

---

# Seniors

BUSINESS PLAN 2003-06

---

## ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

The Business Plan for the three years commencing April 1, 2003 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 of March 19, 2003 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.

*[Original Signed]*

Stan Woloshyn, *Minister of Seniors*  
March 21, 2003

## THE MINISTRY

The Ministry of Seniors delivers programs and services for seniors, and manages and enables the provision of seniors, family and special purpose housing. Planning, coordination and policy development relating to housing, seniors and the aging population are also part of the ministry's core businesses.

The ministry consists of the Department of Seniors, the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta and the Alberta Social Housing Corporation (ASHC). ASHC is a Crown corporation established under the authority of the Alberta Housing Act. The corporation operates primarily as an administrative device for holding housing assets, including mortgages.

As of April, 2003, the ministry will assume responsibility for supporting shelter services for homeless Albertans. Plans are in place to incorporate the Office of the Public Guardian into the ministry's operations in 2003.

## VISION

A vibrant province where seniors and other Albertans live with dignity and experience the best possible well-being and independence.

## MISSION

To provide services, programs and information that contribute to the well-being and independence of seniors, Albertans in need of housing supports, and other clients of the ministry.

## CORE BUSINESSES

1. Provide financial support and information services to seniors
2. Support the management of and enable the provision of family, special purpose and seniors housing
3. Provide planning and policy development for housing, seniors and Alberta's aging population

## OUR BUSINESS PLAN SETTING

In developing our business plan, we considered a broad range of social, economic and contextual factors to help us define our strategic priorities and develop responsive programs, services and initiatives. The primary factors include the following:

### Seniors Income

- As a group, seniors have lower average incomes than most other age groups. Approximately 39 per cent of seniors have incomes low enough to receive cash benefits from the Alberta Seniors Benefit program. In general, a single senior with an annual income of \$18,745 or less and a couple with a combined annual income of \$28,530 or less are eligible for cash benefits from this program.
- Most seniors have relatively fixed incomes, primarily from pensions, government transfers and private savings. This reduces their capacity to adjust to rising living costs and changes in provincial and federal programs, to budget for sudden and unpredictable expenses, or to cope with economic uncertainty and reduced returns from savings.
- Although for some seniors certain costs (such as mortgage payments) may be lower than for younger people, certain other costs tend to increase with age. For example, frail seniors or those with health conditions may need to pay for yard work, home maintenance or personal care, as well as contribute to the cost of daily living aids (such as walkers or hearing aids) and prescription medications.

To ensure that our ministry's income support programs remain flexible and targeted to those seniors most in need, we look at changes in seniors' income over time, and monitor broad socio-economic and demographic trends.

For example, over the past several decades the proportion of seniors' income from government sources such as Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement has declined, and the proportion from pension plans, including Canada Pension Plan, private savings and employment income has increased. This suggests a trend of greater financial independence and less reliance on government assistance.

However, it is uncertain whether this trend will continue. Some of the economic factors that may impact the retirement savings and overall financial situation of seniors and soon-to-be seniors include low interest rates, the stock market decline, the expectation of a slow recovery of world markets, and a more moderate growth projected for Alberta's economy.

Other factors that may have an impact on seniors' incomes now or in the future are changes to federal and provincial programs, and emerging new options for sustaining our health system, as proposed in recent federal and provincial reports on health care reform.

Alberta will also experience an increase in the number of seniors in the population. Unless there is an overall improvement in seniors' income, we can likely expect a growth in the number of seniors requiring income support.

## **Demographic Factors**

Alberta is experiencing an aging trend along with other provinces. At present, 10 per cent of Alberta's population is aged 65 and over, and this percentage is expected to increase to more than 14 per cent by 2016. Currently, on a percentage basis the over-80 age group is the fastest growing segment of society.

A growing seniors population represents an important and diverse resource for our province. Like other Albertans, seniors contribute to Alberta's prosperity through their purchasing power and through payment of federal, provincial and municipal taxes. In addition, seniors provide their wisdom, knowledge and experience to family, community and society as a whole.

A maturing population challenges government to take a lead role in:

- developing initiatives and programs that recognize the diversity of the seniors population in terms of health and wellness, independence and vulnerability, financial security and education, and
- preparing workplaces, the labour force, and communities for greater numbers of older people.

