

BUSINESS PLAN 2017–20

Community and Social Services

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

This business plan was prepared under my direction, taking into consideration the government's policy decisions as of March 3, 2017.

original signed by

Irfan Sabir, Minister

MINISTRY OVERVIEW

The ministry consists of the Department of Community and Social Services. Within the department's budget, funding is provided for arms-length entities and a range of adaptive, innovative and person-centred programs and services to ensure that all Albertans are enabled and empowered to be successful.

A more detailed description of Community and Social Services and its programs and initiatives can be found at: www.communitysocialservices.alberta.ca.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The outcomes and key strategies identified in this business plan are aligned with the strategic direction of the Government of Alberta.

Community and Social Services delivers services and supports to Albertans in a complex and interconnected environment of substantial change, both externally and internally. Externally, a diverse population, an economic downturn, and relationships with families and stakeholders affect how the department conducts its business. Internally, the department continues to transform the way it supports Albertans through a person-centred, integrated service delivery model that recognizes the unique circumstances, experiences and strengths of individuals and families.

Diverse Population

Alberta's population remains diverse and has grown to over 4.2 million people due, in part, to migration from within Canada as well as immigration from other countries. Recent Census data (2016) show that Alberta continues to urbanize with 83.6 per cent of Albertans living in urban settings. Family structures continue to transform with increasing numbers of lone parent, same-sex, blended and other non-traditional family structures. Households are getting smaller as well. In Canada, there are more one-person households than couple households with children, and the number of people living alone continues to grow.

The most recent statistics show that 3.8 million Canadians or 14 per cent of the population identified as having a disability. The prevalence of disability increases with age. More women than men report having a disability and disability rates are estimated to be about double the national average for Indigenous people. Those with a disability are less likely to complete high school or post-secondary, less likely to have paid employment and are more likely to live in poverty. Persons with disabilities require access to timely and accessible services across their lifespan in order to live better lives in inclusive communities. Community and Social Services is committed to continue working alongside families, service providers and communities to ensure the safety and inclusion of all people with disabilities.

In the past decade, Alberta's rates of intimate partner violence have not decreased in a substantial way. Some populations such as women, Indigenous peoples, and those new to Canada experience disproportionately higher rates of violence. Children who witness intimate partner violence suffer emotional and psychological trauma and are denied a home life that nurtures healthy development and relationships. Additional affects of children witnessing intimate partner violence include higher risks of alcohol/drug abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder and juvenile delinquency.

Economic Downturn

The historic collapse in global oil prices has had a significant impact on Albertans, with significant losses in employment and falling earnings. However, the impact of the oil price shock on the Alberta economy appears to be subsiding as a multitude of economic indicators are showing signs of stabilization (or are in the early stages of recovery). Even as an economic recovery begins to take shape, household incomes are likely to remain below pre-downturn levels. While employment is showing signs of improvement, the unemployment rate is expected to remain elevated.

Specific populations such as Indigenous people, immigrants, people with disabilities and youth experience greater difficulty in finding employment and achieving wage parity. For example, the unemployment rate for Albertans aged 15-24 is in the double-digits and remains higher than the rate for adults over the age of 25. The off-reserve Indigenous unemployment rate in 2015 was 11.7 per cent compared to the Alberta average of 6.0 per cent. Wage inequality also persists: in 2015 average hourly wages for men were \$31.88 compared to \$25.89 for women, and \$25.04 for recent immigrants compared to \$28.82 for established immigrants. Community and Social Services expects continued, high demand from individuals and families for financial supports and other services.

Recent immigrants, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, lone parent families and Indigenous peoples are more susceptible to living in poverty compared to other Albertans. Poverty is more than a lack of income: it includes concepts of quality of life, social exclusion, and the ability to access and retain assets. Ensuring that all Albertans can fulfill their potential and participate fully in their communities requires a co-ordinated approach to address these interconnected factors.

Relationships and Partnerships

Delivering quality programs and services requires collaboration and fostering relationships with other governments, Indigenous leaders and communities, the non-profit and voluntary sector and other community partners. In Alberta, the non-profit voluntary sector plays a significant role in the delivery of social services. The possible financial impacts from an increased minimum wage and the carbon levy as well as ongoing challenges related to temporary and contract-based work remain areas of concern in the non-profit and voluntary sector.

The Government of Alberta is committed to achieving better social outcomes for individuals and families, including Indigenous people, through co-ordinated and collaborative service delivery and by addressing the root causes of social and economic challenges. These services are delivered on the premise that every Albertan has the strengths and potential to succeed.

