Results-based
BUDGETING Report to Albertans
November 2015

Alberta Government

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MINISTER'S MESSAGE

I am pleased to present the fourth report to Albertans on Results-based Budgeting (RBB). The *Results-based Budgeting Act*, introduced in February 2012, required a comprehensive review of all government programs and services to assess relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. The review process was organized into three "cycles" with government programs and services organized under 11 lines of business - thematic groupings of programs and services.

All three cycles of review are now complete. About 540 programs were reviewed and approximately 650 recommendations have been made to improve the relevance, effectiveness and/or efficiency of government programs and services.

This report highlights findings and recommendations resulting from Cycle 3, including key findings and recommendations on education, acute and continuing care, wellness, protecting Albertans, and enterprise and ministry support services. Public reports from RBB Cycles 1 and 2 in addition to further information on the RBB process for all three cycles can be accessed through Alberta Treasury Board and Finance's website: http://www.finance.alberta.ca/business/budget/results-based-budgeting/index.html

A key outcome of the overall RBB process is the enhanced collaboration between ministries. Government recognizes that public needs and interests are complex and evolving, and that the ability to design and administer relevant, effective, and efficient government policies, programs and services requires a 'whole of government' approach that leverages the advantages obtained through cross-ministry collaboration. A better understanding of the outcomes Albertans want has also resulted from the RBB process. This government is committed to making evidence-based decisions focused on achieving these outcomes as effectively and efficiently as possible.

The RBB exercise was a significant undertaking for government and I would like to thank all of those involved in the three cycles of review.

Joe Ceci
President of Treasury Board
Minister of Finance

INTRODUCTION

Results-based budgeting is a legislated process to review all programs and services, including agencies, boards and commissions, to determine whether programs are relevant and meet intended outcomes, and are delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible. The government is also required to report publicly on the process.

Reviews of government programs and services were conducted over three cycles beginning in 2012, and concluding in early 2015. Reviews were conducted not through individual ministries, but through 11 "lines of business" – thematic groupings of programs and services.

Approximately 540 programs were reviewed and more than 650 recommendations have been made to improve the relevance, effectiveness or efficiency of government programs and services.

CYCLE 3

In the third cycle, over 170 programs and services were reviewed, under the following five lines of business:

- Education (Supports to Maximize Individual Potential and Preparedness for Life, Work and Community)
- Enterprise and Ministry Support Services (approximately one-third)
- Health (Acute Care and Continuing Care)
- Protecting Albertans
- Wellness

Cycle 3 began in May and June 2014 when representatives from each line of business presented review plans and background materials to challenge panels[1]. Lines of business conducted their reviews according to their approved plans and then presented their final reports to challenge panels in December 2014 and January 2015. Challenge panels then provided advice to Treasury Board Committee on the key findings and recommendations for each line of business.

