

BUSINESS PLAN 2016–19

Human Services

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

This business plan was prepared under my direction, taking into consideration the government's policy decisions as of March 17, 2016.

original signed by

Irfan Sabir, Minister

MINISTRY OVERVIEW

The ministry consists of the Department of Human Services. Within the department's budget, funding is provided for the Alberta Interagency Council on Homelessness, the Premier's Council on Alberta's Promise, the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, the Family Violence Death Review Committee and the Child and Family Services Council for Quality Assurance.

The ministry of Human Services exists to improve quality of life for all Albertans by ensuring that all Albertans have the resources and skills to optimize their quality of life, that they are protected and safe in their homes and communities and that they are enabled and empowered to be successful.

The ministry offers a range of adaptive, innovative and prevention-focused programs and services to Albertans including Employment and Income Support, Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped, Persons with Disabilities Supports, Alberta Supports, Child Intervention, Child Care, Early Intervention Services for Children and Youth, Homeless and Outreach Support Services, Community Supports and Family Safety, Public Guardian and Trustee Services, and the Alberta Child Benefit.

A more detailed description of Human Services and its programs and initiatives can be found at:
www.humanservices.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.

Human Services operates in a complex environment and the social issues facing Albertans are multi-dimensional and inter-connected. Recently, Alberta has experienced an economic downturn and decreasing natural resource revenues. At the same time, Alberta's population has grown to over 4.2 million people. A growing and increasingly diverse population, many of whom are facing economic hardship, means greater pressure on programs and services. Within this context, Human Services will continue to be called upon to assist in creating the conditions for safe and supportive homes and communities.

The effects of low oil and gas commodity prices are leading to economic hardship for many Albertans which, over time, may result in an increased demand for the ministry's income and social support programs and put pressure on ministry resources. Unexpected changes to the funding levels or eligibility requirements for income or support programs provided by other orders of government could result in pressure for the ministry to adjust its current and future commitments.

The current downturn in the economy creates additional challenges for Human Services. The need for social supports increases during times when budget pressures force governments to closely examine spending. The Government of Alberta is committed to creating stability in social service delivery across the province while working to reduce the incidence of Albertans experiencing poverty. Providing accessible, high-quality and affordable childcare as well as financial supports for training and assistance to families who need it today is an investment in the future.

Approximately 16 per cent of Alberta's children live in low-income households and 29 per cent of kindergarten-aged children in Alberta are experiencing great difficulty in one or more areas of development, such as social competence and emotional maturity. Children, youth and families with mental health concerns, addictions and other complex needs require dedicated supports and services. Improving outcomes for children means improving quality of life for families. Thoughtful consideration must be given to how government can best align programs and services to continue to assist lower-income families. While the government's plan to increase the minimum wage will help those families who are working in lower wage jobs, other supports, like the new Alberta Child Benefit, are needed to support families to live safe and healthy lives.

In addition to meeting the immediate needs of Albertans, the ministry also emphasizes preventive initiatives so future generations of Albertans will need fewer interventions and supports in their lives. Preventive efforts include addressing the root causes of poverty, family violence, sexual violence, bullying and homelessness. For example, government is focusing on giving children the best start in life by providing resources and supports to enable nurturing families, secure early learning environments and ensure the inclusive communities that children need to grow and thrive.

As part of its approach to reconciliation, government will engage in thoughtful discussions with Indigenous leadership on the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. There is a growing understanding that all orders of government must focus attention on the needs and strengths of Indigenous people and communities and ensure jurisdictional conflicts do not prevent children from receiving the services they need. This includes implementing the objectives and principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Strategic risks that affect the ministry's operations and its ability to achieve its outcomes include the current economic downturn and corresponding higher unemployment as a result of the volatility in the natural resource sector. This may lead to, for example, an increased number of children and families living in poverty and higher rates of homelessness. Key ministry social support programs and services may be faced with higher demand, leading to an increase in program spending and creating challenges related to the sustainability of key ministry programs.

Despite these challenges, government is committed to achieving better social outcomes for Albertans by ensuring service delivery is integrated, transparent, person-centred and collaborative. The ministry is focused on assuring quality of services and improving how Albertans access and navigate services. Historically, social service programs have been spread across a number of ministries, making it difficult for Albertans to find the supports they need. A person-centred, integrated service delivery approach that focuses on the individual's unique needs and circumstances will make the system easier to navigate and help Albertans receive the programs and services they need, when they need them.

