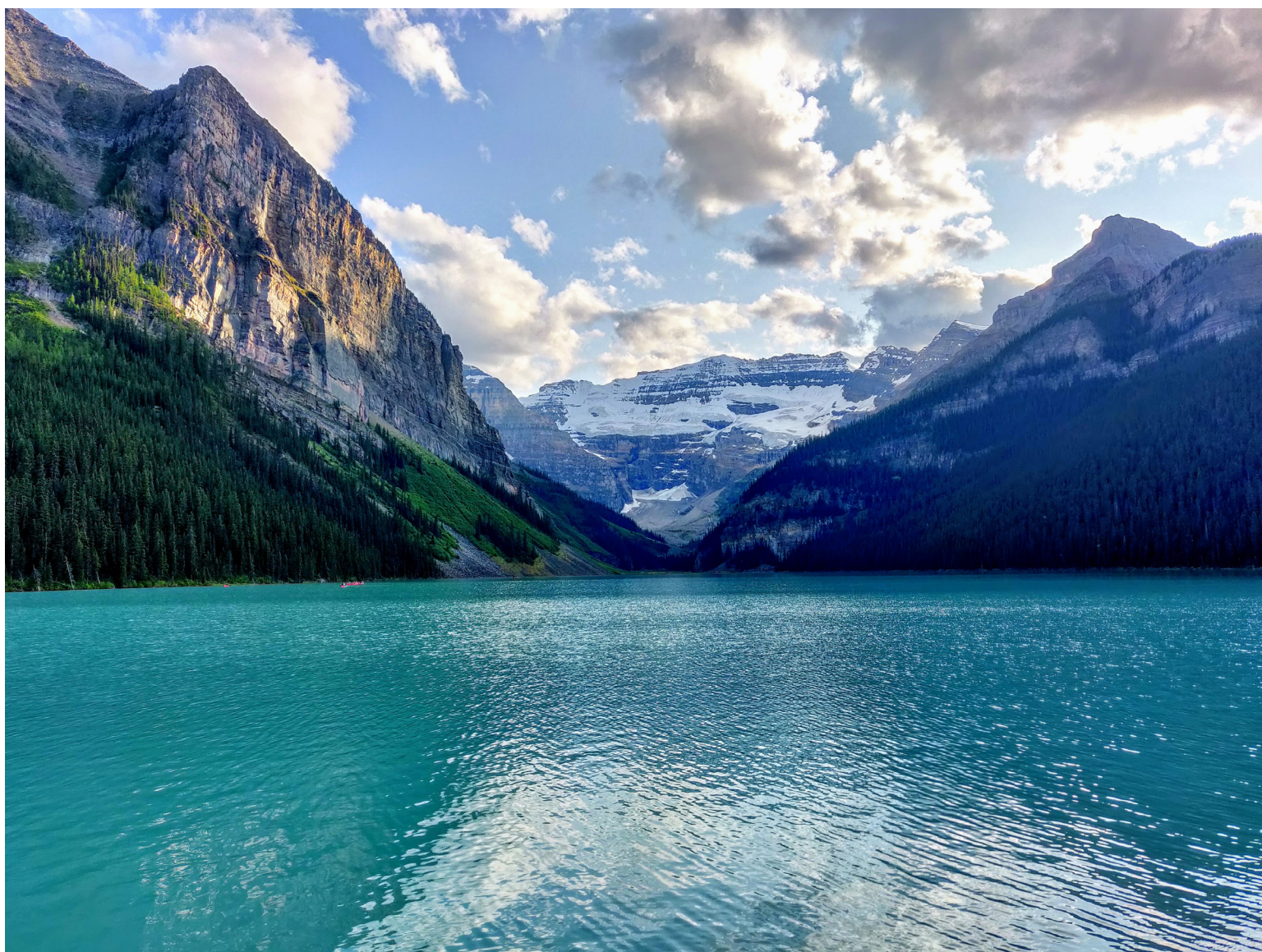


BUDGET 2023

Strategic plan

Government of Alberta
2023-26



Alberta

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Premier's Message



Alberta is the best place to live, work and raise a family.

Albertans have tackled some challenging years together, but this government has worked hard to ensure the economy is diversified, competitive, attracts investment, and creates jobs. Our plan is working.

Alberta is leading the nation in economic growth. Our strong economy, quality of life, and abundant opportunities are encouraging other Canadians and new immigrants to make Alberta their home. Alberta offers low taxes and a skilled workforce, which is why international companies are choosing this province as their destination of choice to invest.

Albertans are proven leaders and the 2023 – 2026 Strategic Plan ensures the province will continue on that road. The strategic plan boosts Alberta's advantage with a key focus on affordability, economic growth, health and education.

First, this government is leading the way on supports for the vulnerable and those Albertans struggling with the everyday cost of living. Budget 2023 provides an opportunity to help Albertans through the inflationary crisis by providing a wide range of affordability measures. These will provide relief to families, seniors and vulnerable Albertans as this government explores more ways to continue supporting all Albertans.

Second, this government is leading the way on economic growth by focusing on even more job creation, attracting international investors and also supporting local businesses. Budget 2023 facilitates job creation and diversification by attracting investments in new and emerging sectors while protecting core industries, making our province even more competitive.

Third, this government is leading the way on health care reforms to build a stronger system that works for Albertans. Budget 2023 provides funding to address the most urgent healthcare challenges so that Albertans who need help, get it when and where they need it. This involves training more health care professionals, providing more ambulances and utilizing specialized surgical centres to reduce surgical wait times. The budget also provides more programs and resources to help people struggling with mental health and addiction.