[1] **Challenge panels** were chaired by a government MLA or Cabinet Minister, usually a member of Treasury Board Committee. Panels also consisted of around five external members and another government MLA. The role of challenge panels was to make sure review plans are sufficiently comprehensive and ask key questions related to relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. Once the reviews are complete, challenge panels review and critique the findings and recommendations.
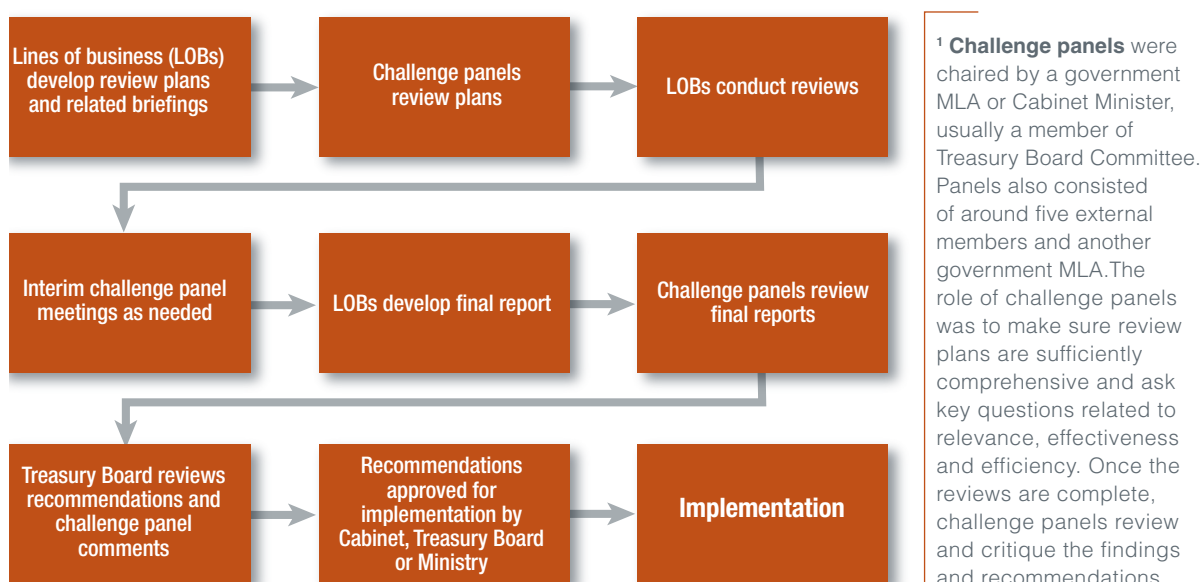
Figure 1. Results-based budgeting process

Treasury Board Committee accepted all recommendations resulting from the third cycle of reviews and instructed ministries to begin implementation, once the appropriate approvals were granted. Most recommendations required approval at the Ministry level, while some required the approval of Cabinet and/or Treasury Board Committee.

Please see http://www.finance.alberta.ca/business/budget/results-based-budgeting/index.html for more information on the process, including a detailed inventory of programs for all three cycles and a list of challenge panel members.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

About 270 recommendations were made by lines of business in Cycle three. Nearly 80 per cent of the recommendations from the third cycle of reviews were related to achieving outcomes. This includes recommendations such as development of a strategic plan for Alberta's post-secondary institutions, expansion and implementation of a provincial strategy for caregivers, and strengthening the services provided to vulnerable children and their families.

A further 40 per cent were related to improving efficiency through measures such as consolidating government websites, better aligning health facility capital investments with an integrated health system and service planning or improving information for the management of government facilities.

Lastly, 17 per cent related to containing costs through measures such as reducing board member travel expenses through the use of teleconferences, developing a pilot project to examine the potential to consolidate maintenance contracts or expanding electronic filing of applications, licenses and registrations.