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

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

Key Strategies:

- 1.1 Enhance and promote mentoring programs, parenting resources and supports, community-based early childhood services and improve access to quality, affordable child care.
- 1.2 Implement the Alberta Child Benefit to support children in lower-income Alberta families and enhance the Alberta Family Employment Tax Credit.
- 1.3 Build on preventive approaches and implement reforms in the child intervention system, focusing on keeping families together, addressing the conditions that bring children into care and promoting collaborative solutions to support child safety and well-being.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 Partner with Health to improve addictions and mental health supports for all Albertans, paying specific attention to children and youth.
- 1.6 Strengthen the focus on preventing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

Performance Measures	Last Actual (Year)	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19
1.a Percentage of Albertans who have information to better help in situations of family violence and bullying (biennial survey):				
• Family Violence	69%	n/a	73%	n/a
• Bullying	70%	n/a	73%	n/a
	(2013-14)			
1.b Percentage of youth receiving Advancing Futures Bursaries who successfully completed their planned studies during the fiscal year	84%	85%	86%	87%
	(2014-15)			
1.c 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%	91%	n/a	91%
	(2014-15)			
1.d Percentage of licensed day-care programs and contracted family day-home agencies that are accredited or participating in accreditation	97%	97%	97%	98%
	(2014-15)			
1.e Percentage of children and youth with a new child intervention file who did not have a file closure in the previous 12 months ¹	83%	87%	87%	87%
	(2014-15)			

Note:

- ¹ Includes children and youth that are in care and not in care. This measure shows the number of children and youth who have received child intervention services that do not return for additional services.

Linking Performance Measures to Outcomes:

- 1.a Shows Human 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 Shows how well Human Services is addressing the needs of youth transitioning out of government care into post-secondary and enabling them to reach their full potential through participation in advanced education.
- 1.c Demonstrates the impact of Human Services on a family's ability to improve the well-being of children with disabilities.
- 1.d Shows how Human Services is supporting a strong start for children. High-quality learning environments for children provide the foundation for achieving better social and economic outcomes over the long-term.
- 1.e Demonstrates how well the ministry is meeting its goal to provide permanent and stable living situations for children who received intervention services.

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	11.7% (2009)	11.8% (2010)	11.6% (2011)	11.0% (2012)	11.0% (2013)
1.b Children receiving Child Intervention services as a percentage of the child population in Alberta:					
• Percentage	2.2%	2.2%	2.0%	1.7%	1.6%
• Number of children receiving Child Intervention services	18,186	18,438	17,264	15,577	14,578
• Children in Alberta	840,411 (2011)	855,969 (2012)	874,784 (2013)	893,686 (2014)	913,390 (2015)

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

Human 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 Human Services 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 for themselves.

Key Strategies:

- 2.1 Ensure disability supports and services are integrated so persons with disabilities receive appropriate and inclusive supports in the most efficient and effective manner across their lifespan.
- 2.2 Prevent and address homelessness and improve housing stability for Albertans in need by integrating personal, financial and health supports with housing.
- 2.3 Improve access to integrated services through Alberta Supports' Call, Click and Come-in channels.
- 2.4 Simplify access to financial supports by integrating income programs.
- 2.5 Through evaluation, quality assurance and performance management, promote effectiveness, accountability and transparency of Human Services programs and services.

Performance Measures	Last Actual (Year)	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19
2.a Satisfaction of families/guardians of adults with developmental disabilities with Persons with Developmental Disabilities funded services (biennial survey)	87% (2014-15)	88%	n/a	89%
2.b Service providers' satisfaction with supports and decision-making services provided by the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee (biennial survey)	93% (2013-14)	n/a	93%	n/a
2.c Percentage of participants employed after leaving Income Support ^{1,2}	60% (2014-15)	61%	62%	63%
2.d Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) quality-of-life index ³	73% (2014-15)	76%	77%	78%
2.e Percentage of Housing First clients that have remained housed in the current fiscal year	91% (2014-15)	91%	91%	91%

Notes:

- ¹ Starting in 2015, this measure will be based on a sample of clients surveyed between January and December each year rather than a sample surveyed between September and January.
- ² 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).
- ³ 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 Shows the ministry's progress on providing quality services related to decision-making for adult Albertans.
- 2.c Demonstrates the success of Albertans in attaining employment after leaving Income Support in order to maximize their potential.
- 2.d 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.
- 2.e Demonstrates the ministry's on-going effort to ensure that Albertans at risk of homelessness have stability in their living conditions and receive services to move them toward greater self-reliance.

Performance Indicators	Actual 2011	Actual 2012	Actual 2013	Actual 2014	Actual 2015
2.a Average Annual Income Support Caseload	36,979	34,323	33,593	36,178	36,542
2.b Average Annual AISH Caseload	43,317	45,429	47,411	49,698	51,959

Outcome Three: Greater collaboration between government, communities and Indigenous partners to strengthen services and achieve shared social outcomes

All sectors of Alberta’s society have a role to play in improving the quality of life of Albertans. Human Services continues to build on already strong foundational relationships with government, community and Indigenous partners to deliver on shared priorities. Collaboration means sharing the right information to help staff deliver services efficiently and to allow government to make the best decisions to improve services. It means engaging with Indigenous leaders, communities and partners on challenges that affect Indigenous children and families and building on strengths in Indigenous communities. It also means working with other government departments to ensure training and employment initiatives for all Albertans are planned and delivered in a coordinated way. Finally, it means working with the non-profit and voluntary sector to ensure a sustainable continuum of supports is available for Albertans.

