondents (85.1 per cent) were satisfied overall, seven respondents (14.9 per cent) were "slightly satisfied" and none was dissatisfied.

Overall level of satisfaction of departments and agencies with the ministry's leadership and collaboration, and with the information, advice and analysis received



² The target for this measure has been revised to 90% in the 2002-05 business plan. The revision reflects accumulated baseline data for this measure, and provides a realistic target that the ministry can work towards.

Core Business 2: Supporting Family and Special Purpose Housing Needs

Goal: To effectively manage and coordinate family and special purpose housing to ensure individuals and families in need have access to basic housing accommodation, in partnership with community-based housing authorities.

This goal is supported through:

- Ensuring provincial policies and legislation direct resources to those most in need of shelter assistance,
- Developing cost-effective ways of enhancing existing housing and creating the opportunity for development of new housing, and
- Ensuring organizations involved in the delivery and administration of special purpose housing operate effectively and meet acceptable standards of accountability.

Strategy:

Improve our ability to estimate future housing needs. (Core Business 1 and 2)

Alberta Seniors began working with Alberta Health and Wellness to develop a model for projecting seniors' future continuing care and supportive housing needs. This approach looks at the full range of service and accommodation needs within the community, as well as within long term care facilities.

To assess the need for low-cost housing across the province, the ministry conducted surveys of vacancies and rental costs in the private market, compiled information on subsidized housing waiting lists, and developed a profile of subsidized housing clients.

In addition, detailed community profiles were prepared for several of Alberta's seven major municipalities. These profiles provide information on population, housing markets, housing demand, and an analysis of household income in the municipalities, and identify areas with a high need for low-cost housing. The profiles will help to ensure that provincial resources are allocated to areas of greatest need. Profiles of the remaining communities will be completed in the coming year.

Strategy:

Implement the Family and Special Purpose Housing Policy Framework by coordinating community-based solutions to address the housing needs of Albertans.

Following consultation with the City of Calgary, two housing management bodies, Calhome Properties and the Calgary Housing Authority, merged to form a single entity, the Calgary Housing Company, which will be managed by a city appointed board. The merger resulted in over 5,100 social housing units being administered by one central housing organization. Along with another 2,355 housing units under the direct administration of the Calgary Housing Company, the consolidated housing portfolio now numbers approximately 7,500. A new operating agreement and funding model is being negotiated with the city and will be implemented in 2002-03. The merger reduces duplication of services, provides easier access for clients seeking social housing, and increases the city's ability to address its affordable housing needs.

Strategy:

Increase assistance to family and special purpose housing through the Rent Supplement Program.

Strategy:

Promote community-based, inexpensive housing solutions by encouraging partnerships with municipal governments, community groups, and the private and non-profit housing sectors.

Strategy:

Conclude discussions with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation toward a new federal/provincial social housing agreement.

Strategy:

Lead the implementation of the Homelessness Strategy in conjunction with other ministries, municipal governments, local authorities, community groups and the private sector.

Discussions continued with other major municipalities to encourage them to take a lead role in determining local needs, planning and setting community priorities for affordable housing in their areas.

Rent supplement assistance was increased by \$650,000 to \$15.5 million to offset a projected budget shortfall under the program resulting from increases in private landlord market rental rates. The program supports low-income households in obtaining suitable rental accommodation through subsidized rents in eligible private sector rental projects.

To address the shortage of low-cost housing in Fort McMurray, Alberta Seniors partnered with the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and the Wood Buffalo Housing and Development Corporation to develop low-cost housing in Fort McMurray. The ministry, through the Alberta Social Housing Corporation, transferred Crown land valued at \$327,000 to the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo for a nominal sum. This, in combination with land transferred in fiscal year 2000-01, assisted with construction of a 180-unit housing development known as Edgewater Court. To provide operational support, Alberta Seniors transferred a number of rent supplement designations to the Edgewater Court facility.

Bi-lateral meetings continued between Alberta Seniors and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation toward the development of a new social housing agreement. The agreement will consolidate the existing 17 separate agreements, covering approximately 30,100 federal/provincial cost-shared social housing units. Agreement in principle was reached and financial details regarding the long-term subsidy arrangement are pending. Once finalized, the agreement will enhance the province's ability to respond to changing housing needs in Alberta communities.

Now in its second year, the Provincial Homelessness Initiative has made significant progress in helping communities address the needs of the homeless in their areas. The ministry provides \$3 million annually for this initiative, which enables communities to access grants from other levels of government, and from private and non-profit groups.