As the following chart shows, recommendations from all three cycles had a similar distribution.
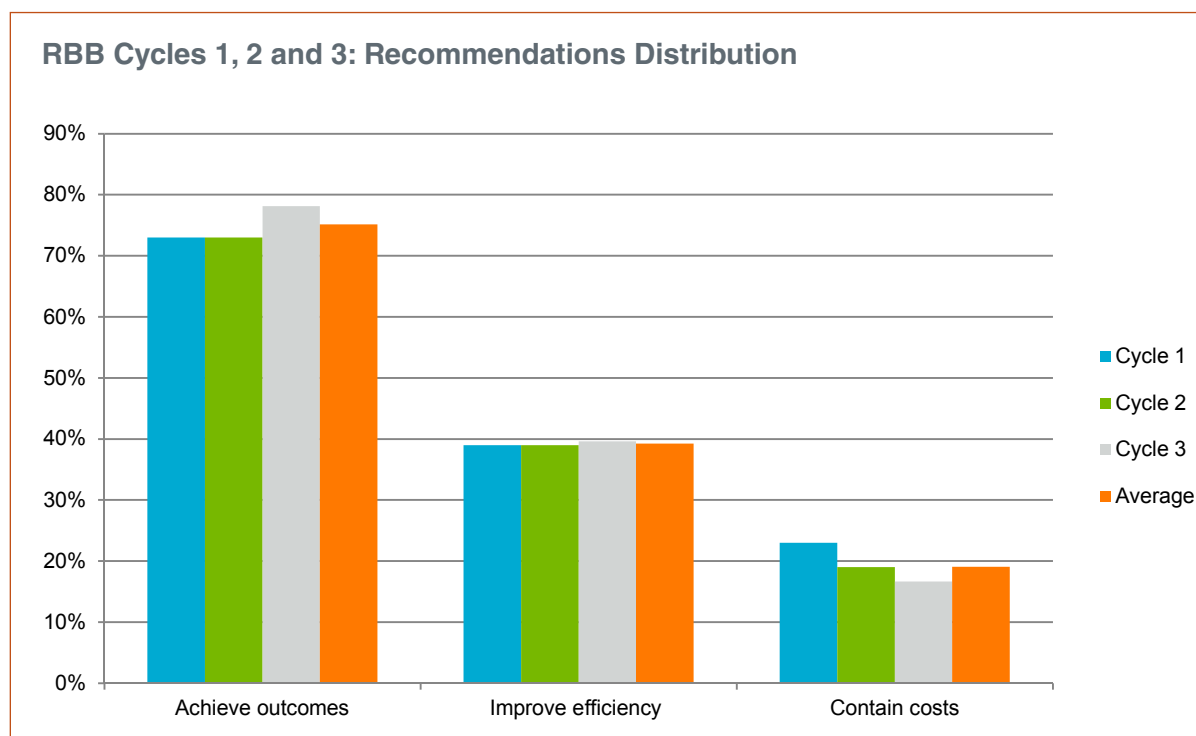
RBB Cycles 1, 2 and 3: Recommendations Distribution

Education

Supports to Maximize Individual Potential and Preparedness for Life, Work and Community

Programs in this line of business provide funding for K-12 and post-secondary education, post-secondary apprenticeship programs, and agricultural extension and research. Outcomes for this line of business include:

- students achieve Alberta's learning outcomes and demonstrate citizenship, entrepreneurship, and proficiency in literacy and numeracy;

- teacher preparation and professional growth focus on the competencies needed to help students learn, and that effective learning and teaching are achieved through collaborative leadership;

- the Campus Alberta system focuses on value of investment, advancing knowledge and is learner enabling; and

- Rural Alberta has the development opportunities necessary for ongoing economic success.

Table 1: Key Findings and Recommendations

Key Findings	Key Recommendations
A full review of the K-12 funding framework requires intensive stakeholder engagement to ensure that the framework's principles work for the entire province.	Conduct a further review of the funding framework, engaging school boards and charter school stakeholders to clearly define and agree to the principle of predictability/stability, and review specific grants to ensure efficiency, effectiveness, simplicity and transparency.
The need for teachers will increase across Alberta due to anticipated retirements. This is expected to result in an exodus of teachers from northern and rural jurisdictions to urban areas.	Enhance the Northern Student Teacher Bursary to meet growing demand and expand the program to rural areas across the province.
There is a need to provide a long-term strategic focus for the 26 publicly-funded post-secondary institutions.	Develop a Campus Alberta strategic plan that continues to build on foundational components of the post-secondary system (e.g. outcomes and indicators framework and the Campus Alberta Interim Strategic Plan) and supports greater integration.
Methods for allocating operating grants have often not incented desired outcomes and continuous improvement.	Work with post-secondary institutions to create and implement sector-level outcomes that link to long-term, stable and predictable funding.
It is important that the Apprenticeship and Industry Training (AIT) system maintain responsiveness to the evolving nature of trades and occupations and needs of industry.	Explore how the AIT system outcomes connect to the advanced learning system outcomes to ensure all post-secondary programs are in alignment and evaluate technical training programs to ensure effectiveness.
The First Nations College system is relevant to learners and to achieving ultimate outcomes for Alberta, but there are significant gaps related in how the colleges are supported by the government. Colleges require explicit strategic direction and funding clarity.	Establish policy direction to guide Aboriginal post-secondary education in the province. Work with First Nations Colleges, federal counterparts and other ministries to better understand and improve the intersections between legislation, policies and sources of funding for the colleges.

