

TogetherBC:

British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy

2023 Annual Report



*TOGETHERBC: BRITISH COLUMBIA'S POVERTY
REDUCTION STRATEGY 2023 ANNUAL REPORT*

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Introduction

This 2023 Annual Report on TogetherBC, British Columbia's (B.C.) first poverty reduction strategy, marks the fifth report on the implementation of the 2019 strategy.

This year, global inflation that began in 2022 increased, putting more strain on people living in B.C. to afford their daily necessities and compounded existing challenges like housing affordability. These issues disproportionately affect people with low incomes.

People living in B.C., their communities, and the Province worked together to overcome some of these challenges and the overall poverty rate remained below government's legislated target.

As of 2022, there were 163,000 fewer people living in poverty in B.C., compared to the baseline year of 2016, including 50,000 fewer children, a reduction in the overall poverty rate of 27.5% and child poverty rate of 36.8%.

This reduction was made possible through collaboration between governments and key partners, including First Nations and Indigenous leadership and the non-profit sector. But, there is much more work to do.

B.C.'s poverty reduction legislation requires the strategy to be updated every five years, based on broad engagement. Beginning in 2022 and continuing through 2023, the Province engaged with over 10,000 people in order to inform the 2024 Poverty Reduction Strategy. In December 2023, the Province released a What We Heard: Engagement Summary Report and worked to finalize a What We Heard: Engagement with Indigenous Peoples Summary Report, for release in early 2024.

The updates to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Act and the two laws that govern income assistance and disability assistance – the Employment and Assistance Act and Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act – will be reflected in next year's (2024) annual report on poverty reduction.

Poverty Reduction Strategy Act and Poverty Reduction Strategy

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act (the Act), which the B.C. legislature passed unanimously in November 2018, laid an important foundation for the strategy. It ensures that poverty reduction will always be a priority for the Province. The Act outlines four guiding principles, six priority action areas and 13 key population groups to guide B.C.'s approach to poverty reduction. The Act also commits government to achieving two important poverty reduction targets by 2024:

➔ **To reduce the overall poverty rate by 25 per cent**

➔ **To reduce the child (under 18) poverty rate by 50 per cent**



TIMELINE OF POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND REPORTING

● **OCT 2017 – MAR 2018**

The Province completed broad, provincewide public engagement to inform the first poverty reduction strategy and legislation

● **JULY 2018**

The Province released a What We Heard About Poverty in B.C. report informed by this engagement

● **NOV 2018**

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act passed unanimously in the legislature

● **MAR 2019**

The Province released its poverty reduction strategy, TogetherBC

● **NOV 2019**

The Province passed the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act) into law.

● **DEC 2020**

The Province released the first annual report on the strategy

● **OCT 2021**

The Province released the second annual report

● **MARCH 2022**

The Province released the Declaration Act Action Plan, including Item 4.15, which commits government to:

“Incorporate Indigenous experiences and knowledge of poverty and well-being into ongoing poverty reduction efforts and the 2024 Poverty Reduction Strategy. The strategy will recognize the ongoing impacts of colonialism and include Indigenous-identified actions and progress measures.”

● **OCT 2022**

The Province released the third annual report

● **FALL 2022-WINTER 2023**

The Province undertook public and Indigenous engagement with over 10,000 people to inform a renewal of the strategy in 2024

● **OCT 2023**

The Province released the third annual report

● **DEC 2023**

The Province released the fourth annual report

2018 POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ACT

TARGETS – BASED ON THE 2016 MARKET BASKET MEASURE (MBM):

➔ Reduce the overall poverty rate by 25 per cent by 2024

➔ Reduce the child (under 18) poverty rate by 50 per cent by 2024

REPORTING:

➔ Annual report must be prepared by October 1 of each year, and must describe:

- ◆ The actions taken to implement the strategy
- ◆ The effects of the strategy on poverty reduction
- ◆ The progress made toward the targets

MINISTER'S POVERTY REDUCTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

➔ The committee must include representatives from the following groups; of these, half must be women:

- ◆ Indigenous Peoples
- ◆ Persons living in poverty
- ◆ Persons living with disabilities
- ◆ Local governments
- ◆ Organizations that advocate for persons living in poverty