Finally, this government is leading the way on defending our interests and standing up to federal government overreach. Albertans are proud Canadians; we are proud of our province and what we have achieved over the years. We take pride in our natural parks and wildlife, diverse culture, beautiful landscapes and abundant natural resources. This government will stand up to protect Alberta from those seeking to control our economy and resources. With Budget 2023, we continue to put the best interests of Albertans first.

Even with the challenges ahead, Albertans continue to show resilience and strength. I am confident that together, this province will face challenges head on and emerge even stronger. That is the Alberta way.

Best regards,
Danielle Smith

Vision

Albertans are an independent, self-sufficient, and generous people. These last few years, however, have proved to be difficult for many. Rising inflation is affecting Albertans' ability to provide for themselves and their families; our healthcare system is under significant strain; and we are combatting unprecedented interference and overreach from the federal government in Ottawa. Alberta's government is securing Alberta's future by growing the economy, encouraging businesses to create more jobs, strengthening health care, and supporting Albertans by investing their tax dollars prudently.

This government is taking immediate action to make life more affordable for Albertans. Alberta's government is delivering targeted relief for families, seniors, and the most vulnerable through direct affordability payments and by indexing benefits to inflation. The government is also indexing personal income taxes to inflation and has paused the collection of the full 13-cent provincial fuel tax until June 30, 2023, regardless of oil prices. We are also helping all Albertans with the rising costs of everyday necessities through electricity and heating rebates. We are providing relief to Albertans by keeping more money in their pockets.

Alberta's long-term prosperity is dependent on improving competitiveness, attracting business investment, and creating jobs. Alberta's economy has momentum. By focusing on job creation and diversification, we are maintaining our position as the economic engine of Canada. We continue to make strategic investments to support key and emerging sectors, reduce unnecessary government oversight to save time and money for Albertans and Alberta businesses, and eliminate barriers for job creators. With one of the lowest corporate tax rates in North America, more corporations and large companies across many sectors are choosing Alberta, creating family-supporting jobs, and maintaining our high quality of life.

We are increasing access to innovative learning opportunities, advancing skilled trades as a valuable career option by creating a modern, flexible, and efficient certification and apprenticeship system, and diversifying learning experiences that help students build in-demand skills that meet labour market needs now and in the future.

Alberta has the best front-line health care workers in the world, and Alberta's government is working to ensure that Albertans have access to the care they need, when and where they need it. We are securing Alberta's future by reforming and building a stronger healthcare system that provides high-quality, accessible care for all Albertans. The government is providing record levels of health care investment, improving Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system response times, reducing emergency department and surgical wait times to ensure patients are receiving the appropriate level of care, and empowering frontline workers to deliver better health care services. Alberta's government is building a recovery-oriented system of care for those at risk of or experiencing mental-health and addiction challenges, where each person is treated with dignity and respect as they work toward achieving their recovery goals.

We are securing Alberta's future by remaining steadfastly committed to responsible fiscal management. The government is introducing a new fiscal framework that will set rules to guide government decision-making on spending, paying down debt and saving for the future. We will continue to respect Albertans by investing their tax dollars in priority areas to sustain the vital public services on which they rely.

Albertans are resilient; we have faced difficult challenges before. Not only have we overcome them, we have grown stronger for it. We are securing Alberta's future, leading the nation in economic growth, investment, and immigration. Alberta is welcoming skilled workers from around Canada and the world to experience the Renewed Alberta Advantage. Thousands of people are already choosing Alberta in record numbers and we lead Canada in population growth. In 2022, Alberta had the highest single-quarter population growth rate in more than 40 years. Alberta is calling; other Canadians, and people from around the world, are answering.

TWO KEY PRIORITIES



1 | SECURING ALBERTA'S FUTURE

As a senior partner in Confederation, and contributor to the country's prosperity, Alberta will assert its constitutional jurisdiction within Canada, protecting Alberta from an intrusive federal government, while continuing to respect treaty rights and government's relationships with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. Building on Alberta's strong foundations, including low taxes, a skilled and educated workforce, and an efficient regulatory environment, we are enhancing Alberta's investment climate, and supporting economic growth and job creation.



2 | STANDING UP FOR ALBERTANS

To ensure Albertans receive value for each tax dollar spent, the Government of Alberta is making transformational changes to ensure the effective and accessible delivery of the services Albertans rely on, particularly in health care and education. Our fiscally responsible approach will ensure sustainable, high quality public services are provided to those who need them, when they need them.

Priority one

Securing Alberta's Future

Our objectives

1. Connecting Albertans to jobs
2. Attracting investment and growing the economy
3. Building Alberta
4. Securing a fair deal for Alberta within a united Canada
5. Reducing unnecessary government oversight
6. Standing up for Alberta's natural resources
7. Ensuring the health and integrity of Alberta's environment and ecosystems

PRIORITY ONE

Objective one

Connecting Albertans to jobs

Government is addressing current and longer-term labour market challenges by supporting Alberta's workforce through responsive training and employment programming, attracting talent, and creating a labour force to meet the demands of Alberta's growing economy.