Under this initiative, seven urban centres (Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray) developed and are implementing community plans that have increased capacity to support approximately 1,100 individuals in both emergency shelters and supportive housing.

Community plans, which are a requirement under the Provincial Homelessness Initiative, play an important role in bringing community and government partners together to deal with the issue of homelessness.

The ministry led the Senior Officials Committee On Homelessness to improve funding and service coordination among provincial ministries. A result of this coordination was an agreement by the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) to provide additional funding for

Strategy:

Monitor housing programs and work with municipalities and management bodies to ensure resources are directed to the housing needs of Albertans in an efficient manner. (Core Businesses 1 and 2)

Strategy:

Review ministry programs and services to identify opportunities for improving accessibility, effectiveness and efficiency.

Strategy:

Strengthen existing alliances with other government ministries, municipalities and other levels of government; and community, private sector and non-profit organizations.

intoxicated homeless individuals who were being turned away by emergency shelters that do not have the appropriate staff to support this clientele.

The ministry disposed of a total of 35 housing units that were surplus or no longer suitable for the ministry's housing portfolio. This entailed the sale of 20 rural emergency home trailers, 14 surplus housing units, and one nominal sum disposal of a community housing unit. In addition, the ministry disposed of 16 lots and .867 hectares of surplus land. As well, the ministry transferred 184 lodge units to management bodies.

Proceeds of \$800,000 from the sale of five single-family units were transferred to the City of Calgary to build more affordable housing. With these proceeds, the city will build a new 128-unit rental project, with one-half of the units to be rented at just below market rates, and the other half at reduced rates for eligible lower-income households. Consideration is being given to other funding sources to reduce capital costs.

The ministry paid off a total of \$61,632,000 of its long-term debt, thus decreasing the liabilities of the Alberta Social Housing Corporation.

In 2001-02, 36 housing management body operational reviews were conducted to ensure that management bodies adhere to the *Alberta Housing Act* and regulations, keep units well maintained, and uphold principles of fiscal responsibility and accountability. In partnership with the Alberta Senior Citizens' Housing Association, 41 lodge standards reviews were completed to ensure that lodge accommodations support the health, safety and well being of residents throughout Alberta. Lodges meeting the required standards receive accreditation from Alberta Senior Citizens' Housing Association. The ministry took action as necessary to ensure that any compliance and advisory issues identified in the reviews were remedied in a timely fashion.

The ministry initiated a process to monitor and allocate private landlord rent supplement program funding to ensure that the program operates within its budget and is targeted to those areas of the province with the highest needs. A new model for allocating rent supplements was developed, which bases allocations on factors such as population, market rental rates, vacancy rates and client waiting lists. Current tenants will be protected, as the new model will be implemented as existing units become vacant.

The ministry participated in two federal/provincial/territorial meetings of Ministers responsible for Housing, as well as provincial/territorial and federal/provincial/territorial working groups investigating ways of increasing the supply of affordable housing in urban, rural and remote areas. This resulted in the federal government proposing a five-year Affordable Housing Program to increase the supply of affordable housing across Canada.

Alberta Seniors played a key role in negotiating a federal/provincial/territorial framework agreement that would enable provinces and territories to access funding under the Affordable Housing Program, as well as allowing them the flexibility required to address their particular housing needs and priorities effectively. The ministry, along with the Government of Canada and all the other provinces and territories, signed the framework agreement in November 2001. This will enable Alberta to access \$67.12 million to help increase the supply of affordable housing in the province. As required by the framework agreement, Alberta commenced bilateral negotiations with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation on finalization of the national framework agreement.

Strategy:

Identify and develop new partnerships with other government ministries, municipalities and other levels of government; and community, private sector and non-profit organizations.

A number of ad hoc and ongoing partnerships developed between provincial government ministries, including Alberta Seniors, and community groups such as the Calgary Homeless Foundation, the Salvation Army, the Mustard Seed Society, the Calgary Drop-in Centre, and the United Way. These groups worked in consultation with Alberta Seniors, Alberta Human Resources and Employment, Alberta Gaming and Alberta Health and Wellness, as required, to assist the government in planning effective resource allocation to address homelessness issues.

The ministry contributed to the cross ministry Aboriginal Policy Initiative through participation in two sub-committees looking at socio-economic status and participation in the economy of Aboriginal people. The ministry's role was to represent housing issues. Led by Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development and Alberta Justice, the cross ministry Aboriginal Policy Initiative addresses Goal 6 of the Government of Alberta's Business Plan – "The well-being and self reliance of Aboriginal People will be comparable to that of other Albertans."