The recommendations made by this line of business help identify key outcomes for Alberta's K-12 and post-secondary education systems and support their achievement by more closely linking them to funding. Better evaluation and coordination of education and extension programs would result in programs that are delivered more efficiently and are more responsive to the needs of the broader economy.

Enterprise and Ministry Support Services

Programs in this line of business provide vital support to the delivery of all government programs and services. This support is provided through internal policy and decision-making capacity, strategic planning, contracted service management and operations in accommodations and facilities, financial services, human resource services, information management, information technology, contact centres and other corporate services. Reviews of the Alberta Investment Management Corporation and the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission were also conducted under this line of business.

Outcomes for this line of business are to:

- improve stakeholder access to government information, programs and services;
- manage and leverage government information as a strategic resource;
- ensure accountability and effective management of resources, investments and risks;
- enable productivity of government employees; and
- provide effective and easy-to-access processes, tools and resources to support staff and government program delivery.

Table 2: Key Findings and Recommendations

Key Findings	Key Recommendations
There is a demand for published government information to be more accessible from all electronic devices and through the existing open government portal. There are opportunities to achieve greater economies of scale.	Modernize publishing and distribution of government documents through increased use of electronic delivery and expand publishing and distribution of other government legal and official resources.
There is no shared governance, management or technology for cross-government contact centres.	Implement a cross-government body to discuss how to best rationalize and operate contact centres. This may include government-wide technology platforms, centralized program technology and a multi-program knowledge base.
Current information management is largely structured around managing paper processes. Effective governance and accountability is lacking and existing technology solutions are dated and not coordinated.	Transform the government's information management program and services through a new governance model, an enterprise approach to content management, standardized collection and organization of information and a 'digital by default' approach.
Current approaches to asset management generally are not conducted with an overall plan in mind. This raises costs and reduces quality of assets such as government buildings.	Develop a strategic asset management plan, operationalize a set of principles that align with best practices in sustainable asset management, and develop better information and better information management.

The current decentralized model used for government information technology investments results in duplication, inconsistent investment and asset management and an inability to fully realize benefits of new technologies and future trends.	Develop a new corporate applications model and a new investment management approach that incorporates central oversight of funding, prioritization and reporting models.
There are over 200 government websites, with no common or consistent approach to how they are developed. This results in an inconsistent look and feel to government websites, higher costs due to duplication of technology, and makes it more difficult for Albertans and others to find information about programs and services.	Develop a new governance model for public websites and implement a web rationalization project to consolidate existing websites into one (alberta.ca).
The Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) could enhance its consultation, planning and evaluation processes. Alberta's charitable gaming model, while having many benefits, also has challenges.	Strategic planning processes should be more established and consistent, evaluation capacity should be increased and stakeholder relationship management should be more coordinated. AGLC should engage with the charitable sector and make recommendations to government regarding renewal of the charitable model.
Treasury Board and Finance can make better use of its internal capabilities and resources to educate AIMCo clients (e.g., pension plans).	Extend departmental investment analysis to other clients and develop co-investor relationships with pension plans and other clients.

The recommendations made by this line of business would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of enterprise and ministry support services, enabling programs across all lines of business to improve how they achieve their outcomes. Developing new approaches to managing and using information, providing increased access to government legislation and related documents, and integrating government websites would modernize government operations. New governance models for corporate applications, improving internal investment analysis capabilities and improving connections between contact centres would improve efficiency and help government manage taxpayer dollars more effectively.

Health

This line of business was divided into two "sub-lines" – acute care and continuing care. Two other sub-lines, primary care and health benefits, were reviewed in RBB Cycle 1.

Acute Care

Programs in the acute care sub-line include funding for medical services for patients with serious injury or illness, urgent medical conditions, or recovery from surgery. Acute care services are provided in hospitals through emergency departments, inpatient and outpatient programs; in the community through urgent and ambulatory care centres and, to a lesser extent, non-hospital surgical facilities. Outcomes for this sub-line include:

- Albertans are informed and active participants in receiving acute care services;
- Albertans receive evidence-informed services that are responsive to the needs of individuals and communities;
- Albertans receive timely access to acute care services;
- transitions within and from acute care are seamless;
- safety is paramount to ensuring preventable adverse events do not occur to patients and staff; and
- acute care resources and infrastructure are used appropriately, effectively and efficiently to achieve optimum value.