- ◆ The business community
- ◆ Unions
- ◆ Academics
- ◆ Persons living in rural and remote communities

UPDATES AND KEY POPULATIONS:

➔ The strategy must be updated at least once every five years. In developing and updating the strategy, 13 key population groups must be considered:

- ◆ Children
- ◆ Youth
- ◆ Women and persons of all genders
- ◆ Indigenous Peoples
- ◆ Persons living with disabilities
- ◆ Persons living in rural and remote communities
- ◆ Immigrants and refugees
- ◆ LGBTQ2S+ persons
- ◆ Seniors
- ◆ Persons and families working and earning low incomes
- ◆ Persons living with mental illness or addiction
- ◆ Persons living with or fleeing abuse
- ◆ Persons of colour

2019 POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

FOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

→ Affordability

→ Opportunity

→ Social Inclusion

→ Reconciliation

SIX PRIORITY ACTION AREAS:

→ Housing

→ Families, children and youth

→ Education

→ Employment

→ Income Supports

→ Social Supports



Independent Commentary: Minister's Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee

The Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee is an independent committee in place to advise Minister Sheila Malcolmson and her team on matters related to poverty reduction and prevention. In this fifth report, you will find our assessment of progress made in 2023 to reduce poverty across B.C.

Overall, we are pleased with the progress that has been made related to TogetherBC progress and outcomes in 2023. We worked closely with Minister Malcolmson and her team in advising the design of the extensive community engagement that resulted in the What We Heard: Engagement Summary Report and What We Heard: Engagement with Indigenous Peoples Summary Report. Progress in 2023 has demonstrated deep listening to community and a focused emphasis on people who experience barriers and are more susceptible to poverty and isolation. While there is a vast array of complex issues that contribute to poverty and vulnerability in B.C., two of the most pressing relate to housing and the cost of food.

The B.C. government has introduced or enhanced both short- and long-term solutions in 2023, including opening up more affordable housing for people with moderate and low incomes, introducing free prescription birth control to people in B.C., waiving tuition fees for all former youth in care to attend free post-secondary education, expanding \$10-a-day child care spaces, increasing minimum wage to \$17.40 per hour, and supporting seniors aging in place by expanding non-medical home support services.

One of the most significant developments in 2023 relates to school food programs to provide an even playing field for all children in B.C. By establishing the Feeding Futures program, the B.C. government has made the largest investment in school food programs in the province's history. If sustained and expanded, this program has the potential to enhance children's regular access to healthy food in schools, a particularly important goal for students from low-income families. The Feeding Futures program goes along with new support for farmers, investment in Indigenous food systems and agriculture, and other ways to strengthen food security and the local supply chain in B.C. We have heard for several years that the rising cost of food and associated food insecurity are making children, families, and individuals in B.C. increasingly vulnerable. Investments made in 2023 will take time to be fully implemented or show results but will help reduce food insecurity in the medium- and long-term.

The Province of B.C. has partnered closely with the non-profit sector to introduce many of the solutions related to poverty reduction during the past three years since the TogetherBC report was introduced. Many of the solutions to community challenges are addressed head-on by non-profit organizations that provide direct service, support, and advocacy. We appreciate the growing partnership between non-profits and the Province to support stronger and healthier communities in B.C., while acknowledging that many front-line service agencies are struggling to meet the growing demands for their services.

The Province has continued to recognize the ongoing harms of colonialism by investing in Indigenous communities. This is evidenced by the implementation of the First Nations Justice Strategy, development of a Métis Justice Strategy, BC Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food, developing the Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Amendment Act, delivering



on the Declaration of Indigenous People Act - Action Plan item 4.36 "To ensure every First Nations community in B.C. has high-speed internet services" by 2027, the Indigenous Youth Internship Program, the Doulas for Aboriginal Families Grant Program, the development of more Indigenous housing across B.C. in urban, rural, and remote areas - on and off reserve, and more.