Strategy:

Consult with ministry clients about their expectations and needs and seek the views and opinions of Albertans and the organizations that represent them on family and special purpose housing concerns.

Following consultation with tenants in social housing projects, the Social Housing Accommodation Regulation was modified. The revised regulation authorizes an annual review of each tenant's income for the purpose of calculating rent. Previous to this, rent was recalculated each time a tenant's income changed. This reduced the administrative overheads both for tenants and for housing managers, as well as providing tenants with an incentive to continue their efforts to improve their financial status.

Strategy:

Develop an effective means of identifying the capital and operational requirements of the ministry's seniors and family and special purpose housing areas. (Core businesses 1 and 2)

The ministry designates housing operators to manage government-funded seniors, family, and special purpose housing. In 2001-02, as in previous years, housing operators prepared three-year business plans to assist them in strategic and financial planning. These plans included an estimate of projected revenues, operating costs and capital expenditures. The ministry encouraged housing management bodies to review their business plans regularly to ensure that they were on track to meet their goals.

Performance Measure for Core Business 2: Supporting Family and Special Purpose Housing Needs

Satisfaction of family housing clients with quality of accommodation and, where appropriate, services provided

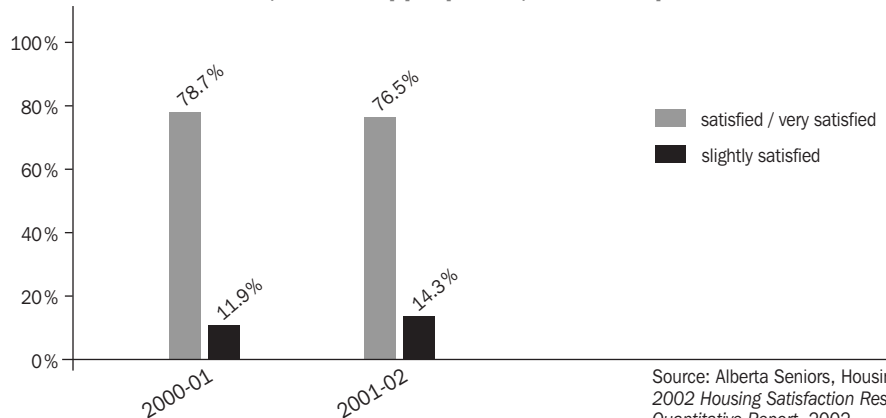
This measure assesses the satisfaction of clients living in provincially owned or supported family housing units. It provides a means of verifying that the government's social housing programs and portfolio are being properly managed and that families in need are receiving suitable, affordable and well-maintained housing.

Satisfaction was determined through a survey conducted for Housing Services by a private research company. A random sample of 400 clients from the Community Housing Program was surveyed by telephone on their overall level of satisfaction with the quality of their accommodation. The research was conducted in February and March 2002 over a period of two weeks. Results based on the sample size of 400 are accurate within +/- 4.9 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

The results from the top two categories of a six-point rating scale, "very satisfied" and "satisfied," were combined to obtain an overall rating of satisfaction. The results indicate that 76.5 per cent of residents were satisfied with the quality of their accommodation.

In 2000-01, based on 403 responses, 78.7 per cent of respondents were satisfied, with the same confidence level. The difference in satisfaction rates between the two years is within the margin of error for the sample and is therefore not statistically significant. However, it may be noted that the difference between the two years' results is largely accounted for by a higher percentage of respondents in 2001-02 registering "slightly satisfied" (14.3 per cent versus 11.9 per cent in 2000-01).³

Overall level of satisfaction of family housing clients with quality of accommodation and, where appropriate, services provided



³ No target for this measure was established in 2001-02 owing to a lack of sufficient baseline data following a change in methodology. A target of 80 per cent was subsequently established for 2002-03.

Corporate Initiatives

In addition to activities and strategies that are directly related to achieving the ministry's business plan goals, as measured by the performance measures, the ministry also engaged in a number of corporate activities that cross the two core businesses. These activities primarily relate to improving the internal efficiency and effectiveness of the ministry's operations.

Strategy:

Optimize employee access to information technology support, tools and training as an effective means to enable employees to do their best.

Strategy:

Participate in the cross ministry Alberta One-Window Gateway Initiative to promote one-window access to government information.

Strategy:

Further use of, and enhancements to, the ministry Intranet as an effective tool for sharing information on ministry and government-wide initiatives.