Actions

- Advancing skilled trades as a valuable career option by creating a modern, flexible, and efficient certification and apprenticeship system. Through the implementation of the *Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Education Act*, government is supporting Alberta's future skill development needs, apprenticeship education pathways, and on-job education requirements.
- In 2023-24, government is investing in the Alberta at Work and skills and training programs to address current and longer-term labour market challenges. These initiatives will provide Albertans with access to training and career development opportunities, help out-of-work Albertans re-enter the workforce, expand the use of the apprenticeship learning model, and increase enrolment in targeted programs. Government continues to deliver responsive training and employment programs to help Albertans participate in our increasingly diverse economic growth.
- Growing and diversifying Alberta's aerospace, aviation and logistics sectors through an agreement with WestJet Airlines. Government is supporting students to reach their goals by providing funding to Mount Royal University to expand the aviation diploma program to meet the known labour market demand for pilots, as well as expanding bursary and student loan programs for aviation occupations, including pilots and aviation maintenance.
- Investing in unemployed and underemployed Albertans through the Driving Back to Work Grant program, which provides more than 90 per cent of training and testing costs to become a Class 1 commercial driver, supporting the economy, and helping keep the province's supply chain moving.
- Increasing access to child care through initiatives that support affordable, quality, safe, and inclusive programs enabling parents to participate in, and support Alberta's economic growth. In 2023-24 the government is investing \$59.3 million to create up to 15,500 licensed child care spaces. Alberta's government is also investing \$229 million to meet the growing demand for skilled early childhood educators through certification and professional development, promoting early learning and child care as viable career choices.
- Investing \$1.4 billion in Capital Maintenance and Renewal (CMR) projects in 2023-24. CMR projects include vital repairs to government-owned facilities like courthouses, provincial buildings, housing, post-secondary institutions, health facilities, schools, and cultural facilities throughout Alberta. These projects are often delivered by small and medium-sized contractors, and support local economies and small business owners.

PRIORITY ONE

Objective two

Attracting investment and growing the economy

Government will continue to enhance Alberta's investment climate to support the province's economic growth. Building on Alberta's strong foundations, including low taxes, a skilled and educated workforce, and an efficient regulatory environment, the government will support established and emerging sectors, and create job opportunities.

Actions

- Supporting access to new markets for Alberta exports by partnering with industry in key growth sectors to plan and execute international and trade missions to advance Alberta's trade interests.
- Through the Alberta Export Expansion Program, enhancing Alberta's trade market access and expanding exports by delivering funding to help export-ready companies and non-profit organizations enhance access to international markets and attract global buyers.
- Maintaining property tax initiatives including a property tax holiday for all new well and pipeline assets until the 2024 tax year, to encourage new investment in the oil and gas sector and support the continued viability of existing assets.
- Attracting highly skilled Canadian certified professionals to work in Alberta by removing barriers to out-of-province credentials recognition through the *Labour Mobility Act*, which clarifies requirements for regulatory authorities and creates a consistent approach to recognizing those credentials.
- Supporting economic growth, job creation and diversification through the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program (AAIP) streams to attract job-creating entrepreneurs, specialized skills, and talent to support Alberta's economic growth.
- Allocating \$22.5 million in 2023-24 to the Alberta Technology and Innovation Strategy to position Alberta as an internationally recognized technology and innovation hub that develops and attracts people, business, and investment, with key initiatives such as innovation-related programming and support for emerging technologies. These technologies include artificial intelligence, quantum science, and the development of an intellectual property commercialization framework that will accelerate commercialization of research developed in Alberta.
- Through the Alberta Enterprise Corporation, the government is connecting Alberta inventors, innovators, and entrepreneurs with venture capital investments, diversifying and developing an innovation-based economy in Alberta.
- Growing Alberta's film and television industry and securing Alberta's position as a filmmaking production hub through targeted incentives. Alberta's film industry has more than doubled in production value and is becoming one of the fastest growing industries in the province.
- Developing and implementing a competitive Agri-Food and Value-Added Processing and Manufacturing program to help industry reach its full economic potential and contribute to the provincial economy. Incentivizing increased capital investment will enable Alberta to maintain its advantage in agri-food manufacturing within Western Canada.

PRIORITY ONE

Objective three Building Alberta

To better serve Albertans and support Alberta's economy, the government is committed to building a strong and vibrant province through key infrastructure developments that support communities, attract investment, and create jobs.

Actions

- Improving broadband services across the province, providing Albertans with access to reliable, high-speed internet by 2026-27 and ensuring that rural, remote, and Indigenous communities are included in the province's economic prosperity.
- Investing in the expansion and improvement of the irrigation network in Alberta. Investments in irrigation will enhance crop production through the ability to grow an increasingly diverse array of crops that cannot be grown under dryland conditions, and provide expanded food manufacturing opportunities.
- Providing grants to assist gas and electricity distributors providing utility services to rural Albertans, and continuing the Rural Electric Program through to 2026 to help reduce the cost of installing farm electric services (i.e., poles, wires, transformers). Investments support thriving rural communities, and access to an efficient and modern utility distribution system that is safe, reliable, resilient, and environmentally responsible.
- Supporting our communities by providing \$485 million in capital funding to Alberta municipalities through the Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI), as well as \$266 million through the federal Canada Community-Building Fund. These continued infrastructure investments support local decision-making, sustain local jobs, and position Alberta's communities to continue participating in future economic growth. The 2023-24 fiscal year will be the final year for the MSI.
- Implementing the Local Government Fiscal Framework (LGFF) to replace the MSI beginning in 2024-25, with \$722 million in municipal capital funding being provided in that first year. The LGFF is a legislated program in which municipal funding in future years will be indexed to provincial revenue. The revenue index factor is being increased from 50 to 100 per cent so that municipalities can be full partners in Alberta's economic fortunes, recognizing the essential role municipalities and local infrastructure play in supporting businesses and creating jobs.
- Investing \$2.3 billion over three years toward priority infrastructure projects to promote economic growth, create jobs, clear transportation bottlenecks, and reduce congestion in key trade and industrial corridors. Key projects underway include: twinning segments of Highway 3 in southern Alberta, building a new interchange on Highway 2 near Leduc, and upgrading Deerfoot Trail in Calgary. In 2023-24, Alberta's government is also investing approximately \$355 million over three years in smaller projects to support municipal roads, bridges and water/wastewater infrastructure.

