

Seniors

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

The Business Plan for the three years commencing April 1, 2002 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 February 26, 2002 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*
February 27, 2002

INTRODUCTION

In March 2001, the Government of Alberta established the Ministry of Seniors. In creating the ministry, the government re-affirmed its commitment to serving seniors. Alberta's prosperity owes much to the contributions of Alberta's seniors, who helped to build this province and make it the vibrant place it is today. The government recognizes the continuing contributions of current and future seniors to their families, to their communities, and to the goal of building a better Alberta.

The new ministry will continue to provide supports to seniors in the areas of income, housing and information services, and coordinate and lead the development of seniors policy within government.

Addressing housing for low-income families, individuals, people with special needs, and seniors will be an important part of the new ministry's mandate. Alberta Seniors will continue to support the management of subsidized housing and continue to work towards new approaches and options for the development of housing for Albertans in need.

In carrying out its mandate, the ministry will build upon partnerships and collaborative relationships with other government ministries, public authorities, agencies and stakeholders to coordinate the many issues facing seniors and other Albertans.

This business plan proposes a vision for the future of Alberta's seniors and Albertans in need of housing supports. It describes the core businesses that the ministry is engaged in, and sets goals for each core business. It outlines the strategies and actions that the ministry plans to undertake to move towards achieving these goals, and identifies performance measures and targets for the goals.

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 to seniors, and to Albertans in need of housing.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

The following are the factors that underlie the way we approach our tasks, and help us to achieve our mission successfully:

- ◆ Focus on those we serve
- ◆ Create beneficial opportunities
- ◆ Help each other to do our best
- ◆ Nurture effective alliances
- ◆ Use resources wisely

MINISTRY CORE BUSINESSES

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.

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.

2. SUPPORT PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT OF SENIORS, FAMILY AND SPECIAL PURPOSE HOUSING

Goal 2.1: Provincially owned and supported housing to meet the basic needs of low-income families and individuals, seniors and persons with special needs is effectively managed and coordinated.

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 and at reasonable cost.

3. PROVIDE PLANNING AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT FOR SENIORS AND HOUSING

Goal 3.1: Government policies and plans effectively anticipate and address the needs of seniors and Albertans in need of housing supports.

LINK TO GOVERNMENT BUSINESS PLAN AND CROSS MINISTRY INITIATIVES

The Alberta Seniors Business Plan is closely aligned to the Government of Alberta's core businesses of People, Prosperity and Preservation, and in particular to Goals 1, 4 and 5 as follows:

Goal 1: Albertans will be healthy

Goal 4: Albertans will be independent

Goal 5: Albertans unable to provide for their basic needs will receive help

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.

Alberta Seniors welcomes the opportunity to partner with Alberta Finance and Alberta Health and Wellness in leading the cross ministry Health Sustainability Initiative in 2002-2003. This priority initiative will incorporate key health-related components identified in 2001 by the cross ministry Seniors Policy Initiative, including the role of supportive housing, and health promotion and illness/injury prevention in contributing to sustainability of the health system.

The momentum of the Seniors Policy Initiative, which brought 18 ministries together to enhance cross ministry collaboration, will be maintained in 2002-05. The ministry will obtain feedback from Albertans about the strategic framework that was developed in 2001. The ministry will also focus on implementing key short-term strategies from the 10-year action plan developed from the framework. These include strategies relating to financial and retirement planning, promoting learning and educational opportunities for older Albertans, improving access to low-cost supportive housing, studying labour force issues in preparation for an increase in the older population, supporting informal caregivers and volunteers, and encouraging communities to be supportive of seniors.

The strategic framework and the strategies in the action plan are informed by government studies such as *ALBERTA FOR ALL AGES: Directions for the Future*, and build upon the solid base of current programs and services for seniors. Development and implementation of the strategies will involve continued collaboration and partnership with other Alberta Government ministries.

The ministry will continue to support and/or participate in those aspects of the cross ministry initiatives that are linked to Alberta Seniors' businesses and goals. The three other cross ministry priority policy initiatives are: Economic Development Strategy; Children and Youth Services Initiative; and, Aboriginal Policy Initiative. In addition, the cross-ministry key administrative initiatives are: Corporate Human Resource Development Strategy; Alberta Corporate Service Centre Initiative; Corporate Information Management/Information Technology Strategy; and Alberta One Window Initiative.