## **Housing**

In Alberta, housing is primarily a matter for individual choice and private sector development. The provincial government no longer builds and operates housing, and those housing projects still owned by the government are operated by community-based housing authorities. Much of our ministry's business entails developing ways to increase availability and accessibility of low-cost or affordable housing and devolving ownership of remaining properties to community-based agencies. In our planning process, we address the following pressures:

- There is a shortage of low-cost housing options and home supports for seniors. Although there are many private sector living options for seniors, these are mostly targeted to those with higher incomes and are beyond the reach of many seniors.
- While Alberta's strong economic growth has contributed to the province's overall prosperity, it has also resulted in a shortage of low-cost and affordable housing, a decline in availability of housing for low-income seniors, and an increase in the number of homeless people, especially in major urban centers and high-growth areas.
- Many of the Albertans in need of housing in these areas have jobs that help to maintain Alberta's strong economy, but their wages are not high enough to meet private sector rents.
- Northern and remote communities have few safe, affordable housing options and little or no active real estate or rental market. Existing housing in these areas is deteriorating.
- There are limited options for persons with special needs (e.g., mental and physical disabilities) who require specialized housing services to help them remain living in the community.

An injection of capital funding is necessary to enable local community organizations to build and manage needed housing. For this business planning cycle, provincial funding will enable the ministry to access up to \$67 million in federal funds to develop affordable housing, especially in high-growth, high-need areas and northern, remote communities.

In addition, the ministry will explore the possibility of reinstating the Seniors Supportive Housing Incentive Program to develop supportive housing to enable seniors to live independently in the community.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The following strategic priorities will guide our activities as we work towards achieving our goals:

- Deliver income supports that are efficiently administered, effectively communicated, targeted to seniors most in need, and responsive to seniors' changing circumstances. (Goals 1.1 and 1.2)
- Continue the process of transferring ownership of housing and land assets to local housing authorities. (Goal 2.1)
- Provide capital support to community-based agencies to assist them in developing long-term, local responses to housing pressures in their communities. (Goal 2.2)
- Continue to develop the ministry's leadership role with other ministries, other levels of government, housing operators and stakeholder groups in respect of seniors issues and housing initiatives. (Goal 3.1)

## GOALS, KEY STRATEGIES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

CORE  
BUSINESS  
ONE

# 1

### Provide financial support and information services to seniors.

#### Goal

- 1.1 Seniors in need have access to financial supports that enable them to live in a secure and dignified way.**

This goal supports Goal 4 of the Government of Alberta Business Plan, *Albertans will be self-reliant and those unable to provide for their basic needs will receive help.*

#### Key Strategies

- 1.1.1 Adjust income-based benefits for seniors to reflect the changing personal supports needs of seniors as they age.
- 1.1.2 Improve income support to residents of seniors lodges to assist them in obtaining additional services as their needs change.
- 1.1.3 Continue to identify opportunities to improve fairness and clarity of the Alberta Seniors Benefit program by simplifying eligibility criteria and administration.
- 1.1.4 Continue to review the Special Needs Assistance for Seniors program to ensure that payments are directed to those most in need, and applications are processed in a timely and efficient way.

Performance Measures	2001-02 Results	2003-04 Target
Percentage of seniors provided with the opportunity to apply for Alberta Seniors Benefit	Measure under development	To be established
Assessment time for Special Needs Assistance for Seniors program applications	New Measure	To be established

## Goal

### 1.2 Seniors and their families have access to information and educational material about programs, services and initiatives that are designed to enhance their well-being.

This goal supports Goal 4 of the Government of Alberta Business Plan, *Albertans will be self-reliant and those unable to provide for their basic needs will receive help.*

## Key Strategies

- 1.2.1 Continue to improve the effectiveness of information services in keeping seniors, their families, and service providers well informed about provincial and federal programs, and other resources that benefit seniors. In addition to maintaining regular information services, activities for 2003-04 will include enhancing the provision of information through the ministry website, and reviewing a range of service delivery models.
- 1.2.2 Collaborate with other ministries and organizations to support strategies that inform and educate seniors and their families about how to protect seniors against fraud and other crimes, and to enhance their personal wellness and safety.

Performance Measures	2001-02 Results	2003-04 Target
Satisfaction of seniors with information provided:		
Seniors information line	90.4%	90.0%
<i>Programs and Services for Seniors</i> booklet	91.3%	90.0%
Seniors Services Offices	95.2%	90.0%

CORE  
BUSINESS  
TWO

## 2 Support the management of and enable the provision of family, special purpose and seniors housing

## Goal

### 2.1 Provincially owned and supported housing for low-income families and individuals, seniors, and persons with special needs is efficiently and effectively managed, and appropriately and fully utilized.

This goal supports the Government of Alberta Business Plan Goal 4: *Albertans will be self-reliant and those unable to provide for their basic needs will receive help.*

## Key Strategies

- 2.1.1 Create effective governance structures for the community-based provision of seniors, family and special purpose housing in urban, rural and remote communities.
- 2.1.2 Create effective linkages with community-based housing organizations for the purpose of transferring ownership and management of provincial housing.
- 2.1.3 Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Alberta's housing programs by developing a support continuum that integrates homeless shelters with other housing programs, to provide a comprehensive approach to addressing the needs of homeless and near homeless Albertans.

