

Justice and Solicitor General

BUSINESS PLAN 2015–20

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

This business plan was prepared under my direction, taking into consideration the government's policy decisions as of March 5, 2015.

original signed by

Jonathan Denis, QC, Minister
March 13, 2015

THE MINISTRY

The ministry consists of the Department of Justice and Solicitor General, the Victims of Crime Fund, and the Human Rights Education and Multiculturalism Fund. Within the department's budget, funding is provided for the following agencies, boards and commissions which are accountable to the minister: Alberta Human Rights Commission, Alberta Review Board, Criminal Injuries Review Board, Fatality Review Board, Judicial Council, Law Enforcement Review Board, Notaries Public Review Committee, Provincial Court Nominating Committee, Rules of Court Committee and Victims of Crime Programs Committee.

The ministry plays a key role in the stewardship of the justice system in Alberta. Its programs and services uphold the rule of law and help ensure Albertans' safety and security. The ministry performs a range of functions in conjunction with other ministries, the judiciary, policing agencies and stakeholder organizations. It administers the courts in Alberta, provides information and dispute resolution options, prosecutes people accused of breaking the law and provides custody, supervision and rehabilitative opportunities for individuals under correctional authority. The ministry operates a range of programs and services including Maintenance Enforcement and the Motor Vehicle Accident Claims and Recoveries programs, Family Justice and Civil Mediation Services, Law Information Centres and law libraries. The Property Rights Advocate Office and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner have specific legislated functions to carry out independently from the department, but operate through the department in other areas. Justice and Solicitor General is party to a tri-partite agreement with the Law Society of Alberta and Legal Aid Alberta in the delivery of legal aid to Albertans. The ministry provides oversight of the RCMP, as our provincial police service, and supports, educates and trains police commissions and policing committees who oversee municipal police services. The ministry also provides legal advice and strategic services to government.

A more detailed description of Justice and Solicitor General and its programs and initiatives can be found at www.justicesolgen.alberta.ca.

LINK TO GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Programs and services delivered by the ministry were reviewed for relevance, effectiveness and efficiency in accordance with the Government of Alberta's *Results-based Budgeting Act*.

The desired outcomes and priority initiatives identified in this business plan are aligned with the strategic direction of the Government of Alberta and ministry mandates.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Alberta has one of the highest rates of population growth in the country which places greater demands on the justice system. New economic, fiscal and demographic realities have substantial implications for the ministry as it adapts to changing demands and expectations of the justice system.

For example, using the justice system can be difficult, time consuming and costly for many Albertans whose cases grow more complicated as their needs become increasingly complex. As a growing number of people have begun to try to handle their own court cases rather than relying on lawyers, their unique needs must be addressed. This coincides with a growing trend amongst the public for increased self-service options and transparency from all levels of government. In addition, as social, addiction and mental health issues continue to bring Albertans into the justice system, a coordinated effort is required to provide help within Alberta communities for these at-risk, vulnerable populations.

The ministry is being challenged to adapt to ensure the justice system remains sustainable. Innovative programs and services are required to meet the needs of Alberta's diverse and growing population. This involves doing things differently by finding opportunities to better utilize existing resources such as technology and court houses, changing the way we deal with traffic tickets to simplify procedures and improve accessibility for Albertans and continuing to build a team of talented public servants who can deliver on an ambitious agenda of change.

The justice system is complex and interconnected, with many different programs and services including policing, prosecutions, legal aid, courts, victim services and correctional services. Interdependencies and interrelationships of each of the system's components need to be considered, as pressures on one part of the system can have singular program and system-wide effects. Likewise, changes to a program or service can have far-reaching impacts throughout the system. There is agreement that the system should be less complex, less expensive and less adversarial, with better dispute resolution mechanisms.

The justice system is hard to change, but people across the province are coming together to make it better. Albertans want to be involved in creating an open and responsive justice system that works for all Albertans and reflects current values. The justice system is responding to the challenge to innovate and new ideas are making their way into the legal system, including movement toward simplifying procedures so Albertans can deal with legal issues on their own or with non-lawyer assistance. The ministry is committed to the holistic delivery of the justice system and the impact it has on Albertans, as well as its ability to develop long-term strategies that deliver the results Albertans expect. Collective action is required to tackle this complex task and the ministry is committed to collaborating with justice system stakeholders to support meaningful and innovative change.

Service excellence is a priority for the ministry. As Albertans have legitimately high expectations about how their government should perform, it is critical that the ministry delivers client-focused programs that are accessible, affordable, efficient and timely. The ministry will work with justice system stakeholders and other government partners to meet the needs of Albertans, giving consideration to ease of access for clients, rather than ease of delivery for government.