Table 3a: Key Findings and Recommendations

Key Findings	Key Recommendations
Although quality management and continuous improvement are embedded in the system, there are gaps in consistency, reporting, standardization and spread of learnings.	Develop a provincial strategy that encourages Albertans to build awareness of health care services and supports them to make informed decisions about health care services.
Significant increases in demand exceed current capacity of major programs.	Develop and implement centralized intake models that use real-time operational data to reduce wait times and improve transitions.
Health promotion, chronic disease prevention and management initiatives could be better promoted within and between the major programs to reduce the burden on the health system.	Develop and implement strategies to effectively deliver more standardized services to patients with specific acute and chronic conditions.
Information technology systems have not been fully optimized or integrated across the acute care system and with other parts of the health system.	Continue to advance initiatives that develop and/or support best practices and enhanced clinical integration, enabling better cooperation between acute care and other parts of the health system.
There are challenges with supply of and demand for health care professionals and how best to optimize the current workforce.	Integrate standardized information technology solutions to enable rapid communication within the health system.
Aging infrastructure impacts quality of care.	Continue to work with academic institutions and provider organizations to design and advance inter-professional care models.
	Support the development of a human resource plan that aligns with system service plans.
	Align strategic capital investments with integrated health system and service planning.

Continuing Care

Programs in the continuing care sub-line include funding for long term care and the development of new long-term spaces, supportive living, home care and medical support programs. Outcomes for this sub-line are:

- Albertans have timely access to continuing care services and supports that meet their needs;
- Albertans receive safe, quality continuing care services and supports, within suitable physical environments;
- Albertans and their families are informed and actively engaged in choices about continuing care services and supports;
- services are coordinated within and beyond the continuing care system, integrating information and services provided by individuals, family, friends and other social supports; and
- the continuing care system is financially sustainable and includes a range of affordable options for Albertans and families.

Table 3b: Key Findings and Recommendations

Key Findings	Key Recommendations
Clients need support to stay in the community for as long as possible. Services provided in home and community settings produce better outcomes and are less costly on the public purse than facility-based care. Individuals' needs and available supports are taken into account to determine the most optimal environment for care delivery.	Develop a model of client-directed health and personal care service options that offers individuals a range of management options from individual vouchers to service provider-managed options.
Case management improves transitions. Enhancing assistance for clients to navigate is important in providing timely access to care. It also enhances client engagement and supports them in making informed choices.	Expand and implement the Provincial Caregiver Strategy, which would include expanding caregiver support resources and education, developing client-directed respite care service packages and exploring options to enhance caregiver tax credits.
Achieving the optimal mix of providers and determining which services are best delivered by which providers is an ongoing challenge. Enabling health professionals to perform within their full scope of practice, evaluating service mix and clarifying accountabilities have the opportunity to increase effectiveness and efficiency. Coordinated planning is needed between primary care, continuing care and acute care services. Planning and resources need to consider the whole system.	Implement the 2013 provincial End-of-Life Framework and related strategies across the health system, with immediate focus on: - Developing partnerships with community resources, such as Emergency Medical Services; - Developing a hospice care delivery model in community settings; - Providing consultation access to End of Life Care experts to staff and clients; and - Developing a web-based information centre for clients and families.

Table 3b: Key Findings and Recommendations, *continued*

Key Findings	Key Recommendations
Services are limited in rural and remote communities. Recruiting and retaining staff is harder, and a smaller and spread out population makes it more costly to provide the same services as those provided in urban centres.	Continue to develop and implement a provincial strategy and action plan for dementia care.
	Improve transitions for clients across the health system by expanding current capacity for convalescent care, expanding and enhancing integrated geriatric teams in acute care facilities and strengthening case management capacity.
	Create greater linkages with social support partners to increase community capacity and leverage existing physical, social and technological assets to create communities for life that support aging in place.