Performance Measures	2000-01 Results	2001-02 Results	2003-04 Target
Satisfaction of housing residents with the quality of accommodation and, where appropriate, services provided by housing operators:			
Seniors lodge residents	91.5%	87.2%	93.0%
Self-contained housing residents	90.8%	86.7%	93.0%
Family housing residents	78.7%	76.5%	80.0%

## Goal

### **2.2 Seniors, low-income families and individuals, and persons with special needs have access to a range of housing appropriate to their needs at reasonable cost.**

This goal supports Goal 4 of the Government of Alberta Business Plan, *Albertans will be self-reliant and those unable to provide for their basic needs will receive help.*

## Key Strategies

- 2.2.1 Encourage and support the development of community plans that are based on local needs and established priorities, and direct resources accordingly.
- 2.2.2 Enable development of low-cost housing that responds to community needs and priorities.
- 2.2.3 Create effective linkages with other provincial entities to facilitate delivery of affordable, appropriate housing.

## Performance Measures

**2003-04  
Target**

New measures to be developed:

Percentage of communities within the province that have plans for responding to the housing needs of their citizens

To be established

Effectiveness of community plans in developing low-cost housing to respond to community housing needs

To be established

CORE  
BUSINESS  
THREE

## **Provide planning and policy development for housing, seniors and Alberta's aging population**

## Goal

### **3.1 Government policies, programs and plans effectively anticipate and respond to the needs of current and future seniors and Albertans in need of housing supports.**

This goal supports Government of Alberta Business Plan Goals 1 and 4, *Albertans will be healthy and Albertans will be self-reliant and those unable to provide for their basic needs will receive help.*

## Key Strategies

- 3.1.1 Continue to partner with Alberta Health and Wellness and Alberta Finance to achieve the objectives and targets of the cross ministry Health Sustainability Initiative.
- 3.1.2 Improve analysis of data on seniors income sources to provide a basis for forecasting seniors' future income support needs.
- 3.1.3 Provide leadership and coordination across government for monitoring, anticipating and responding to issues relating to seniors' independence, quality of life, safety and security, and community participation, and issues relating to the housing needs of Albertans.
- 3.1.4 Develop the ministry's role in partnering with stakeholders, housing operators, other ministries, and other levels of government in respect of housing initiatives and necessary support services.
- 3.1.5 Collaborate with senior officials from other federal, provincial and territorial ministries to address issues relating to housing and seniors. Activities for 2003-04 include:
  - Planning for an aging population, promoting healthy aging and seniors wellness, and examining issues around the care and safety of seniors in their homes.
  - Examining emerging housing trends, best practices, taxation policy, and ways of providing additional rural and remote housing.

Performance Measure	2000-01 Results	2001-02 Results	2003-04 Target
Satisfaction of departments and agencies with the ministry's leadership and collaboration, and with the information, advice and analysis received	85.1%	86.7%	90.0%

## SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA CROSS-MINISTRY INITIATIVES

In carrying out its mandate, the ministry works collaboratively with ministries across government, as well as community and private sector organizations, to support initiatives that contribute to the government's vision. The ministry's collaboration with Alberta Health and Wellness and Alberta Finance on the Health Sustainability Initiative is noted above. In addition, the ministry participates in two other cross ministry policy initiatives: the Economic Development Strategy, and the Aboriginal Policy Initiative.

The ministry provides support as necessary to the government's cross-ministry administrative initiatives. These are the Corporate Human Resource Development Strategy, Alberta Corporate Service Centre Initiative, Corporate Information Management/Information Technology Strategy, and Service Alberta.

## CORPORATE STRATEGIES

In addition to engaging in activities directed towards the three core businesses above, the ministry is also involved in a range of corporate activities that help to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our business practices and the safety of our working environment. These activities include supporting employee access to information technology, maintaining a performance appraisal system for all ministry employees, and providing employees with information and support on health and safety in the workplace.

For this business planning period, Alberta Seniors plans the following activities:

- Execute an accommodation plan to provide ministry employees with a more effective working environment.
- Support the Corporate Human Resource Plan, and promote effective human resource management to ensure that the ministry has the staff with the right skills in the right place at the right time to meet business plan goals. Strategies include succession planning, employee recognition and retention, and access to learning supports for employees.
- Review the ministry website to ensure that it provides useful, accurate, up-to-date and easily accessible information on ministry programs, services and initiatives, and that it is compatible with the Service Alberta website.
- Cooperate in the advancement of the government-wide Capital Planning Initiative.
- Develop a Business Resumption Plan to ensure the ministry is able to respond appropriately to disruptions in service.
- Bring regulations scheduled for review to the Regulatory Review Secretariat in a timely manner.