DESIRED OUTCOMES, PRIORITY INITIATIVES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Desired Outcome One: Alberta's communities are safe, secure and resilient

Protecting Albertans and supporting safety at the community level is a primary focus of the ministry. Albertans have said they value safe and secure communities where they feel confident that they can walk after dark without fear of crime or victimization. Ministry programs and policies are continuously improved to take a preventative approach to crime and respond effectively to reduce the impact of crime on Albertans, their families, communities and victims. The ministry enhances public safety through custody, supervision and rehabilitative opportunities for individuals under correctional authority. Through targeted programming linking offenders with the services they need to improve their quality of life and community safety, the ministry aims to reduce risk factors and promote protective factors to help communities thrive. Key mandate items aligned with this outcome include working with police, Human Services and communities to advance safe communities; and, supporting victims of crime and effective custody and correctional services across the province.

Priority Initiatives:

- 1.1 Review and revise the Law Enforcement Framework so that it is responsive to changing issues and needs, and to ensure Government of Alberta involvement regarding policy direction for law enforcement.
- 1.2 Review the structure and program delivery of organized and serious crime enforcement services within the province to ensure they are responsive to community needs, while effectively managing resources.
- 1.3 Formalize information sharing practices between Correctional Services and other enforcement agencies so that intelligence gathered within correctional facilities is shared appropriately to prevent and detect criminal offences.
- 1.4 Collaborate with Human Services, Health, police, municipalities and service agencies to deliver coordinated, timely, and appropriate supports and services for individuals with addictions and mental health issues who are involved with the justice system. This includes developing a joint policy for addiction and mental health services, which will encourage healthier, safer communities, improved information sharing and service delivery standards, and greater access to services.
- 1.5 Work with partners to enhance policies and programs to rehabilitate and support individuals involved in the justice system, ensuring the services and supervision provided are responsive, coordinated and consistent, and that they are appropriate given the needs and risks of varying offender populations.
- 1.6 Work with First Nations partners to develop culturally appropriate crime prevention initiatives.

Performance Measures	Last Actual 2013-14	Target 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-20
1.a Percentage of Albertans who feel safe walking alone in their area after dark	82%	84%	84%	85%	85%	86%
1.b Percentage of Albertans satisfied with policing in Alberta over the past 12 months	83%	86%	87%	87%	88%	88%
1.c Number of escapes from secure custody or during transport	1	0	0	0	0	0
1.d Percentage of offenders successfully completing their sentence while on temporary absence without incurring new criminal charges ¹	99.6%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note:

- 1 New methodology uses temporary absences revoked due to re-offence.

Desired Outcome Two: Alberta has a modern justice system that enables timely and appropriate outcomes

Access to justice is a systemic change initiative that seeks to introduce innovative solutions to complex problems. By creating options that put Albertans first and support a collaborative and coordinated process, the ministry is addressing areas of confusion and the adversarial nature of the current justice system. 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. In addition, considerable court time is spent on family, civil and traffic matters that could be more efficiently and effectively dealt with outside of the courtroom. The ministry is committed to providing alternate dispute resolution processes, expanding and improving case management in the Alberta courts and examining pre-trial processes and non-court based options with partners and stakeholders. This will improve client outcomes, improve access to justice and allow justice and court resources to be appropriately focused on the timely resolution of serious or complex criminal, family or civil matters.

Priority Initiatives:

- 2.1 Collaborate with partners to reform the family justice system in Alberta to make it more open and responsive by providing families with coordinated services to resolve disputes without having to go to court wherever possible and, when court processes are required, making them less adversarial.
- 2.2 Transform traffic ticket processing to improve traffic safety while developing a fair, accessible and sustainable process for Albertans to dispute tickets. The transformation will increase capacity in courts, prosecutions, law enforcement and court administration.
- 2.3 Examine innovative policies, processes and practices for bail/remand, pre-trial supervision and intermittent sentences to focus ministry efforts on supervision of medium and high risk offenders.
- 2.4 In the spirit of the Injecting a Sense of Urgency report, continue to reform the Alberta Crown Prosecution Service to address violent and serious offences in a timely manner.
- 2.5 Reduce the number of court appearances required before setting a trial date by expanding remote court scheduling and improving the electronic flow of information.
- 2.6 Continue to simplify processes and expand dispute resolution options in the Provincial Court to resolve civil claims (small claims) in a timely, cost-effective manner.
- 2.7 Continue to review opportunities to enhance technology to support the management of offenders under correctional jurisdiction.

Performance Measures	Last Actual (Year)	Target 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-20
2.a Percentage of Albertans who agree that fair and impartial service is provided to prosecute people charged with a crime	80% (2013-14)	82%	83%	84%	85%	86%
2.b Median elapsed time from first to last appearance for a criminal case in Provincial Court and Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta	117 days (2011-12)	116 days	116 days	116 days	116 days	116 days

Desired Outcome Three: Albertans receive excellent service

The ministry has always supported excellent service for Albertans and staff. Service excellence is about improving the overall user experience and having the right mix of experience, knowledge and skills required to meet current and future needs. The ministry is taking a citizen-centred approach to address the needs of those involved in the justice system through the use of technology, simplification of processes and bridging the gap between rural and urban service levels. The priority is to challenge assumptions, processes and systems to deliver services that are targeted, appropriate and cost-effective. Understanding the various components of the justice system and how they interact with other social systems will enable the ministry and its employees to expand availability, streamline services and maximize program capacity.