OUTCOMES, KEY STRATEGIES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Outcome One: Alberta families and communities thrive through improved supports by strengthening prevention and addressing the root causes of social and economic challenges

Better social outcomes become possible with resilient individuals, thriving families and inclusive communities. While assisting Albertans in crisis is important, focusing on the root causes of social and economic exclusion in the present helps to prevent future crises from occurring and supports the development of stronger individuals, families and communities.

Key Strategies:

- 1.1 Work with families, service providers and stakeholders to ensure safety and inclusion for people with disabilities.
- 1.2 Prevent and address family violence, sexual violence and bullying by supporting women's shelters, collaborating with communities and other ministries to address root causes and promote healthy relationships across the lifespan.
- 1.3 Work with cross-ministry partners on a provincial approach to prevent and reduce poverty in Alberta.
- 1.4 Continue to strengthen prevention of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), access to diagnostic services and supports for Albertans impacted by FASD.
- 1.5 In partnership with Children's Services and other social service-based ministries, improve information-sharing practices within government and with service agencies to support the best outcomes for the health, education and safety of Albertans.

Performance Measures	Last Actual (Year)	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-20
1.a Percentage of Albertans who have information to better help in situations of family violence and bullying (biennial survey):				
• Family Violence	75%	78%	n/a	81%
• Bullying	71%	74%	n/a	77%
	(2015-16)			
1.b Percentage of families accessing the Family Support for Children with Disabilities program who indicate the services provided had a positive impact on their family (biennial survey)	90%	n/a	92%	n/a
	(2014-15)			

Linking Performance Measures to Outcomes:

- 1.a Shows Community and Social Services' success in providing essential knowledge to Albertans at risk of family violence and bullying with respect to the services available to enhance their safety.
- 1.b Demonstrates the impact of the ministry on a family's ability to improve the well-being of children with disabilities.

Performance Measure(s) under Development:

A performance measure to demonstrate the effectiveness of housing supports to, and promoting stability for, Albertans at risk of homelessness is under development.

Performance Indicators	Actual (Year)	Actual (Year)	Actual (Year)	Actual (Year)	Actual (Year)
1.a Incidence of low-income as a percentage of the population					
• Low-income measure after tax	11.8%	11.6%	11.0%	11.0%	10.8%
	(2010)	(2011)	(2012)	(2013)	(2014)
1.b Incidence of family violence in Alberta (annual police-reported data from Statistics Canada):					
• Number	12,108	12,505	11,786	11,884	12,298
• Prevalence per 100,000 population	321	322	295	289	294
	(2011)	(2012)	(2013)	(2014)	(2015)
1.c Number of women and children admitted to provincially-funded women's shelters:					
• Number of Women	n/a	5,144	4,773	4,990	4,652
• Number of Children	n/a	4,724	4,498	4,567	4,269
		(2012-13)	(2013-14)	(2014-15)	(2015-16)

Outcome Two: Albertans receive higher quality programs and services that are more coordinated, seamless and tailored to their needs to maximize their potential

Community and Social Services is working to improve Albertans' experiences when accessing and navigating social support systems. Better service delivery means focusing on individual Albertans' needs (being "citizen-centred") rather than focusing on programs. With many services in place to meet a variety of needs, Albertans may find it difficult to know where to go for help or what help is available. Integrating the service delivery system will enable the ministry to provide Albertans with better support and simplified access to the services and benefits they need – in person, online or over the phone – to help them achieve better outcomes.

Key Strategies:

- 2.1 Ensure Albertans with disabilities and their families receive safe, respectful and integrated supports in an inclusive, effective and transparent manner to enable them to achieve their goals.
- 2.2 Improve access to qualified service dogs for Albertans with disabilities and mental health issues.
- 2.3 Prevent and address homelessness and improve housing stability for Albertans in need by integrating personal, financial and health supports with housing.
- 2.4 Improve access to integrated services through Alberta Supports' Call, Click and Come-in channels.
- 2.5 Renew the financial supports system to be more equitable and effective to improve the quality of life for low-income Albertans.
- 2.6 Through the development and implementation of performance management approaches, assess and improve the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of ministry policies, programs and services.

Performance Measures	Last Actual (Year)	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-20
2.a Satisfaction of families/guardians of adults with developmental disabilities with Persons with Developmental Disabilities funded services (biennial survey)	87% (2014-15)	n/a	89%	n/a
2.b Percentage of participants employed after leaving Income Support ¹	59% (2015-16)	62%	65%	68%
2.c Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) quality-of-life index ²	76% (2015-16)	80%	81%	82%

Notes:

- ¹ Those who stopped receiving Income Support without obtaining employment could have transitioned to training programs, entered new partnerships (e.g. change in marital status) or received support from other sources (e.g. Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance and AISH).
- ² The index is made up of four equally-weighted components based on questions from the annual AISH client survey related to meeting basic needs, the ability to live independently, manage health issues and get involved in the community.