CORE BUSINESS 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.

Many seniors have private pensions, savings and other sources of income to provide for their financial security in their senior years. The government encourages individuals to take responsibility for their own financial needs. However, the government recognizes that some seniors require assistance in meeting basic needs and achieving a reasonable standard of living, and is committed to ensuring that assistance is directed to those most in need.

To assist lower-income seniors, the ministry offers two programs. Alberta Seniors Benefit is an income-tested program designed to assist eligible seniors by providing monthly cash benefits to help them meet their basic needs, and by calculating their Alberta Health Care premium subsidies. Applicants who qualify for a cash benefit also receive a full premium subsidy. Applicants who do not qualify for the cash benefit may be eligible for a full or partial Alberta Health Care premium subsidy.

The Special Needs Assistance for Seniors program is an income-tested program that provides a lump-sum payment to assist seniors who find themselves experiencing financial difficulties or unexpected expenses.

In support of this goal Alberta Seniors plans the following activities:

- 1.1.1 Work towards adjusting provincial income benefits for lower-income seniors, in particular to reflect the changing personal supports needs of seniors as they age.
- 1.1.2 Lead development of a benchmark measure for "sufficient retirement income" to be used as a guideline for establishing provincial income benefits for lower-income seniors.
- 1.1.3 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 and analyze social and economic factors affecting seniors.
- 1.1.4 Simplify eligibility criteria and administration of Alberta Seniors Benefit to improve fairness and clarity of the program.
- 1.1.5 Continue to review and improve the effectiveness of 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

	Results 1999-2000	Results 2000-01	Target 2002-03
Percentage of eligible seniors receiving Alberta Seniors Benefit	---	Measure under development	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.

To make informed decisions on matters of importance to their well being, seniors and their families need to have access to accurate, up-to-date, and relevant information. This includes information about the many programs and services for seniors offered by the government and the community.

To support this goal, Alberta Seniors publishes resource materials such as the booklet *Programs and Services for Seniors*, and provides province-wide information services. Other regular activities include the Seniors Services Workshop, which provides education and information for service providers, and public education strategies around issues of importance to seniors, such as personal safety and elder abuse.

The ministry also promotes public knowledge and understanding of seniors and their contributions, for example, through the annual Senior Citizens Week. In addition, seniors and those who work with seniors are recognized through such activities as the Minister's annual Seniors Services Awards.

Alberta Seniors also supports the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta. Reporting to the Minister of Seniors, the Seniors Advisory Council gathers views and suggestions from seniors and seniors' organizations across the province, and identifies issues that government should be aware of. In this way the Council strives to represent seniors' interests with integrity, accountability and respect.

In support of this goal Alberta Seniors plans the following activities:

- 1.2.1 Review a range of models to improve delivery of in-person and outreach information services to seniors.
- 1.2.2 Continue to develop effective ways to ensure seniors, seniors' families, and seniors service providers are well informed about provincial and federal programs, and other resources that benefit seniors.
- 1.2.3 Collaborate with other ministries and organizations to support provincial strategies to inform and educate seniors and their families about how to protect themselves against fraud and other crimes, and to enhance their personal safety.
- 1.2.4 Encourage communities to consider allocating a greater proportion of their grants to projects that enhance seniors' quality of life.

Performance Measure

	Target 2002-03
Satisfaction of seniors with information provided	90%
<p>A measure of satisfaction with information has been used and reported for the last three years when services to seniors were delivered by Alberta Community Development. For the 2001-2002 reporting year a new methodology and rating scale were used, and this will be reported for the first time in the Alberta Seniors 2001-2002 Annual Report.</p>	

CORE BUSINESS 2: SUPPORT PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT OF SENIORS, FAMILY AND SPECIAL PURPOSE HOUSING

Goal 2.1: Provincially owned and supported housing to meet the basic needs of low-income families and individuals, seniors and persons with special needs is effectively managed and coordinated.