PRIORITY ONE

Objective four

Securing a fair deal for Alberta within a united Canada

The government will continue to advance Alberta's interests and effectively advocate on the issues that are important to Albertans while building and maintaining strong relationships with federal, provincial and territorial governments.

Alberta's government is committed to securing a fair deal at national and international forums and ensuring Alberta's constitutional authority to make decisions within provincial jurisdiction is never compromised, all while continuing to respect the rights of Aboriginal peoples of Canada recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

Actions

- Advancing and defending Alberta's economic interests with the federal government in the negotiation of international agreements to improve market access for Alberta goods and services, and provide a stable framework for international investment and trade. Government will continue to advocate for Alberta as the federal government engages in trade negotiations with the United Kingdom, India, Indonesia, and other foreign governments.
- Building and maintaining direct relationships with priority international partners through the network of Alberta's international offices, particularly with national and state-level officials in the United States, to expand and defend Alberta's economic and policy interests.
- Considering outstanding recommendations of the Fair Deal Panel and taking action, as appropriate, in pursuit of a federal system that best serves the needs of Albertans and Canadians, affirming Alberta's place in the Canadian federation.
- Working closely with the world's leading banks, insurers, pension funds, credit rating agencies and investors to define and defend Alberta's leadership on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) standards across all sectors. This includes adopting a standardized jurisdictional ESG framework to enable transparent, comparable jurisdictional assessments and to enhance Alberta's reputation as a leader for clean, secure, and ethically-sourced energy, attracting new investment to the province.
- Continuing to advocate for responsible federal firearms legislation to deter criminals, respect property rights, and make sure Albertans continue to live in safe and secure communities. In 2023-24, government is investing over \$8 million to support the mandate of the Alberta Chief Firearms Office, which includes advocating for federal legislation that supports law-abiding firearm owners.

Objective five

Reducing unnecessary government oversight

Alberta's government is continuing to reduce red tape to make Alberta the most attractive destination for investment and job creation. To date, the government has reduced over 28 per cent of its regulatory requirements resulting in at least \$2.1 billion in cost savings for Albertans and Alberta businesses.

Actions

- Allocating nearly \$30 million in 2023-24, to reduce the Land Titles registration backlog which has delayed land title transactions, and return it to normal operating levels, as well as modernize the application process.
- Continuing to reform how the government regulates, including reducing wait times for permit approvals across government; reducing government oversight where it is not necessary; eliminating redundant requirements; and implementing smarter regulations that focus on the desired outcome rather than prescribing how it must be achieved.
- Implementing digital solutions to improve service delivery and reduce administrative burden including user-friendly digital services that are accessible to Albertans, such as modernizing the Registries Motor Vehicle System, removing barriers to accessing drivers' licences and vehicle registration.
- Strengthening the rights of landowners, and oil and gas operators to ensure fair and timely decision from the Land and Property Rights Tribunal on surface rights disputes by modernizing processes through improved technology, and reducing timelines for issuing decisions. This includes launching a Surface Rights E-File Portal for submitting and monitoring compensation applications, transitioning to a more efficient case management system, and implementing software to automate applications and decisions.
- Collaborating with other jurisdictions to reduce red tape and barriers to internal trade, including reviewing Alberta's exceptions under its trade agreements, as well as working with other governments to reconcile existing regulatory measures that act as a barrier to trade and aligning new regulatory measures. This helps improve access to goods and services, making life more affordable for Albertans.

PRIORITY ONE

Objective six

Standing up for Alberta's natural resources

Alberta's government will defend the province's track record as a responsible steward and advance Alberta's natural resource development by engaging with global partners and accessing new markets. Government will attract investment in Alberta's energy sector through innovative infrastructure development and streamlining the regulatory environment.

Actions

- Working with First Nations, Metis Settlements, other Métis communities, and Indigenous organizations to facilitate Indigenous participation in the province's resource development sector and on resource development projects through the Aboriginal Consultation Office.
- Continuing to invest in environmental stewardship and responsible resource development by advancing oil and gas site rehabilitation throughout Alberta.
- Exploring options to expand the eligibility of programming like the Alberta Petrochemical Incentive Program (APIP) to attract investment in Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage (CCUS). Work on this proposed initiative will include consultation with a cross section of industries to determine potential criteria, process, and coordination with contemplated federal CCUS initiatives to ensure the Alberta program enhances the province's economic competitiveness and world-leading environmental stewardship.
- Engaging with the United States and other global partners to promote Alberta's long-standing commitment to responsible and innovative energy and mineral resource development, and communicating Alberta's role as an integral, reliable partner in supporting North American and global energy security to investors.
- Advocating locally, nationally, and internationally for expanded pipeline capacity and access to new markets for Alberta's energy resources and products, including new and under-construction export pipelines, and new liquefied natural gas infrastructure, to access new markets, enhance energy security, and grow value-add industries.
- Attracting new investments through the Natural Gas Vision and Strategy, including enabling opportunities in liquefied natural gas, growing investments in petrochemical manufacturing, exploring opportunities for the development of hydrogen, and development of the plastics circular economy. This strategy positions Alberta to become a global supplier of clean, responsibly-sourced natural gas and related products, including hydrogen, petrochemicals, and recycled plastics.
- Creating and implementing a competitive regulatory environment that encourages the development of liquefied natural gas, hydrogen, helium, lithium, geothermal, and minerals.