The recommendations made by the acute care and continuing care sub-lines of business, in conjunction with the recommendations made by the primary care and health benefits reviews, would help to bring about system-level change in Alberta's health care system. This system-level change aims to improve the patient experience, improve health outcomes, and reduce the per capita cost of health care.

Individuals receiving treatment in acute care facilities would receive better information about their care options and be more involved with the decisions about their health during and after an acute care visit. Quality of care would be enhanced, reducing complications and other adverse events during and after acute care stays. These improvements would be evident within the health system with shorter hospital stays and wait times for hospital procedures and fewer hospital readmissions and emergency department visits. More efficient use of resources in the near term would bring about long-term savings for the health care system.

With respect to continuing care, clients would benefit from greater independence and by having the necessary tools to self-manage their health wherever they receive care. Clients would have more options to receive care at home and in the community as they age and will have increased access to services that are designed to meet their individual needs. These improvements would result in more people remaining in their communities and homes instead of more expensive institutional settings, shorter hospital stays, and fewer hospital readmissions and emergency department visits. More efficient use of resources in the near term would bring about long-term savings for the health care system.

Protecting Albertans

Programs in this line of business include child intervention services, maintenance enforcement, the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee, policing, court services and corrections, disaster mitigation and response, oversight and regulatory functions for human rights, worker protection, financial services, transportation safety, residential tenancy disputes and enabling services such as motor vehicle registration and land titles. The outcomes for this line of business are:

- risk factors to Albertans, families and communities are reduced and managed;

- vulnerable Albertans are protected and supported;

- Albertans feel safe, secure, protected and healthy;

- communities, businesses, families and Albertans are engaged to address legal issues, health, and safety;

- economic and environmental risks are mitigated and managed;

- decisions and determinations are transparent, defensible, timely and fair;

- albertans have confidence in justice, safety and response services; and

- a safe transportation network supports Alberta's economic advantage.

Table 4: Key Findings and Recommendations

Key Findings	Key Recommendations
Program effectiveness and efficiency is impaired due to silos, duplication and separation of services, impacting client needs and satisfaction.	Enhance service delivery through better integration and coordination of programs and increased public awareness.
More Albertans are seeking automated and/or improved online service delivery.	Develop a strategy to improve access to electronic information and services.
The correctional population is increasingly diverse and complex.	Explore and implement innovative services for offenders.
The traditional hearing process is expensive, time consuming and onerous. Insufficient resources coupled with an increase in the number of complaints and appeals have resulted in a backlog of files.	Provide fair, complete and timely access to dispute resolution.
An enhanced internal review process of child deaths and serious incidents that focuses on learning as much as possible from past incidents will help reduce the probability of similar incidents occurring in the future.	Increase the emphasis on continuous improvement of services delivered to vulnerable children and youth.
The courts spend a disproportionate amount of time, energy and resources dealing with matters in the pre-trial phase, as well as non-violent and less serious offences. Considerable court time is also spent on family, civil and traffic matters that could be better dealt with in other venues or through alternate dispute resolution processes.	Expand the role of program areas and quasi-judicial bodies to address non-violent and less serious matters.
Recent natural disasters have demonstrated the effectiveness of, and continued need for, a coordinated response. There is a further need to increase the emphasis on preparedness and mitigation, rather than solely on response.	Provide enhanced and integrated natural disaster prevention, mitigation and response.
To maximize effectiveness and improve outcomes for Albertans, prevention strategies must be coordinated.	Coordinate prevention strategies across government.

A key theme underlying many of the recommendations in this line of business is increasing the focus on prevention. This change could lead to greater safety, decrease reoffending and lessen the need for response and recovery efforts after natural disasters. Other recommendations made by this line of business would improve efficiency and effectiveness of programs and services. A redesigned court and mediation system would be able to allocate more time to complex cases, and routine matters could be addressed more efficiently. Better collaboration between programs and more open and accessible information would improve service delivery to Albertans.