Appropriate housing is a central concern for seniors and other Albertans whose income does not always enable them to pay full market rent for accommodation. Alberta Seniors owns or supports approximately 36,000 housing units which are operated by management bodies, non-profit organizations, and municipalities. Alberta Seniors partners with the federal government, through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, to support the costs of maintaining this housing portfolio. The ministry also provides rent supplements, which reduce the cost of renting units, primarily in the private market.

These units are designed for seniors, low-income families and individuals, and persons with special needs who meet certain eligibility criteria. Eligible seniors may access self-contained apartments and cottages, and lodges providing additional services such as meals and laundry. For other low-income Albertans and those with special needs there is a range of social and specialized housing.

Alberta Seniors is responsible for coordinating the management and operation of these housing units in an efficient and effective manner.

The ministry also operates the Alberta Social Housing Corporation, a Crown corporation established under the authority of the Alberta Housing Act. It operates primarily as an administrative device for holding housing assets and mortgages.

In support of this goal Alberta Seniors plans the following activities:

- 2.1.1 Encourage municipalities to take a lead role in assessing their local housing needs, identifying priorities and developing strategies for addressing those needs. Improve the efficiency with which provincially funded housing programs are administered and the extent to which they complement municipal consolidated housing plans.
- 2.1.2 Review the relationship between the provincial government and management bodies/municipalities to ensure that housing funding is targeted to individuals and families with the greatest needs.
- 2.1.3 Negotiate a new social housing agreement with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to redefine and streamline the federal/provincial housing relationship. Ensure that all provincial government requirements and processes are in place.
- 2.1.4 Subsequent to the new social housing agreement, develop a plan to manage the flow of funds from CMHC to the province and to administer any portion of the CMHC portfolio that is transferred to the province.
- 2.1.5 Pursue plans to dispose of provincially owned housing that is no longer appropriate to the ministry's housing portfolio, and direct the proceeds to more appropriate housing solutions, or transfer to community-based housing organizations.
- 2.1.6 Revise the Rent Supplement Program to ensure that rent supplements are targeted toward communities with the greatest need, and the program can be operated within the approved budget.
- 2.1.7 Review the ministry's special purpose housing portfolio to ensure that it is addressing housing needs effectively. The review will include consultation with other ministries, other levels of government, and community organizations to find opportunities for improving the coordination of special purpose housing and support services.
- 2.1.8 Initiate a review of the *Alberta Housing Act*, to be completed by Spring 2004.

Performance Measures

	Results 1999-2000	Results 2000-01	Target 2002-03
Satisfaction of housing clients with quality of accommodation and, where appropriate, services provided:			
◆ Seniors lodges clients	Methodology	91.5%	93.0%
◆ Self-contained housing clients	revised	90.8%	93.0%
◆ Family and special purpose housing clients		78.7%	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.

Alberta's strong economic growth has placed pressure on housing availability in some areas of Alberta. Although many new houses and apartments are being built, these tend to be targeted at higher-income Albertans, and are beyond the reach of many families and individuals on low or fixed incomes.

For seniors, there is an increasing need for supportive housing to enable them to remain living in the community and to maintain as much independence as possible. Most supportive housing concepts integrate housing with the provision of a range of services, such as meals, laundry, homemaking, transportation, or personal care. Recognizing that the number of seniors in Alberta is growing and will continue to grow for some years, the private housing sector has begun to respond to their housing needs with a variety of innovative housing developments, particularly in larger urban settings. Private homemaking and personal care services are also available for seniors with the ability to pay. However, most of these supportive housing units and services are targeted at high- and middle-income seniors.

Alberta Seniors recognizes the need to develop a public response to the particular housing needs of low-income families and individuals, persons with special needs, and low-income seniors requiring supportive housing. The ministry, in partnership with other Alberta ministries, other levels of government, and the non-profit sector, is looking at new ways to increase the availability and accessibility of low-cost basic and supportive housing in Alberta.

In support of this goal Alberta Seniors plans the following activities:

- 2.2.1 Finalize a seniors housing and support framework. Establish a joint health and housing task force to provide analysis and advice on implementation of the framework.
- 2.2.2 Continue to improve the ministry's ability to estimate future subsidized housing needs. For seniors housing, this will include collaborating with Alberta Health and Wellness and with the regional health authorities to identify the number and types of seniors supportive housing needed.
- 2.2.3 Negotiate and finalize a bilateral agreement with the CMHC to participate in the federal Affordable Housing Program.