Key Strategies:

- 3.1 Work with Indigenous communities, leaders and partners to strengthen relationships and develop collaborative strategies that support Indigenous people.
- 3.2 Work closely with Indigenous leaders to review ministry programs and policies to identify ways to implement the objectives and principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- 3.3 Provide training and supports to assist Albertans with finding and maintaining employment and increasing their employment opportunities, with special attention to specific populations who require extra support such as Indigenous peoples, immigrants, people with disabilities and youth.
- 3.4 Improve information-sharing practices within government and with service agencies to support the best outcomes for the health, education and safety of children and families.
- 3.5 Work with the Family and Community Support Services community on a renewed vision to support improved social outcomes for Albertans.

Performance Measures	Last Actual 2014-15	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19
3.a Percentage of clients reporting they are either employed or in further education or training after leaving a skills training program ¹	74%	75%	76%	77%
3.b Percentage of Indigenous children in foster care/kinship care who are placed with Indigenous families	39%	50%	50%	53%

Note:

¹ Starting in 2015, this measure will be based on a sample of clients surveyed between January and December each year rather than a sample surveyed between September and January.

Linking Performance Measures to Outcomes:

- 3.a This measure shows how successful Human Services is in supporting Albertans who have received skills training to transition to employment or further education or training.
- 3.b This measure shows how the individual needs of vulnerable children may be met by placing them in culturally appropriate situations in collaboration with Indigenous communities in order to achieve shared social outcomes.

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

(thousands of dollars)	Comparable			2016-17 Estimate	2017-18 Target	2018-19 Target
	2014-15 Actual	2015-16 Budget	2015-16 Forecast			
REVENUE						
Services on First Nations Reserves	53,673	60,478	60,478	62,246	64,075	64,075
Labour Market Development	50,690	48,668	48,950	40,850	40,488	40,488
Other Federal Transfers	25,580	22,113	22,113	25,868	24,430	24,920
Premiums, Fees and Licences	5,516	5,404	5,404	5,372	5,372	5,362
Other Revenue	29,095	20,205	20,205	22,558	22,558	22,558
Ministry Total	164,554	156,868	157,150	156,894	156,923	157,403
Inter-Ministry Consolidations	(2)	-	-	-	-	-
Consolidated Total	164,552	156,868	157,150	156,894	156,923	157,403
EXPENSE						
Ministry Support Services	41,382	41,038	41,038	39,580	39,564	39,553
Employment and Income Support	610,882	652,823	675,323	683,098	703,336	735,869
Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped	915,870	949,489	949,489	977,761	1,001,440	1,014,010
Persons with Disabilities Supports	1,047,338	1,067,159	1,066,479	1,088,751	1,105,559	1,122,550
Alberta Supports	15,209	15,081	15,081	14,642	14,649	14,649
Child Intervention	712,068	735,512	735,512	734,149	737,661	742,005
Child Care	280,612	296,897	290,897	306,548	321,531	321,531
Early Intervention Services for Children and Youth	95,525	90,279	90,279	91,996	93,376	94,700
Homeless and Outreach Support Services	162,240	177,941	177,941	181,352	181,292	181,292
Community Supports and Family Safety	97,871	137,816	136,316	123,711	123,707	123,707
Public Guardian and Trustee Services	28,278	30,098	37,848	29,832	29,822	29,822
Alberta Child Benefit	-	-	-	147,000	196,000	196,000
2013 Alberta Flooding	3,579	1,400	300	1,100	1,100	-
Ministry Total	4,010,854	4,195,533	4,216,503	4,419,520	4,549,037	4,615,688
Inter-Ministry Consolidations	(22,693)	(23,372)	(23,372)	(23,372)	(23,372)	(23,372)
Consolidated Total	3,988,161	4,172,161	4,193,131	4,396,148	4,525,665	4,592,316
Net Operating Result	(3,823,609)	(4,015,293)	(4,035,981)	(4,239,254)	(4,368,742)	(4,434,913)
CAPITAL INVESTMENT						
Ministry Support Services	119	549	549	494	494	494
Employment and Income Support	4,053	2,869	2,869	2,582	2,582	2,582
Persons with Disabilities Supports	291	608	608	547	547	547
Child Intervention	661	2,775	2,775	1,539	1,539	1,539
Total	5,124	6,801	6,801	5,162	5,162	5,162