Wellness

Programs within this line of business include operating funding in support of clinical prevention, disease and injury prevention, health promotion and health protection. Examples include wellness programs or initiatives such as immunization support, cancer research and prevention, community-based health services, tobacco reduction, drinking water management, environmental health, healthy eating and active living. The outcomes for this line of business are:

- improving the health knowledge, skills and behaviour of individuals and families;
- building communities that create wellness;
- improving social and economic supports for wellness;
- strengthening primary prevention with primary health care; and
- building health public policy.

Table 5: Key Findings and Recommendations

Key Findings	Key Recommendations
Wellness initiatives address the determinants of health with the goal of preventing diseases and injuries. Prevention assists in reducing the burden of illness on the health care and social services systems.	Develop an Alberta Wellness Charter, incorporate wellness in all government strategy and policy documents and evaluate existing policies from a wellness point of view.
Programs in this line of business can provide the necessary leadership to enable a strategic approach to wellness across Alberta.	Engage Albertans about wellness, including the development and promotion of clear, consistent and accessible messages, information and resources.
Programs and services are heavily dependent on partnerships and collaboration.	Increase integrated and collaborative efforts around wellness within the Government of Alberta, other levels of government and other stakeholders.
It is challenging to demonstrate the effectiveness and efficiency of programs without comprehensive, standardized performance measures.	Develop and implement a government-wide comprehensive approach to wellness performance measurement.

The recommendations made by this line of business would be the first step in bringing about a cultural and systemic shift to incorporating wellness into more aspects of government and societal decision-making. Engagement and partnerships with Albertans and wellness stakeholders would continue to be essential if change is to be realized. Further, it would be important to understand this change using meaningful data collected and analyzed comprehensively. By addressing the determinants of health equitably and preventing diseases and injuries before they occur, Alberta could benefit not only from a decrease in health care and social support system costs but an increase in human potential.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

Many recommendations made through the results-based budgeting process are now being implemented and will make improvements in the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of government programs and services. This section highlights specific improvements implemented since the publication of the last public report in December 2014.

Economic Development

Recognizing that economic development programs and services benefit from increased collaboration, the government has developed a number of online tools and services to strengthen stakeholder engagement and coordination through improved access to key information. Such tools include the Alberta Economic Dashboard, which provides data on 26 provincial economic indicators; the Alberta Major Projects Tool, which catalogues the status of major commercial projects, enabling Alberta industry to better identify potential business opportunities; and a new website that collates all government-funded business programs and small business services.

Other initiatives undertaken by government include the implementation of a cross-compliance approach to the premises identification (PID) system that enhances coverage of and increases participation in PID, an essential part of an integrated animal health management and assurance system; and, a change in permit fees for overweight vehicles to an 'over-the-road' distance travelled fee based on usage and impact on the province's road netwrok. There are also plans to consult with industry to determine whether to change the overall rates based on current maintenace costs.

Health

A number of initiatives have been undertaken to improve health outcomes for Albertans, including: development of an action plan to accompany the Primary Health Care Strategy, released in 2014, which will enable individuals to access a specific health care provider or health care team; development of the Personal Health Record, which will enable Albertans to track their own health and wellness needs; ongoing deployment of Strategic Clinical Networks, which will strengthen coordination of service delivery between acute care, continuing care and primary health care; implementation of the Destination Home initiative, which will enable seniors to return to their homes as quickly as possible after a hospital stay and avoid unnecessary hospital visits; and the Alberta Dementia Strategy and Action Plan, which will improve care and support for Albertans with dementia and their caregivers.

Municipalities and Regional Planning

Several initiatives have been undertaken to strengthen local governments and regional planning, including: simplified access to municipal infrastructure grant funding, continuing to promote the participation of urban Aboriginal people in the development, design and delivery of programs and services provided for them; and expanded access to public library resources for Albertans. There has also been an amendment of the *Safety Codes Act* to establish an automatic code adoption process that allows municipalities and industry to enhance their competitiveness through the use of innovative technologies.