In B.C., the poverty rate (calculated by the MBM¹, using the 2018 expenditure weights) among all persons in 2016 was 16 per cent. By 2022, that rate had dropped to 11.6 per cent, a proportionate reduction of 27.5 per cent. The child poverty rate, that of persons aged under 18, was 17.4 per cent in 2016. By 2022, that rate

¹ Progress towards legislated targets

Income poverty refers to the condition of a household having too little income to meet its basic needs. The poverty rate measures the fraction of people that live in such households, where the basic needs threshold is defined by the Market Basket Measure (MBM). The reduction of income poverty is not the sole objective of the Province in its poverty reduction strategy. Other aspects of well-being, such as housing sufficiency and food security, are very important. However, the Province has legislated goals for poverty rates in B.C. The legislated target for the five-year period beginning on January 1, 2019 is to reduce the poverty rate among all persons by 25 per cent from its 2016 level, and to reduce the poverty rate among persons under 18 years of age by 50 per cent from its 2016 level. Although we are now at the end of the 5-year period, we only have data as far as 2022 to consider our progress towards these targets.

had dropped to 11 per cent, a proportionate reduction of 36.8 per cent.

We note that income transfers were relatively high, and as a consequence poverty rates were relatively low, during 2020 and 2021. For example, in 2020, the poverty rate amongst all persons was 7.6 per cent, and among children it was 5 per cent. So, we have seen very substantial “rebound” in poverty rates since the pandemic-related income transfers ended.

We think of 2022 as a “normal” year, so we consider the trend line excluding 2020 and 2021 as informative about our progress on poverty reduction. Consequently, relative to the legislated targets, we believe it is fair to say that B.C. has achieved its legislated goal of reducing all-persons poverty by 25%, but has not yet achieved its legislated goal of cutting child poverty in half. While a reduction in child poverty of 36.8 per cent---more than a third---is substantial, more policy effort needs to be aimed at children.

It may be instructive to compare poverty rates in B.C. with those in Canada as a whole. The poverty rate for all persons in Canada fell from 12.9 per cent in 2016 to 9.9 per cent in 2022, a reduction of 23.3 per cent which is similar to what we experienced in B.C. In contrast, the child poverty rate in Canada fell from 13.9 per cent in 2016 to 9.9 per cent in 2022, a reduction of 28.8 per cent. This reduction in child poverty is quite a bit smaller than the 36.8 per cent reduction we observed in B.C. over the same period. This suggests that, although B.C. has not reached its legislated target of halving child poverty, something is going in the right direction for B.C. children. A counterargument to this claim is that B.C. had a higher rate of child poverty than that in Canada as a whole throughout the entire period. So, although we are going in the right direction, we have further to go.

The Province has engaged in many activities, detailed in this report, to improve lives and reduce deprivation, including actions to reduce income poverty. Such actions include,

for example, increasing welfare benefit levels. The major actor in reducing income poverty over the period 2015 to 2019 was the federal government, through the implementation of the Canada child benefit in 2016 (which specifically targets child poverty) and increases to other income support programs. These increases were permanent, which gives the Province a good foundation upon which to act, for example, through increased income supports for households with children. The B.C. family benefit, which started in 2024, has not yet affected measured child poverty, but we are hopeful that it will make a difference.

The legislated targets offer measurable benchmarks that can be used to assess progress. However, we believe that although attention to income poverty is a meritorious policy goal, it should not be held as a sole objective. For example, this committee believes that the recent progress made in the areas of public housing and child care are very important in reducing material deprivation in large numbers of households. However, these are not reflected in income poverty measures at all.

While we recognize progress, we want to see more positive outcomes and believe that the targets and approaches in the upcoming 2024 Poverty Reduction Strategy will lead to greater advancements in poverty reduction and a better quality of life for all people living in B.C. We will continue to advise the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, along with other relevant ministries, with a focus on preventing and reducing poverty in B.C. for this and future generations.

Measuring our Progress in 2023

The Market Basket Measure (MBM) is Canada's Official Poverty Line. It is a low-income measure that compares the disposable income for a family of four with the cost of a "basket" of food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and other items that reflect a modest, basic standard of living.

B.C.'s poverty reduction targets use the MBM as the best available measurement of poverty, but it is important to complement it with other indicators of poverty and well-being to address its limitations, including applicability to certain regions (rural/remote and First Nations communities).