Objective seven

Ensuring the health and integrity of Alberta's environment and ecosystem

The health and integrity of our environment and ecosystems are essential to the well-being of Albertans and the strength of the economy. Alberta's government will implement effective regulation, environmental frameworks, land use plans, and complementary strategies to secure a sustainable future for Albertans.

Alberta is committed to continuing to work with Indigenous communities on environmental issues to develop and maintain long-term, trust-based relationships and recognizing the unique perspective and priorities of the First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples as partners in climate action.

Actions

- Taking meaningful action toward a lower carbon future with the Alberta Emissions Reductions and Energy Development Plan. This plan sets out to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by working collaboratively with industrial emitters, and investing in innovation and the practical application of technology through the Technology, Innovation and Emissions Reduction (TIER) system. As one of the strongest policies in North America, this will help Alberta achieve its climate goals, strengthen the economy, and drive innovation in the province.
- Maintaining and strengthening environmental resource stewardship and conservation through proactive engagement and partnerships with municipalities, nonprofit organizations, and Indigenous communities. Through Alberta's Clean Air Strategy, the province is reaffirming its commitment to the wise management of air quality, and through the Water for Life Strategy, Alberta is achieving its commitment to safe, secure drinking water supply; healthy aquatic ecosystems; and reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy.
- Securing Alberta's position as a leader in regulatory assurance through the Regulatory Transformation Project (RTP). Alberta is supporting community and economic development while maintaining high-quality environmental health in Alberta through legislation, policies and plans. Once fully implemented, the RTP will provide outcomes-based approaches to decisions, be impartial, transparent, and agile with clear accountability, a common risk management framework, and enhanced stakeholder awareness.



EMPLOYMENT

Private sector employment

Last Actual: Employment in the private sector grew 7.8 per cent in 2022. The number of jobs in the private sector is an indicator of the extent to which economic conditions are affecting activity in the private sector and, therefore, employment in that sector.

Long-term unemployment rate

Last Actual: For 2022, the share of unemployed Albertans who were long-term unemployed was 21 per cent. Long-term unemployment is defined as being out of work and looking for a job for 27 weeks or more and is an indication of the overall health of the labour force, the ability for people to find work, and the extent to which government programs and economic conditions are impacting long-term unemployment.

Wages and salaries growth

Last Actual: On a year-to-date basis until September, wages and salaries were up 8.8 per cent in 2022 compared to 2021. Wages and salaries are an indicator of labour income, and reflect changes in employment, labour force participation, hours worked, and wage growth.

Enrollment in facility-based child care programs, family day home, innovative, and group family child care

Last Actuals: the number of available child care spaces for 2021-22 was 136,867 spaces, in addition to 15,359 preschool spaces. 55,274 children were receiving a subsidy. This indicator includes daycare, family day home, out of school care, preschool, innovative and group family child care programs. Increased access to child care supports parents' ability to pursue education or training, and take part in the workforce.



INVESTMENT AND BUSINESS ACTIVITY

Non-residential capital investment in Alberta

Last Actual: \$56.7 billion in 2022, up 4.8 per cent from 2021. Non-residential investment is an indicator of the overall productive capacity of the economy and a key driver of economic activity in the province.

Value of Alberta's exported products

Last Actual: \$203.9 billion in 2022, up 47.7 per cent from 2021. The total value of Alberta exports of domestic goods to international markets is a key indicator of trade and export growth. Increased exports are a signifier of economic growth and prosperity in Alberta.

Upstream oil and gas investment

Last Estimate: \$22.1 billion in 2022, up 22.8 per cent from 2021. Fixed Non-residential capital investment in Alberta's oil and gas extraction sector is an indicator of the health and future growth of the oil and gas sector in Alberta.

Energy goods exports

Last Actual: \$158.3 billion in 2022, up 59.1 per cent from 2021. The value of energy products (crude oil, natural gas and electricity) exported by Alberta internationally is an indicator of the health of the oil and gas industry and efforts to increase market access.

Non-energy exports

Last Actual: \$45.6 billion in 2022, up 18.3 per cent from 2021. The value of international goods exports, excluding energy products, in Alberta indicates growth and diversification outside the energy sector.

Priority two

Standing up for Albertans

Our objectives

1. Providing value for each tax dollar spent
2. Making life more affordable
3. Supporting Albertans most in need
4. Ensuring an accessible and modernized health care system
5. Providing quality education and skills development to Albertans
6. Partnering with Indigenous communities
7. Enhancing the justice system
8. Building better communities

PRIORITY TWO

Objective one

Providing value for each tax dollar spent

Albertans expect their tax dollars to be spent wisely and responsibly, to ensure the long-term sustainability of government programs. Government is committed to operating efficiently by investing wisely in programs and services and following through on its commitment to good financial management and fiscal prudence. Alberta's government is paying down the provincial debt, saving for the future, and investing in areas and services important to Albertans.