Strategy:

Update the ministry Human Resource Plan and continue implementation of the government's Corporate Human Resource Development Strategy, including professional development opportunities, succession planning, learning and professional development accounts, and strategies to recognize long service and to celebrate success.

Strategy:

Clarify responsibilities for ministry staff and the linkages with branch, division and overall ministry business plans through the ministry performance management process.

Strategy:

Implement strategies to address issues identified through employee surveys and other employee feedback mechanisms.

All employees were provided with access to computer technology, including appropriate software, to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their work. A technology help desk provided support and assistance to ensure technology operated at optimal levels.

The ministry continued to be a partner in the cross ministry Service Alberta (formerly Alberta One-Window Gateway Initiative), including membership on the Technology Advisory, the Website Project, and the Authentication Project committees. Service Alberta will make it easier for Albertans to obtain information and process transactions in a secure and convenient manner.

The ministry continued to enhance its Intranet to improve communication to employees and assist in coordination of tasks. For example, an Intranet site for the cross ministry Seniors Policy Initiative was developed to enable employees from all participating ministries to share information in a convenient format.

With the establishment of the Ministry of Seniors, a new Human Resources Plan was developed to align staff resources to the needs of the new ministry. Succession planning was initiated, and learning opportunities, including formal training and various job experiences, were provided to ensure employees had the skills, knowledge and competencies to conduct the ministry's business in an effective and efficient manner.

A performance management process was established for the department. Using the ministry business plan as a frame of reference, each division and branch within the ministry developed an operational plan and report on activities and achievements. These plans also form the basis for each employee's individual performance and productivity plans and reports.

Ministry employees' responses to the government-wide employee survey indicated that the ministry performed well in all areas identified in the survey. These included employee satisfaction, organizational performance and employee performance. By comparison with the results for all government employees, ministry employees were especially knowledgeable about how their work contributed to the goals of the ministry business plan and the overall goals of the government. The survey results were released in

Strategy:

Maximize the efficiency of ministry operations and effectiveness of ministry services through optimal use of information technology and information management including: improving Internet services to augment electronic access to ministry services and information; and optimizing the provision of planning and technical support to ministry users and for mission critical systems.

Strategy:

Participate in the government's Alberta Corporate Service Centre Initiative and the cross ministry Corporate Information Management/Information Technology Strategy.

Strategy:

Cooperate in the advancement of the government-wide capital planning initiative, including the Corporate Capital Overview, to facilitate planning and priority setting for the ministry's physical infrastructure program.

Strategy:

Ensure appropriate controls are in place to meet the ministry's accountability obligations.

February 2002, and the findings will be incorporated into future ministry planning processes.

Improvements to ministry information technology and information management included the following:

- Upgrading the hardware and software of the Alberta Seniors Benefit system, resulting in significant improvements in efficiency. For example the time to produce a monthly payment for 130,000 seniors was reduced from over 20 hours to just under four hours.
- Bringing all ministry applications under a single support structure, including five housing applications that were moved from Alberta Municipal Affairs' network. This resulted in significant administrative efficiencies and reduced operating costs.
- Switching the electronic transmission of the Alberta Seniors Benefit direct deposit data file from an antiquated mainframe dataline to FTP transmission. FTP is an industry standard transmission protocol which provides more security at a much lower operational cost.
- Enhancing the ministry's housing Extranet (ShirNet) to allow housing management bodies to maintain confidential client information in a secure, central location, and to submit appropriate data electronically to ministry officials for analysis and reporting.

Ministry staff continued to work with Alberta Corporate Service Centre to achieve cost savings and efficiencies in the delivery of government-wide administrative functions.

The ministry participated in three Capital Planning Initiative committees of the government-wide capital planning initiative. The goal of the initiative is to ensure that effective, innovative capital planning and funding decisions are made which support long-term capital requirements.

The ministry prepared an annual risk-based comprehensive internal audit plan. Independent reviews were carried out under the plan, which provided assurance to senior management that:

- systems and controls were operating as intended
- transactions were in compliance with legislation
- the government accountability framework for contracts and grants was adhered to, and
- performance reporting was accurate and appropriate.

Reviews undertaken during 2001-02 did not indicate any significant concerns with the ministry's accountability obligations.