Statistics Canada regularly updates the basket to reflect changes in what is considered necessary for a person to have a basic standard of living. The second review of the MBM happened between 2018-2020. As with previous annual reports, this report uses the MBM 2018-base data. Statistics Canada is currently undertaking a third review of the MBM, anticipated to be complete in 2025.

There is a two-year delay for poverty data. When the Poverty Reduction Strategy Act was established in 2018, B.C. used 2016 as the baseline year for measuring the proportion of people living below the poverty line. This is because that was the most current data at the time. For this annual report, the most recent data available is for 2022 (data was released in spring 2024).

The legislated target for the five-year period beginning on January 1, 2019, is to reduce the overall poverty rate by 25% from its 2016 baseline level and to reduce the poverty rate among children (under 18 years of age) by 50% from its 2016 baseline level.

As of 2022, there were 163,000 fewer people living in poverty in B.C., including 50,000 fewer children, a reduction of 27.5% in the overall poverty rate and 36.8% in the child poverty rate.

Until 2022, B.C. had surpassed targets for both child poverty and overall poverty. However, the most recent federal data shows B.C. is no longer meeting the child poverty target. The increase in poverty rates can be linked to the ending of federal pandemic benefits in October 2021 combined with high inflation, which started to increase in the second half of 2022.

Depth of poverty is measured by looking at how far below the poverty line some people are living. Those whose income is 75% or less of the MBM threshold are living in deep poverty. In 2022, depth of poverty improved overall, with the average household income of those living below the MBM up to 67.2% from 65% in 2021. This means those living in poverty are not as far under the poverty line as they have been in previous years. For children this rate was 74% in 2022, up from 61.6% in 2021. The group whose depth of poverty rates worsened were singles, with an average household income of 60.7% of the MBM in 2022, down from 64% in 2021.

An increase in poverty rates combined with an improvement in the depth of poverty suggests people who were just over the poverty line in 2021 fell below it in 2022.

While the 2019 legislation includes targets for reducing overall poverty and child poverty, the Province monitors trends for other key populations as well:

- » **Single males and children living in female-headed, single-parent families experienced the largest rise in their low-income rates**
- » **Working age adults (18-64) experienced a rise of 32.6% from 2021, however the poverty rate for this population is still down 27.6% from 2016**
- » **Although the poverty rate for seniors (adults 65 and over) rose from 7% in 2021 to 8.7% in 2022, it has decreased overall since 2016 (9.1%)**

Poverty Reduction Highlights: Key Actions Across Government 2023

These highlights are a snapshot of some of the actions taken in 2023 across ministries to support B.C.'s Poverty Reduction Strategy.

HOUSING

- » Opening up more affordable rental homes for people with moderate and low incomes
- » Improving access to housing and support for people leaving violence
- » Helping those who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness
- » Providing specialized care housing to people with brain injuries and complex mental health, addiction, and housing challenges
- » Establishing Indigenous Housing Partnerships team
- » Capping annual rent increases below inflation
- » Increasing flexible housing options that foster independence and choice for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- » Delivering more high-quality, affordable, and inclusive child care
- » Expanding supports for youth aging out of government care
- » Increasing access to early intervention and prevention services so more children and youth can address mental health and addiction challenges before they become problems

- » Making it easier for children and youth to connect with mental health and addictions supports
- » Providing free prescription birth control for people in B.C.
- » Establishing the Feeding Futures program, the largest investment in school food programs in B.C.'s history
- » Over \$50 million in funding to support community food access projects throughout B.C.