Actions

- Introducing a fiscal framework outlining a responsible approach to fiscal management that balances debt reduction, savings and investment in areas and services most important to Albertans while maintaining Alberta's advantage and attracting new investment.
- Continuing to implement the recommendations of the MacKinnon Panel, as appropriate, including careful reviews of expenditures, improving planning, transparency, and financial reporting.
- Finding efficiencies in the delivery of government programs and services, allowing the province to focus its spending on the programs and services that benefit all Albertans – including health care, education, and economic growth efforts.
- Centralizing work on public-private partnerships (P3s) and alternative funding models through the Alternative Capital Financing Partnerships Office (ACFPO). Government is providing the resources and expertise required to engage in strategic partnership opportunities, as well as exploring alternative revenue generation options, improving the quality of government's investment decisions, and the efficiency with which infrastructure projects are delivered. Alternative funding models ensure value for money and more predictable completion times.

PRIORITY TWO

Objective two

Making life more affordable

Making life affordable for Albertans is a top priority for government. Alberta's government is delivering targeted relief for families, seniors, and the most vulnerable. Alberta's government is delivering immediate cost of living and inflation relief while working to support long-term affordability.

Actions

- Implementing regulatory approaches and program delivery models that reduce unnecessary government oversight and emphasize outcomes. By focusing on outcomes, government is getting out of the way of job creators to allow them to continue to grow their businesses while improving how government provides services. A modernized regulatory environment reduces costs for Albertans and makes Alberta a great place to live, invest, and do business.
- Implementing the Affordability Action Plan to deliver quick and effective relief to cost of living concerns, including indexation of the Alberta Child and Family Benefit, personal income taxes, and benefits to seniors and persons living with a disability, or low income, as well as continued delivery of affordability payments through to June 2023 to seniors, families with children, and social assistance recipients.
- Lowering the cost of gasoline at the pumps by introducing a permanent fuel tax relief program tied to the price of oil.
- Maintaining Alberta's tax advantage compared to other provinces. Albertans and Alberta businesses continue to pay the lowest overall taxes when compared to other provinces. For 2022-23, Alberta's tax advantage is \$19.7 billion.
- Continuing to provide rebates to reduce high utility costs for nearly two million Alberta families, farms and businesses. Government is providing over \$47 million in electricity rebates in April 2023, and will be introducing a permanent program to protect consumers from price spikes in natural gas heating costs.
- Developing a strategy to reduce energy bill costs for Albertans by reviewing transmission and distribution charges.
- Reducing the impact of inflation on post-secondary students by lengthening the period after completion of studies when student loans are interest free and payment is not required to 12 months, lowering the student loan interest rate to the prime rate, and increasing the income threshold for the Repayment Assistance Plan.
- Providing more support to help low-income families move through their communities to access jobs, education, and health care. Alberta's government is investing up to \$16 million to support low-income transit programs throughout the province.
- Supporting food security as more Albertans turn to food banks to help meet their basic needs. Government is investing \$10 million ensuring no Albertan goes hungry. Alberta's government is also working to raise community awareness and involvement for food banks and other civil service agencies by allocating an additional \$10 million over two years in matching funds towards Alberta food banks, charities, not-for-profits and civil society organizations.

PRIORITY TWO

Objective three

Supporting Albertans most in need

Government will always have supports in place for our most vulnerable citizens and those who require other targeted protections and supports. Alberta is providing increased funding for specialized agencies that address domestic violence and human trafficking, as well as supporting low-income seniors, and Albertans with disabilities.

Actions

- Modernizing and digitizing financial support systems to simplify and enhance service delivery for low-income Albertans and persons with disabilities to further support their participation in community life, while maintaining program integrity, and ensuring long-term sustainability.
- Maintaining financial stability for more than 178,000 low-income seniors through the provision of \$508 million in grants and nearly \$20 million in low-interest home equity loans, to meet basic needs, afford essential health and personal supports, and allow them to age safely in their homes.
- Improving supports for the successful transition of youth from government care into adulthood focusing on mentoring, educational attainment, employment readiness, and connection to support services.
- Investing \$22.8 million over four years to continue implementing the Human Trafficking Task Force recommendations that better protect and assist vulnerable Albertans and stop their exploitation by traffickers. Work includes establishing an Alberta Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons; a Centre of Excellence for research and data collection; offering a new grant for coordinated community support; and providing resources to Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams to support victims and survivors through the investigation process for alleged cases of trafficking.
- Expanding the Rural Sexual Assault Support project by training more rural Alberta health care providers to perform sexual assault evidence kit exams. This will ensure that more sexual assault survivors can receive this essential health care service in their respective communities across Alberta. Collecting physical evidence within 72 hours of an assault empowers sexual assault survivors, increases the likelihood of obtaining forensic evidence, and supports more convictions in sexual assault prosecutions.

PRIORITY TWO

Objective four

Ensuring an accessible and modernized health care system

Alberta's government will continue to implement key initiatives to modernize and optimize Alberta's healthcare system so that every Albertan is able to conveniently access safe, high-quality, and reliable health services when they need them.

Alberta's government is supporting Albertans at risk of or experiencing addiction and mental health challenges on their personal journeys towards recovery. This recovery-oriented system of care coordinates networks of personalized, community-based services, providing access to a full continuum of services and supports, from prevention and intervention to treatment and recovery.