Financial Performance Highlights

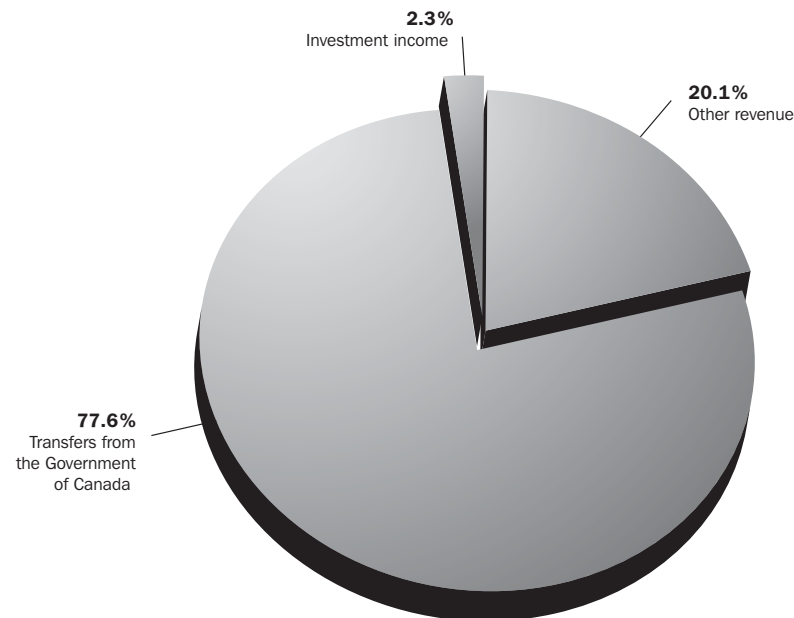
The ministry consolidated financial results for the year ended March 31, 2002, demonstrate the ministry's excellence in effective stewardship of its resources. More detailed information can be found in the ministry's financial statements.

Financial performance highlights

	in millions		
	2002	2001	
	Authorized Budget	Actual	Actual
Revenues:			
Transfers from the Government of Canada	\$ 65.4	\$ 64.4	\$ 65.2
Investment income	1.1	1.9	2.1
Other revenue	7.8	16.7	12.8
	<u>74.3</u>	<u>83.0</u>	<u>80.1</u>
Expenses:			
Provide financial support and information services to seniors	174.0	174.5	164.1
Support provision and management of seniors, family and special purpose housing	122.9	118.4	89.5
Provide planning and policy development for seniors and housing	0.9	0.8	0.7
Ministry support services	2.6	2.9	1.9
Grants in Kind	8.7	9.1	3.5
Debt servicing costs	49.6	49.4	54.4
Valuation adjustments	0.2	(0.3)	(1.2)
	<u>358.9</u>	<u>354.8</u>	<u>312.9</u>
Loss (gain) on disposal of capital assets	0.4	-	(6.6)
Net operating results	<u><u>\$(285.0)</u></u>	<u><u>\$(271.8)</u></u>	<u><u>\$(226.2)</u></u>

The largest source of revenue for the ministry was \$64.4 million from the Government of Canada under cost sharing agreements with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Of the remaining \$18.6 million, \$8.3 million was recoveries from management bodies and not-for-profit organizations, \$4.9 million donation of capital assets, \$1.9 million was from investment income, and the balance from various sources. The \$8.7 million increase in 2002 actual revenue compared to budget was primarily due to an increase in recoveries from management bodies and donation of capital assets.

Sources of Revenue – \$83.0 million



Source: Alberta Seniors

The consolidated financial results for 2001-02 show that the ministry spent \$354.8 million against an authorized budget of \$358.9 million.

The ministry's largest expense was \$174.5 million to provide financial support and information services to seniors, of which \$167.4 million (approximately 96%) was for income support to eligible lower-income seniors.