Priority Initiatives:

- 3.1 Ensure appropriate funding for legal aid to enable Albertans to access and receive legal assistance and services when they need them.
- 3.2 Ensure the effectiveness of the Maintenance Enforcement Program by improving the accessibility of program services to clients; undertaking a client and stakeholder engagement plan; improving clients' self-serve options; and increasing access to the child support recalculation program.
- 3.3 Improve access to information and support for victims of crime as they move through the criminal justice process by ensuring services are aligned with victims' needs, providing training to victim support workers, and using technology to expand the availability of services across the province.
- 3.4 Collaborate with partners to develop a process for the online payment of fines, fees and debts, which will be more accessible, user-friendly and timely for Albertans than the current court administration process, and will allow the redeployment of court resources to more serious or complex matters.
- 3.5 Create and implement a sustainable and innovative infrastructure plan for courthouses across the province that will focus on the needs of Albertans, taking into consideration the increasing number of Albertans who represent themselves in court.
- 3.6 Implement recommendations from Results-based Budgeting, as appropriate, to improve the ministry's ability to protect Albertans.
- 3.7 Develop and implement a strategic workforce plan to include succession and talent management, ensuring the right people are in the right place at the right time to deliver service to Albertans.
- 3.8 Implement a new service delivery model to reduce government involvement in transcription and court reporting services and allow the reallocation of court resources to more serious or complex matters.
- 3.9 Continue to implement the ministry's information management and technology strategic plan to improve the ministry's ability to deliver services to Albertans.

Performance Measures	Last Actual 2013-14	Target 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-20
3.a Percentage of victims satisfied with services provided by employees and volunteers within the criminal justice system	85%	86%	86%	87%	87%	88%
3.b Maintenance Enforcement Program's compliance rate on cases enrolled, by regular monthly payments	73%	74%	74%	75%	75%	76%

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
Consolidated Financial Statements Basis

(thousands of dollars)	Comparable					
	2014-15 Forecast	2015-16 Estimate	2016-17 Target	2017-18 Target	2018-19 Target	2019-20 Target
REVENUE						
Transfers from Government of Canada	36,664	33,030	32,830	32,830	31,821	31,821
Investment Income	950	970	970	995	995	995
Motor Vehicle Accident Claim Fees	23,100	23,600	24,000	24,500	24,500	24,500
Other Premiums, Fees and Licences	16,990	23,253	23,253	23,253	23,253	23,253
Fines and Penalties	135,900	203,507	209,307	215,307	221,607	221,607
Maintenance Enforcement	15,196	14,974	14,977	15,012	15,046	15,046
Other Revenue	23,660	23,500	28,672	29,393	29,776	29,776
Consolidation Adjustments	(525)	(525)	(525)	(525)	(525)	(525)
Total Revenue	251,935	322,309	333,484	340,765	346,473	346,473
EXPENSE						
Ministry Support Services	56,412	59,082	56,764	55,264	56,898	59,394
Resolution and Court Administration Services	201,374	202,418	202,619	204,619	210,426	216,090
Legal Services	56,857	56,198	56,371	56,371	58,676	62,197
Alberta Crown Prosecution Service	95,457	94,493	94,606	94,606	98,446	104,311
Support for Legal Aid	64,310	66,000	69,500	69,500	69,500	69,500
Justice Services	43,595	44,417	43,877	43,912	45,189	47,086
Public Security	501,350	510,876	516,541	512,794	526,366	533,177
Correctional Services	255,855	250,780	250,783	250,812	260,419	275,092
Alberta Human Rights	8,374	8,424	8,399	8,424	8,721	9,175
Motor Vehicle Accident Claims	20,562	21,237	21,212	21,162	21,162	21,162
Victims of Crime Fund	33,331	33,197	34,597	36,297	38,097	38,097
Consolidation Adjustments	(525)	(525)	(525)	(525)	(525)	(525)
Total Expense	1,336,952	1,346,597	1,354,744	1,353,236	1,393,375	1,434,756
Net Operating Result	(1,085,017)	(1,024,288)	(1,021,260)	(1,012,471)	(1,046,902)	(1,088,283)
CAPITAL INVESTMENT BY PROGRAM						
Ministry Support Services	3,582	780	549	549	549	549
Resolution and Court Administration Services	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Legal Services	25	-	-	-	-	-
Justice Services	1,070	620	620	620	620	620
Public Security	96,948	64,559	26,663	7,362	4,933	3,463
Correctional Services	150	150	150	150	150	150
Victims of Crime Fund	25	25	25	25	25	25
Total	102,800	67,134	29,007	9,706	7,277	5,807