- 2.2.4 Collaborate with other Alberta government ministries, other levels of government, communities and the private and non-profit housing sectors to increase the supply of low-cost housing within the areas of highest need.
- 2.2.5 Develop a Remote Housing Program that could provide housing solutions in northern remote communities, including Aboriginal communities.
- 2.2.6 Support the provincial Homelessness Implementation Strategy, to ensure a range of housing facilities and support services are available to homeless people, including emergency shelters, transitional housing, and special needs initiatives. Lead the Senior Officials Committee on Homelessness to improve service/funding coordination, and to work towards long-term sustainability.
- 2.2.7 Ensure the smooth transfer of homeless shelters from Alberta Human Resources and Employment to Alberta Seniors, and incorporate administration of the shelters into Alberta Seniors' operations.
- 2.2.8 Collaborate with other provincial ministries, other levels of government, communities, and the private and non-profit housing sectors, to increase the supply of low-cost seniors supportive housing through the provision of one-time, targeted financial assistance.
- 2.2.9 Develop funding options to aid the development of supportive housing that is sustainable and targeted to those in need.
- 2.2.10 Work with legislative authorities and stakeholders to make building and service codes, standards and practices more supportive of the housing needs of an aging population.

Performance Measure

A measure for Goal 2.2 is to be developed. The measure will attempt to reflect the extent to which Albertans in need of low-cost housing are successful in accessing it. Development of the measure will include assessing and collecting data on the level of need for low-cost housing.

CORE BUSINESS 3: PROVIDE PLANNING AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT FOR SENIORS AND HOUSING

Goal 3.1: Government policies and plans effectively anticipate and address the needs of seniors and Albertans in need of housing supports.

Alberta Seniors provides a central coordinating and leadership structure within government on issues relating to seniors and housing. The ministry monitors social, economic and political trends within government, Alberta, Canada and globally, and analyzes them in terms of their potential to impact seniors, older Albertans, and people in need of low-cost housing. It anticipates, identifies, and researches relevant issues, reviews documentation, develops strategic plans, and prepares options and recommendations for government action in areas relating to seniors and housing.

As the lead ministry for seniors and housing, the ministry coordinates cross ministry projects, collaborates with other ministries and stakeholders, and provides information, analysis and advice on issues relating to seniors and housing.

The ministry participates in the federal/provincial/territorial forum of ministers responsible for seniors, and the forum of housing ministers, and coordinates Alberta's participation in major federal, provincial and territorial projects relating to seniors and housing.

In support of this goal Alberta Seniors plans the following activities:

- 3.1.1 Partner with Alberta Health and Wellness and Alberta Finance to support the cross ministry Health Sustainability Initiative.
- 3.1.2 Maintain the momentum of activities initiated through the Seniors Policy Initiative by implementing, tracking and/or coordinating projects started through this initiative. By 2004-05, implement selected short-term projects.
- 3.1.3 Improve the ministry's effectiveness in monitoring, anticipating, and responding to emerging seniors' and housing issues.
- 3.1.4 Continue to develop the ministry's leadership role with stakeholder groups, other provincial ministries, public authorities, and other levels of government in respect of seniors and housing initiatives.
- 3.1.5 Continue to improve the quality of the ministry's responsiveness to requests for accurate, timely and useful information on social, economic and political trends affecting seniors and housing.
- 3.1.6 Provide continuing support to interdepartmental projects and committees working on issues relating to seniors and housing.
- 3.1.7 Collaborate with senior officials from federal, provincial and territorial ministries with responsibility for seniors and housing to prepare for the proposed ministers' meeting in 2002.

3.1.8 Lead and coordinate preparations for the second phase of the national evaluation of the National Framework on Aging in 2003-04.