Actions

- Improving access for underserved populations and for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples to quality health services that support improved health outcomes by promoting and exploring novel, innovative, and creative strategies.
- Implementing actions identified by the Health Care Action Plan to improve Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system response times, reduce emergency department and surgical wait times to ensure patients are receiving the appropriate level of care, and empowering frontline workers to better deliver health care services.
- Modernizing continuing care, primary health care, and digital health systems to increase choice, enhance access, and improve the quality of care for Albertans.
- Addressing health care staffing challenges by investing \$158 million in 2023-24 towards initiatives to train, recruit, and retain more health care professionals for Alberta. This work is supported by Alberta's Health Workforce Strategy and the Rural Health Professions Action Plan, addressing specific challenges in remote and rural communities, as well as creating additional seats for physician training at Alberta's medical schools.
- Addressing the province's critical nursing shortage by making it easier for credentialed nurses from the Philippines to bring their skills to Alberta patients. Government is attracting internationally educated nurses by addressing barriers faced by many internationally trained nurses, including the navigation of complex regulatory requirements, assessment and licensing processes, and having access to clinical placements.
- Investing \$4.2 billion over three years in capital funding to maintain or expand health care facilities across the province. This includes funding for the redevelopment and expansion of the Red Deer Regional Hospital, which will increase critical services and add capacity to one of the largest hospitals in the province.
- Working with municipalities and community-based organizations to improve access to recovery-oriented systems of care. This approach is based on a comprehensive continuum of person-centred care including prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery supports giving hope to Albertan's experiencing or at risk of mental health and addiction challenges.
- Expanding access to mental health supports for children and youth in schools by developing an integrated school-based services model, including establishing mental health classroom teams in partnership with CASA Mental Health, giving children and youth the opportunity to seek out mental health supports sooner.

PRIORITY TWO

Objective five

Providing quality education and skills development to Albertans

Alberta's government is working with parents, teachers, superintendents and trustees to make Alberta's schools the best places for our children to learn and develop. Government will build post-secondary education as the foundation of a strong Alberta economy and a vibrant province. A top priority for government is to provide supports that ensure Albertans have the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed for family-supporting jobs, contributing to economic growth and diversification.

Actions

- Improving student access to schools and affordability for families by reducing ride times and addressing inflationary cost pressures facing the student transportation system.
- Supporting students through specialized learning programs and services to address learning loss and complex learning needs.
- Allocating \$2.3 billion over three years towards maintaining and enhancing existing school infrastructure and building new schools, maximizing the impact of investment in school infrastructure through robust planning to provide the best value, and addressing the need for more schools in Alberta's growing communities.
- Implementing initiatives under the Alberta 2030: Building Skills for Jobs strategy to transform the adult learning system, providing high-quality education, skills, and training needed for Alberta's future, and drive innovation to make Alberta competitive in the global economy.
- Expanding enrolment in high demand programs and increasing opportunities for hands-on learning experiences through collegiate high schools, apprenticeship programs, and vocational education. Government is working to better align the supports available to students to prepare them for well-paying jobs following the successful completion of their programs, and addressing current and longer-term skilled labour market challenges.

Objective six

Partnering with Indigenous communities

Alberta's government will continue to partner with Indigenous Peoples in Alberta in pursuit of reconciliation, inclusion, opportunity, and community well-being, including increasing safety for all Indigenous People. Government will support opportunities for Indigenous entrepreneurship, community supports, training, and employment, as well as supporting Indigenous leaders to develop the social and economic programs their communities need.

Actions

- Advancing reconciliation and support work to preserve First Nations and Métis culture, traditions and languages. This includes completion of a reconciliation garden and installation of a permanent monument at the Alberta Legislature grounds in the summer of 2023 to honor victims and survivors of the residential school system.
- Allocating \$146 million in 2023-24 as part of the First Nations Development Fund (FNDF) to help fulfil First Nations' economic, social, and community priorities. The FNDF is supported by a percentage of revenues from government-owned slot machines operating in First Nations casinos in Alberta.
- Working with the federal government to improve access for Indigenous Peoples to key services such as education and health care, and advocating for on-reserve services for persons with developmental disabilities, addiction and/or mental health issues.
- Expanding efforts to ensure culturally appropriate addiction and mental health community supports are in place for First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples in Alberta.
- Supporting relationship-building between Indigenous communities and schools, including providing guidance to First Nations education authorities, and enhancing framework agreements to boost education outcomes for Indigenous students.
- Offering direct investment, through the Aboriginal Business Investment Fund, to eligible Indigenous community-owned economic and business development projects that improve social and economic outcomes for Indigenous Peoples and their communities by creating jobs and boosting regional economies.
- Supporting Indigenous communities through the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation (AIOC), whose mandate is to support Indigenous communities' participation in commercially viable major natural resource, broadband, agriculture, transportation, and related infrastructure projects that play an intricate role in Alberta's economic growth.
- Helping Indigenous organizations address systemic barriers to Indigenous participation in employment and training initiatives, and making connections to industry stakeholders to create meaningful opportunities for employment through the Employment Partnerships Program.

PRIORITY TWO

Objective seven

Enhancing the justice system

Albertans deserve an accessible and sustainable justice system that protects them and their loved ones, and ensures safe communities. Government will protect Albertans by making the justice system fairer, faster, and more effective.