## EXPENSE BY CORE BUSINESS

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable 2001-02 Actual	Comparable 2002-03 Budget	Comparable 2002-03 Forecast	2003-04 Estimates	2004-05 Target	2005-06 Target
<b>EXPENSE</b>						
<b>Core Business</b>						
Provide Financial Support and Information Services to Seniors	180,832	196,101	196,402	198,449	199,896	199,977
Support the Management and Enable the Provision of Family, Special Purpose and Seniors Housing	191,244	170,476	188,771	196,473	202,981	187,493
Provide Planning and Policy Development for Housing, Seniors and Alberta's Aging Population	1,890	2,141	2,140	2,377	2,377	2,377
<b>MINISTRY EXPENSE</b>	<b>373,966</b>	<b>368,718</b>	<b>387,313</b>	<b>397,299</b>	<b>405,254</b>	<b>389,847</b>

## MINISTRY STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable 2001-02 Actual	Comparable 2002-03 Budget	Comparable 2002-03 Forecast	2003-04 Estimates	2004-05 Target	2005-06 Target
<b>REVENUE</b>						
Transfers from Government of Canada	64,481	64,927	73,427	85,379	89,738	75,803
Investment Income	1,892	909	909	849	800	750
Premiums, Fees and Licences	87	105	105	105	105	105
Other Revenue	16,696	6,576	9,876	4,852	2,785	135
<b>MINISTRY REVENUE</b>	<b>83,156</b>	<b>72,517</b>	<b>84,317</b>	<b>91,185</b>	<b>93,428</b>	<b>76,793</b>
<b>EXPENSE</b>						
<b>Program</b>						
Provide Financial Support and Information Services to Seniors	178,730	193,761	194,178	196,100	197,596	197,596
Support the Management and Enable the Provision of Family, Special Purpose and Seniors Housing	140,741	124,101	142,279	151,634	160,145	147,025
Provide Planning and Policy Development for Housing, Seniors and Alberta's Aging Population	1,859	2,110	2,110	2,344	2,344	2,344
Ministry Support Services	3,448	3,618	3,618	3,927	3,919	3,919
Valuation Adjustments and Other Provisions	(260)	185	185	185	185	185
<b>Program Expense</b>	<b>324,518</b>	<b>323,775</b>	<b>342,370</b>	<b>354,190</b>	<b>364,189</b>	<b>351,069</b>
<b>Debt Servicing Costs</b>						
Alberta Social Housing Corporation	49,448	44,943	44,943	43,109	41,065	38,778
<b>MINISTRY EXPENSE</b>	<b>373,966</b>	<b>368,718</b>	<b>387,313</b>	<b>397,299</b>	<b>405,254</b>	<b>389,847</b>
Gain (Loss) on Disposal of Capital Assets	46	12,636	12,636	10,749	12,409	11,037
<b>NET OPERATING RESULT</b>	<b>(290,764)</b>	<b>(283,565)</b>	<b>(290,360)</b>	<b>(295,365)</b>	<b>(299,417)</b>	<b>(302,017)</b>



## CONSOLIDATED NET OPERATING RESULT

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable 2001-02 Actual	Comparable 2002-03 Budget	Comparable 2002-03 Forecast	2003-04 Estimates	2004-05 Target	2005-06 Target
Ministry Revenue	83,156	72,517	84,317	91,185	93,428	76,793
<i>Inter-ministry consolidation adjustments</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Consolidated Revenue</b>	<b>83,156</b>	<b>72,517</b>	<b>84,317</b>	<b>91,185</b>	<b>93,428</b>	<b>76,793</b>
Ministry Program Expense	324,518	323,775	342,370	354,190	364,189	351,069
<i>Inter-ministry consolidation adjustments</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Consolidated Program Expense</b>	<b>324,518</b>	<b>323,775</b>	<b>342,370</b>	<b>354,190</b>	<b>364,189</b>	<b>351,069</b>
Ministry Debt Servicing Costs	49,448	44,943	44,943	43,109	41,065	38,778
<b>Consolidated Expense</b>	<b>373,966</b>	<b>368,718</b>	<b>387,313</b>	<b>397,299</b>	<b>405,254</b>	<b>389,847</b>
Gain (Loss) on Disposal of Capital Assets	46	12,636	12,636	10,749	12,409	11,037
<b>CONSOLIDATED NET OPERATING RESULT</b>	<b>(290,764)</b>	<b>(283,565)</b>	<b>(290,360)</b>	<b>(295,365)</b>	<b>(299,417)</b>	<b>(302,017)</b>