Linking Performance Measures to Outcomes:

- 2.a Evaluates the ministry's performance on supporting adult Albertans with developmental disabilities to participate in their communities and live independently.
- 2.b Demonstrates the success of Albertans in attaining employment after leaving Income Support in order to maximize their potential.
- 2.c Shows how AISH recipients report having their basic needs met, the independence of their living situation, the supports they require to manage their health issues, and involvement in their local community.

Performance Measure(s) under Development:

A performance measure on the timeliness of determining eligibility to receive AISH is under development in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of process improvements intended to better meet client needs.

Performance Indicators	Actual 2012	Actual 2013	Actual 2014	Actual 2015	Actual 2016
2.a Average Annual Income Support Caseload					
• Expected to Work	n/a	16,571	16,152	19,001	29,111
• Barriers to Full Employment	n/a	17,022	17,293	17,541	19,122
• Total Caseload	34,323	33,593	33,445	36,542	48,233
2.b Median time on Income Support (in months)					
• Expected to Work	7	6	5	5	6
• Barriers to Full Employment	31	34	36	37	34
2.c Average Annual AISH Caseload	45,429	47,411	49,698	51,959	54,330

RISKS TO ACHIEVING OUTCOMES

Key risks facing Community and Social Services' ability to achieving outcomes include:

- **Economic climate:** The current downturn in Alberta's economy may contribute to continued high demand for financial supports and other services, requiring the strategic allocation of resources to address current issues while maintaining key investments in preventative initiatives.
- **Emergency preparedness:** In recent years, Alberta has been subject to a series of natural disasters, such as the southern Alberta floods and the Slave Lake and Wood Buffalo fires. Challenges to the capacity to effectively respond to a situation requiring emergency social services while maintaining other service levels poses risks to the health and well-being of Albertans.
- **Complexity:** The ministry operates within a complex policy and operational environment with a range of factors that may pose risks to the business of the ministry and create challenges related to the sustainability of key ministry programs. These factors include increasingly complex case files with growing costs per case, continued caseload growth over time and diverse stakeholders with a range of interests, including the non-profit voluntary sector.

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

(thousands of dollars)	Comparable			2017-18 Estimate	2018-19 Target	2019-20 Target
	2015-16 Actual	2016-17 Budget	2016-17 Forecast			
REVENUE						
Services on First Nations Reserves	26,683	32,880	32,880	34,197	34,119	34,119
Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons	50,381	-	25,190	25,190	-	-
Labour Market Development	48,221	40,850	41,850	40,850	40,488	40,488
Other Federal Transfers	1,766	1,918	2,118	-	490	500
Premiums, Fees and Licences	1,627	372	372	357	342	327
Other Revenue	26,328	19,967	19,967	17,968	17,973	17,830
Internal Government Transfers	-	-	-	6,163	-	-
Ministry Total	155,006	95,987	122,377	124,725	93,412	93,264
Inter-Ministry Consolidations	(138)	-	-	(6,163)	-	-
Consolidated Total	154,868	95,987	122,377	118,562	93,412	93,264
EXPENSE						
Ministry Support Services	23,306	22,161	22,161	24,870	24,941	24,787
Employment and Income Support	688,205	697,740	811,685	825,563	804,022	811,746
Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped	953,257	977,761	1,000,761	1,047,919	1,094,124	1,139,429
Persons with Disabilities Supports	1,056,481	1,088,751	1,127,751	1,127,872	1,166,677	1,189,076
Homeless and Outreach Support Services	176,074	181,352	181,352	187,330	188,130	188,130
Community Supports and Family Safety	130,291	123,711	123,711	123,711	123,711	123,711
2013 Alberta Flooding	406	1,100	1,100	1,100	-	-
Ministry Total	3,028,020	3,092,576	3,268,521	3,338,365	3,401,605	3,476,879
Inter-Ministry Consolidations	(15,584)	(12,572)	(12,572)	(12,572)	(12,572)	(12,572)
Consolidated Total	3,012,436	3,080,004	3,255,949	3,325,793	3,389,033	3,464,307
Net Operating Result	(2,857,568)	(2,984,017)	(3,133,572)	(3,207,231)	(3,295,621)	(3,371,043)
CAPITAL INVESTMENT						
Ministry Support Services	488	494	494	494	494	494
Employment and Income Support	2,517	2,582	3,038	8,745	2,582	2,582
Persons with Disabilities Supports	124	547	547	547	547	547
Ministry Total	3,129	3,623	4,079	9,786	3,623	3,623
Inter-Ministry Consolidations	-	-	-	(6,163)	-	-
Consolidated Total	3,129	3,623	4,079	3,623	3,623	3,623