Actions

- Implementing a pre-charge assessment system that will ensure charges are reviewed by a prosecutor before being laid by police. This system will reduce the number of cases entering the court system that do not meet the threshold for prosecution, and create capacity within Alberta's three independent courts by ensuring valuable court time is scheduled for viable matters only.
- Implementing strategies to make the justice system more responsive to the needs of Albertans, including the use of restorative justice practices, Mental Health, and Drug Treatment Courts. These alternatives to the traditional court system will offer non-violent offenders a chance to avoid incarceration and complete a treatment program. This approach recognizes complex social, economic, cultural, and health factors and seeks to prevent re-offending in more comprehensive ways.
- Developing a family justice strategy that will help families resolve their matters more quickly and efficiently, and lessen time spent in court. The strategy will focus on improving services and supports such as pre-court assessment, mediation, and parenting intervention programs, which help parents achieve better outcomes for their children as their families restructure.
- Improving Albertans' interactions with the justice system through community channels, including the Public Security Indigenous Advisory Group and Hate Crimes Liaisons to ensure government programs reflect the needs of Indigenous communities.
- Modernizing the victim service delivery model to ensure services are consistent and accessible across the province, providing victims of crime with appropriate supports when and how they need them.
- Continuing to work with policing partners, municipalities and Indigenous communities to address crime and implement risk reduction strategies. This includes focused work on rural crime, organized crime, hate-motivated crime, drug and human trafficking, and proceeds of crime.
- Reviewing options for strengthening policing services in the province with the objective of improving the safety and security of Albertans and their property.

PRIORITY TWO

Objective eight Building better communities

Alberta's government will support and fund local services and projects, ensure the availability of more affordable housing, and support creative industries.

Actions

- Assisting Ukrainian evacuees fleeing the Russian invasion through the provision of supports and services to help them settle and integrate into communities across the province, including initiatives to address recommendations from the Premier's Advisory Task Force on Ukraine.
- Supporting newcomers with access to language, mentorship, and community services. Through these services, government is helping Alberta's newest residents make valuable contributions to communities across the province, and utilize their skills to support our diversified economy.
- Allocating over \$25 million in 2023-24, to the Alberta Foundation for the Arts as the primary arts resource and grant funding body dedicated to supporting the development of the arts and artists.
- Increasing affordable access to sport, physical activity, and recreation for Alberta youth and families by introducing the Every Kid Can Play program, making recreation more accessible for children and youth from low-income families. Additionally, government is increasing funding to the Community Facility Enhancement Program (CFEP) supporting non-profit organizations' ability to purchase, build, renovate, or upgrade sports, recreational, and cultural community facilities. These projects support vibrant communities across the province and create opportunities for Albertans to engage with their communities.
- Allocating \$104 million to refurbish and enhance outdoor recreational opportunities, buildings on Crown lands, and recreational trails to encourage Albertans and visitors to get outside and enjoy Alberta's more than 470 provincial parks and recreation areas.
- Reviewing the structure and effectiveness of the Calgary and Edmonton Metropolitan Region Boards, to ensure coordinated regional decision-making, effective delivery of inter-municipal services, and value for tax dollars.
- With the advice from the Premier's Council on Multiculturalism, promoting welcoming and diverse communities through enhanced funding for ethno-cultural organizations that promote cultural awareness and celebrate multiculturalism in Alberta.
- Continuing to implement *Stronger Foundations: Alberta's 10-year Year Strategy to Improve and Expand Affordable Housing*, providing safe, stable, affordable housing for an additional 25,000 households by 2032-33. This includes implementing an Affordable Housing Asset Management Framework and expanding partnerships with government, municipal, non-profit, and private housing partners through a new Affordable Housing Partnership Program.



EDUCATION

High School completion rate

Last Actual: In 2020-21, 87.1 per cent of students completed high school within five years of entering Grade 10. High school completion is an indicator of education system performance, job readiness and preparedness for further study. Data for 2021-22 will be available in June 2023.

Post-Secondary transition rate

Last actual: In 2020-21, 60.3 per cent of Alberta's high school students made the transition to post-secondary within six years of entering Grade 10. Fostering student transition to a post-secondary institution or apprenticeship program is an indicator of the development of a skilled labour force. Data for 2021-22 will be available in June 2023.



HEALTH

Surgical procedures that met national wait time benchmarks

Last Actual: In 2021-22: 51.2 per cent of hip replacements, 39.7 per cent of knee replacements, and 64.7 per cent of cataract surgical procedures met national wait time benchmarks. This indicator is used to monitor effective, accessible care for three common surgical procedures.

Mental health and addiction-related emergency department visits with no physician or community provided mental health services in previous two years

Government is expanding access to recovery-oriented support services in the community to provide Albertans living with, or at risk of, addiction or mental health issues with options other than emergency departments to help improve health and quality of life outcomes. Both physician and community service data will be available for the 2023-24 fiscal year.



GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Net Debt to GDP in Alberta and comparator provinces

Last Actual: In 2021-22, Alberta's net debt-to-GDP ratio was 15.2 per cent compared to 38.1 per cent for Quebec, 39.8 per cent for Ontario, 15.9 per cent for British Columbia, and 49.3 per cent for the federal government. This indicator is the proportion of a province's net debt to its gross domestic product and is a proxy for the fiscal health and sustainability of a province's finances.

The federal net debt is based on a similar methodology to the comparator provinces, including Alberta, and is different from the "federal debt" measure that the federal government reports in budgets and public accounts. Federal debt reported in federal budgets equals total liabilities less financial assets (net debt) less non-financial assets.

Per capita expenditure in Alberta and comparator provinces

Last Actual: In 2021-22, Alberta's per capita program expenditure was \$14,062 compared to the average of \$13,664 of comparator provinces (Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia). This is an indicator of the comparative levels of public expenditure compared to the most directly comparable provinces with respect to features such as population size and density as well as geography.