Enterprise and Ministry Support Services

Government is leading a number of initiatives to improve government operations, including: integration of government's core information technology structure; consolidation of government print operations; and transformation of government library services to a citizen-facing, digital, open government service. These initiatives will ensure government services are delivered in a more timely and cost-effective manner.

Support to Albertans in Need

The government has introduced a number of programs and services to support Albertans in need, including: enhanced supports for women and children affected by family violence through a new investment in women's emergency shelters across Alberta; implementation of the Provincial Family and Community Safety Program grants to fund local projects to prevent family and sexual violence and child sexual abuse; increased student aid for low-income student loan borrowers, as well as for northern and Indigenous learners to improve access to Alberta's post-secondary institutions and apprenticeship programs; implementation of the Canada-Alberta Job Grant, an employer-driven training program that enables employers to equip current and future workers with the skills they need to fill available jobs; and deployment of Disaster Recovery programs that includes encouraging contractors working on-reserve to utilize Aboriginal labour in order to provide skill development and training.

Protecting Albertans

A number of measures have been developed to make the province's justice system more innovative and accessible. The government contiues to develop the Reforming Family Justice Initiative, a multi-disciplinary initiative which seeks to reform Alberta's civil and family justice system so it is less complex, less expensive, and less adversarial, aiding in more disputes being resolved outside of court. Another measure is the implementaion of Criminal eFile, which reduces administration costs by allowing Crown prosecutors and defense attorneys to transmit key documents electronically through a secure electronic disclosure portal.

Recreation and Culture

Several initiatives have been launched to better support the province's recreation and culture sector, including: improved tracking and management of grant programs through the online Grant Administration Tracking and Evaluation tool; coordinating application of the *Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act* to determine and/or clarify the roles and responsibilities of provincial foundations, thereby optimizing sector outcomes; collaborating with Alberta Human Services and Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour to develop a long-term strategy to ensure the sector is properly supported by volunteers; continued development of an outcomes-based performance management framework to better focus ministry resources and ensure ministry activities are delivering measureable results.

Resource Management and Environmental Stewardship

The government has undertaken a number of steps to improve the management of the province's resources including development of a provincial invasive alien species program that limits the immediate and long-term economic, environmental and societal costs of these species. Another step undertaken is the establishment and implementation of a process and structure by the Land Use Secretariat to review requests from parties directly and adversely affected by regional plans.

Education

The government is undertaking a number of initiatives to ensure Alberta's school children have equitable access to a quality, affordable education, including:

- encouraging school boards to continue to implement cooperative transportation agreements that capture economies of scale to provide transportation services for tens of thousands of students in a more cost-effective manner;

- increasing school board accountability and transparency through the tracking of key performance indicators and cost data;

- ensuring stable and predictable funding for school facilities by providing funding for five years to enable completion of Phase two and Phase three of the current schools capital program;

- developing a standardized methodology to more accurately determine which schools are under- or over-utilized;

- replacing older portable classrooms based on the emergent enrolment and health and safety needs of schools;

- collaborating with school boards to enhance reporting requirements related to infrastructure maintenance and renewal needs; and

- increasing development of multi-function post-secondary facilities through cross-ministry collaboration.

A K–12 school has been built with a wing for Northern Lakes College programming in the Gift Lake region through collaboration between the college, the local Métis community, the school board, Innovation and Advanced Education, Education and Infrastructure. The Gift Lake Learning Centre opened to students in April 2015.

Wellness

A focus on wellness will help reduce chronic disease and illnesses, making Alberta a healthier place to live, work and raise a family. The government has undertaken the development of a strategic directions document for wellness in Alberta. The document provides foundational directions for a collective approach to wellness, including:

- establishing a leadership and governance structure for wellness;

- changing the conversation, shifting the culture;

- supporting Albertans to reach their potential;

- building community capacity for wellness;

- strengthening primary prevention in health care system;

- aligning policy to support wellness; and

- measuring progress on wellness.

All of these directions require ministries to collaborate and integrate wellness in a whole-of-government approach.