Performance Measure

	Results 1999-2000	Results 2000-01	Target 2002-03
Satisfaction of departments and agencies with the ministry's leadership and collaboration, and with the information, advice and analysis received	86.7%	85.1%	90%

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 in improving the efficiency, effectiveness and safety of the working environment and business practices. For this business planning period, Alberta Seniors plans the following activities:

- ◆ Continue to support employee access to information technology with the objective of improving service to Albertans.
- ◆ Ensure a performance management appraisal system is in place for all ministry employees.
- ◆ Execute accommodation plan to consolidate ministry employees in a more effective working environment.
- ◆ Update the ministry Corporate Human Resource Plan (which includes performance management, recognition, succession planning, learning supports, health and safety).
- ◆ 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 disasters or major emergencies.

Expense by Core Business

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable 2000-01 Actual	Comparable 2001-02 Budget	Comparable 2001-02 Forecast	2002-03 Estimates	2003-04 Target	2004-05 Target
EXPENSE						
Core Business						
Provide Financial Support and Information Services to Seniors	165,519	175,645	176,750	191,750	193,233	194,672
Support Provision and Management of Seniors, Family and Special Purpose Housing	146,747	180,516	179,225	156,861	146,147	147,526
Provide Planning and Policy Development for Seniors and Housing	712	903	844	942	982	1,000
MINISTRY EXPENSE	312,978	357,064	356,819	349,553	340,362	343,198

Ministry Statement of Operations

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable 2000-01 Actual	Comparable 2001-02 Budget	Comparable 2001-02 Forecast	2002-03 Estimates	2003-04 Target	2004-05 Target
REVENUE						
Transfers from Government of Canada	65,172	65,358	65,494	64,872	64,988	64,815
Investment Income	2,134	1,075	1,075	909	849	800
Other Revenue	12,838	7,255	9,409	6,576	5,152	3,235
MINISTRY REVENUE	80,144	73,688	75,978	72,357	70,989	68,850
EXPENSE						
Program						
Provide Financial Support and Information Services to Seniors	164,112	173,990	174,656	189,660	191,156	192,723
Support Provision and Management of Seniors, Family and Special Purpose Housing	91,654	129,769	128,432	110,751	101,976	105,443
Provide Planning and Policy Development for Seniors and Housing	703	892	832	929	969	988
Ministry Support Services	1,856	2,662	3,410	3,106	2,989	2,815
Valuation Adjustments and Other Provisions	254	164	164	164	164	164
Program Expense	258,579	307,477	307,494	304,610	297,254	302,133
Debt Servicing Costs						
Alberta Social Housing Corporation	54,399	49,587	49,325	44,943	43,108	41,065
MINISTRY EXPENSE	312,978	357,064	356,819	349,553	340,362	343,198
Gain (Loss) on Disposal of Capital Assets	6,660	(370)	205	12,636	7,103	12,612
NET OPERATING RESULT	(226,174)	(283,746)	(280,636)	(264,560)	(262,270)	(261,736)

Consolidated Net Operating Result

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable 2000-01 Actual	Comparable 2001-02 Budget	Comparable 2001-02 Forecast	2002-03 Estimates	2003-04 Target	2004-05 Target
Ministry Revenue	80,144	73,688	75,978	72,357	70,989	68,850
<i>Inter-ministry consolidation adjustments</i>	(5,477)	368	234	(11,158)	(5,579)	(11,037)
Consolidated Revenue	74,667	74,056	76,212	61,199	65,410	57,813
Ministry Program Expense	258,579	307,477	307,494	304,610	297,254	302,133
<i>Inter-ministry consolidation adjustments</i>	(3,539)	(8,716)	(9,123)	(21,712)	(14,333)	(19,224)
Consolidated Program Expense	255,040	298,761	298,371	282,898	282,921	282,909
Ministry Debt Servicing Costs	54,399	49,587	49,325	44,943	43,108	41,065
Consolidated Expense	309,439	348,348	347,696	327,841	326,029	323,974
Gain (Loss) on Disposal of Capital Assets	6,660	(370)	205	12,636	7,103	12,612
<i>Inter-ministry consolidation adjustments</i>	(3,539)	(8,716)	(9,123)	(21,712)	(14,333)	(19,224)
CONSOLIDATED NET OPERATING RESULT	(231,651)	(283,378)	(280,402)	(275,718)	(267,849)	(272,773)