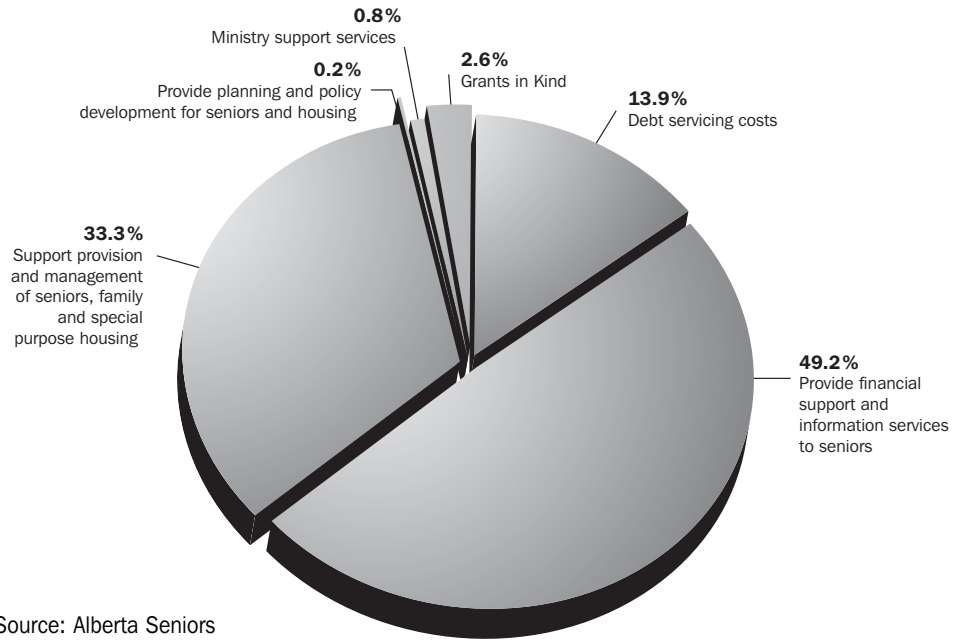
The ministry expended \$118.4 million on support provision and management of seniors, family and special purpose housing that included \$15.6 million for rent supplement grants, \$16.6 for support to community and senior's housing providers, \$30.5 million on housing development grants, \$14.0 for lodge assistance grants, \$17.8 million on other housing services grants and operating costs, and \$23.9 million for amortization of social housing buildings.

Other expenses for the ministry consisted of \$49.4 million in interest charges for long-term debt, \$9.1 million in grants-in-kind to return lodges to municipal based management bodies and nominal sum transfers, \$2.9 million for ministry support services, \$0.8 million for planning and policy development and a credit of \$0.3 million for valuation adjustments.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

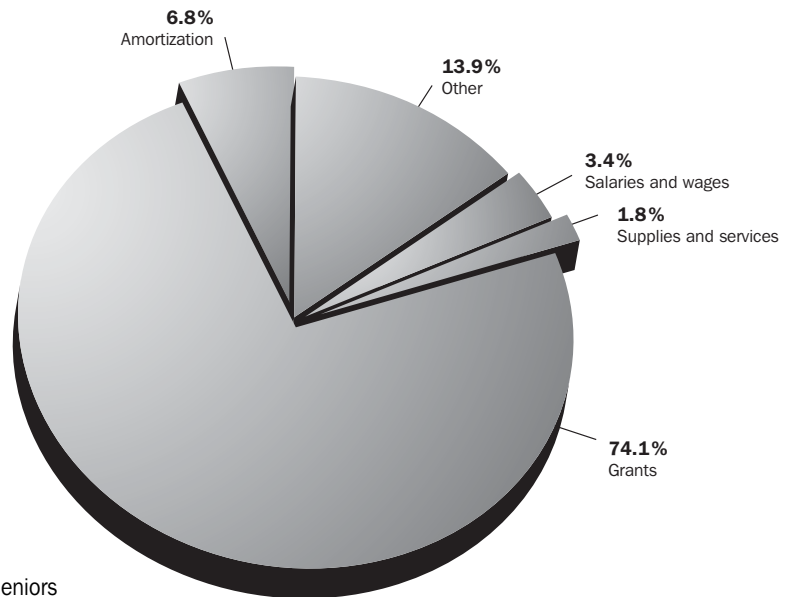
A significant increase of \$10.4 million between 2002 and 2001 results occurred in the core business to “Provide financial support and information services to seniors.” This increase was attributed to additional benefits paid to low income seniors to assist with higher living expenses and long-term care fees.

Expenses* by Program – \$354.8 million



Source: Alberta Seniors

Expenses* by Object – \$354.8 million



Source: Alberta Seniors

* Expenses are net of valuation adjustments

A significant increase of \$28.9 million occurred in the core business "Support provision and management of seniors, family and housing." This increase was mainly due to housing projects under the Healthy Aging Partnership Initiatives that facilitated private partnerships for the development of new supportive housing for low and moderate income seniors, and funding for maintenance of existing senior, family and special purpose housing facilities.

Ministry Expense by Core Business

	in millions		
	2002		2001
	Authorized Budget	Actual	Actual
Core Business			
1. Provide financial support and information services to seniors	\$ 175.9	\$ 176.5	\$ 165.6
2. Support provision and management of seniors, family and special purpose housing	183.0	178.3	147.3
	<u>\$ 358.9</u>	<u>\$ 354.8</u>	<u>\$ 312.9</u>