EDUCATION

- » Releasing the K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan to address racism and discrimination in education and create a culture of belonging for all students and staff
- » Waiving tuition fees for all former youth in care to attend free post-secondary education
- » Restoring tuition-free Adult Basic Education and English Language Learning
- » Increasing student loan maximums, providing more flexible repayment, and helping low- and middle-income students with up to \$4,000 a year to pay for tuition, textbooks and other study items
- » Helping newcomers work in their fields with faster assessments for internationally trained professionals

EMPLOYMENT

- » Providing Assistive Technology Services to support people with disabilities to remove barriers to finding and keeping a job
- » Expanding Skills Training for Employment programs and offering specialized project-based training and work experience for people who are underrepresented in the workforce

INCOME SUPPORTS

- » Increasing shelter rates by \$125 in August 2023 to reduce the risk of homelessness, the first increase to the shelter rate since 2007
- » Increasing the rates for key supplements to reflect the increased cost of essentials, such as food and clothing, and to support people with emergent or specific needs, such as medical transportation or dietary restrictions
- » Increasing the earnings exemption so people on income and disability assistance can keep their earnings without having assistance payments reduced
- » Increasing the Senior's Supplement
- » Helping people with the cost of living, through tax credits and benefits, and increasing minimum wage annually

SOCIAL SUPPORTS

- » Building on commitments to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and Declaration Act Action Plan
- » Launching the \$60 million Stronger Community Services Fund to support non-profit organizations throughout B.C. in their critical work of supporting communities, reducing poverty and advancing social inclusion and racial equity
- » Improving transportation supports to connect people with programs and services, through programs including BC Bus North and the First Nations Community Access and Resiliency Program
- » Working together to improve access to programs and services while upholding inherent rights of First Nations and Indigenous communities to keep Indigenous Peoples safe, healthy, and connected to community
- » Enabling seniors to live longer in their homes by expanding non-medical home support services

- » Providing access to high-speed internet services to all homes in B.C. by 2027
- » Launching a trauma-informed, multilingual racist incident helpline for witnesses and victims of hate to report incidents

SOCIAL SUPPORTS

- » Investing a historic \$200 million to strengthen the food supply chain across B.C., increase the availability of fresh food, and encourage more food production in remote areas. This funding also included:
 - ◇ Investing \$30 million for the Indigenous Food Security Program to support Indigenous food sovereignty and security initiatives
 - ◇ Investing over \$50 million for strengthening food banks, food distribution and food access
- » Increasing community capacity to respond to emergencies, strengthening distribution systems for charitable food systems, and improving dignified access to culturally preferable food
- » Strengthening partnerships and collaboration across sectors
- » Providing employment, education, or skills training in the local food economy
- » Building capacity within First Nations and promoting Indigenous food sovereignty



Engagement to Update the Poverty Reduction Strategy

Listening to People to Break the Cycle of Poverty: Insights from Over 10,000 People Living in British Columbia

In 2023, the B.C. government conducted a wide-ranging public engagement to understand people's experiences of poverty, and to learn what is working and where more action is needed to support those that need it the most.

The public engagement took place over spring and summer 2023 and continued until the early months of 2024. There were separate distinctions-based Indigenous engagement processes – one focused on First Nations, including Modern Treaty Nations, and another in partnership with Métis Nation BC. Additionally, work was done to reach out to urban Indigenous Peoples, including Inuit, living in B.C. as part of the broader consultation process.

The engagement strategy was built on advice and guidance from key government partners, Indigenous leadership and the Minister's Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee. As part of the Province's commitment to accountability on poverty reduction, the Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee was formed in 2019 as an independent committee to advise on poverty reduction and prevention. In addition to Indigenous representatives (including elected leaders from First Nations Leadership Council and Métis Nation BC), it includes representation from, unions, persons with lived experience of poverty, local government, rural and remote communities, and persons living with disabilities, among others.

In total, B.C. engaged with over 10,000 people, 70% with lived experience of poverty, through

in-person and virtual town halls, Minister's roundtables, small group meetings, written recommendations, and an online public survey. To capture input from as many people as possible, Argyle, an independent engagement firm contracted by the Province, conducted both online and in-person public engagement sessions, which included participation supports such as honoraria, food, child care, transportation, and mental health supports. They also developed a conversation toolkit that could be used by groups to facilitate their own conversations around poverty reduction. Accessible options included printed versions of the online survey and the conversation toolkit, ensuring those without access to internet could participate in a meaningful way.

To ensure a culturally safe, Indigenous-led engagement process, the Province contracted an Indigenous facilitation firm, Mahihkan Management, to conduct Indigenous engagement sessions held in communities and online. Mahihkan partnered with Friendship Centres and Indigenous organizations for in-person sessions, and each session was opened by an Elder. Participation supports were also provided such as honoraria, food, child care and transportation, and qualified wellness counsellors were available. A separate Métis-led engagement was organized through Métis Nation BC and included a review of Métis community literature related to poverty reduction, a targeted survey, and client interviews.

Results from all engagement consultations and sessions can be found in both the What We Heard: Engagement Summary Report, and the What We Heard: Engagement with Indigenous Peoples Summary Report. These reports, released in fall 2023 and winter 2023-24, provide guidance for how the government can better fill gaps and prioritize actions to break the cycle of poverty. Data collected will continue to inform cross-government programs and priorities.

Looking to 2024 and Beyond

This 2023 annual report is the fifth annual report of B.C.'s first poverty reduction strategy, TogetherBC. Future annual reports will align with B.C.'s 2024 Poverty Reduction Strategy and updated legislation, including:

NEW ACTION AREAS:

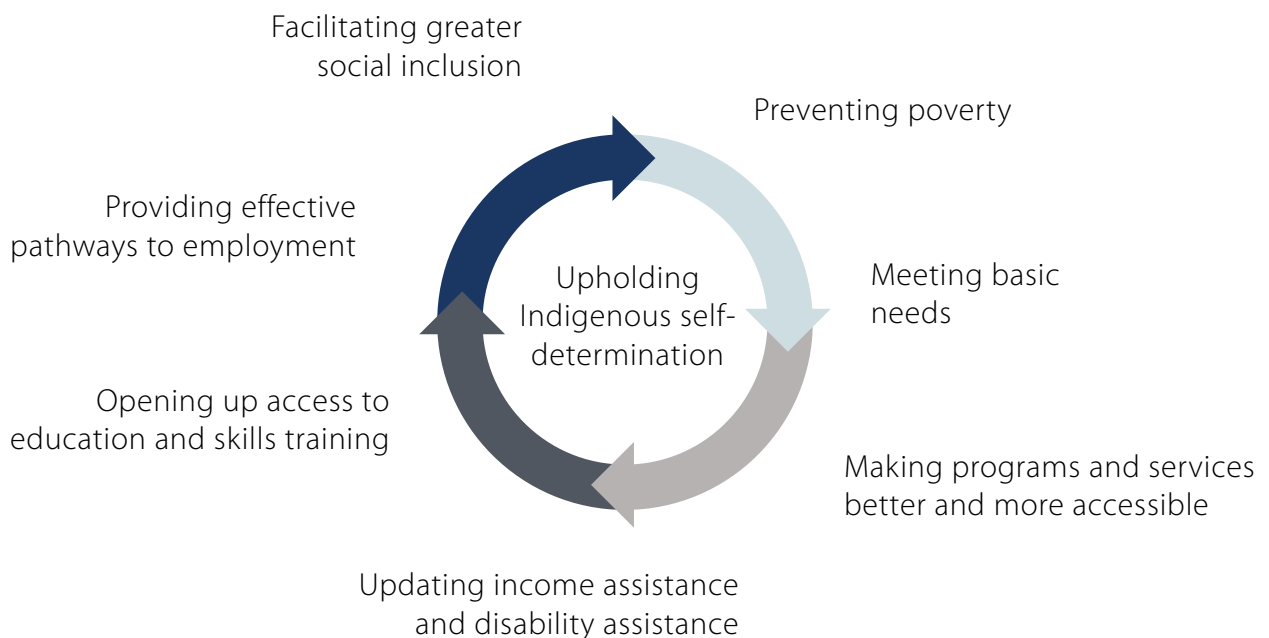
- » Upholding Indigenous self-determination
- » Preventing poverty
- » Meeting basic needs
- » Making programs and services better and more accessible
- » Updating income assistance and disability assistance
- » Opening up access to education and skills training
- » Providing effective pathways to employment
- » Facilitating greater social inclusion

UPDATED TARGETS:

- » Reduce overall poverty rate by 60%
- » Reduce child (under 18) poverty rate by 75%
- » Reduce seniors' poverty rate by 50% by 2034 (new)
- »

BROADER TARGETS:

Broader indicators will include those co-developed with Indigenous people, to provide a more complete understanding of poverty. This will help us better understand and address the outcome and equity gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.



Appendix: Cross-Ministry Report on Poverty Reduction 2023

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

Feed BC and Feeding Futures (K-12 school food programs) – Started 2023

Budget 2023 committed \$214.5 million in operating funding over three years to expand school food programs. In partnership with the Ministry of Education and Child Care, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food is working to incorporate B.C. food into expanded school food programs.

Feed BC Partnerships – Ongoing

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food leads government's Feed BC initiative to shift more public institutional food spending to B.C. food growing food system resilience, local jobs, and economic diversification. In 2023, Feed BC continued work with the Ministry of Health and all six health authorities, the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills and 20 public post-secondary institutions and, the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and 10 provincial correctional centres to track and source more B.C. food towards a minimum of 30% B.C. food expenditures. Every dollar spent on B.C. food in government institutions brings a two-fold impact to B.C.'s economy including new local jobs and GDP ([Feed BC BC Input-Output model \(BCIOM\) study](#)).

AgriRecovery – Completed

The governments of B.C. and Canada provide financial support for producers who experience extraordinary recovery expenses due to fire, drought, and flooding.

» Canada-B.C. Flood Recovery for Food Security Program – Completed

More than 430 B.C. farmers who suffered extraordinary damages during the devastating November 2021 floods accessed over \$80 million in federal-provincial government support to help their farms return to production and support B.C.'s food security.

» 2023 Canada – British Columbia Wildfire and Drought Recovery Initiative – Completed

More than 360 B.C. producers who need help recovering from the drought and wildfire in 2023 have received about \$13 million in federal-provincial government support to help their farms return to production and support B.C.'s food security.

BC Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food (IACAF) – Ongoing

Through the BC Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food (IACAF), the first of its kind in Canada, Indigenous leaders and subject matter experts on agriculture and food are working with the Province to increase Indigenous participation in the sector and strengthen Indigenous food systems and food sovereignty.

Indigenous Food Systems and Agriculture Partnership Program – Ongoing

[Indigenous Food Systems and Agriculture Partnership](#) Program funding can be used for activities involved in agriculture, food processing and food systems planning, training and skills development, technological adoption, scaling up productivity and profitability, and climate-change adaptations. First Nations and Indigenous communities, businesses and organizations are eligible to apply, and projects for both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations will be considered.

The New Relationship Trust has partnered with the B.C. government to deliver a \$30-million program to help Indigenous communities build and strengthen distinct local food systems, including the revitalization of traditional production, harvest and preservation practices. The program supported 64 projects in its first intake and will lead to more equitable participation in B.C.'s agriculture economy and reducing the disproportionate amount of food insecurity within Indigenous communities.

Agriculture and Food Workforce Development Initiative – Started 2023

The Agriculture and Food Workforce Development Initiative is providing as much as \$15 million to help strengthen the workforce in the B.C. agriculture sector. AgSafe is the first organization supported under the new program and will receive \$755,000 to expand mental-health services to the agriculture community.

Food Security Emergency Planning and Preparedness Fund – Started 2023

The \$20 million fund has supported 25 local governments, First Nations and farming associations with \$6 million to help plan for, and the purchase and installation of equipment and infrastructure to prepare for agricultural emergencies.

Food Affordability and Innovation Fund – Started 2023

The \$17.5 million Food Affordability and Innovation Fund has helped more than 30 companies and not for profits help improve the availability and affordability of food in B.C.'s remote, rural and Indigenous communities through \$3.5 million in support.

MINISTRY OF ATTORNEY GENERAL

MULTICULTURALISM AND ANTI-RACISM BRANCH

Annual Report on Multiculturalism – Ongoing

The Ministry of Attorney General continued to make enhancements to the annual Report on Multiculturalism in 2023, which details actions provincial government ministries and Crowns are taking to ensure programs, policies and initiatives are responsive to B.C.'s diverse population, including racialized and underrepresented groups who are more likely to be impacted by poverty.

Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network – Ongoing

The Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network is a \$540,000 program launched in 2020 that connects more than 40 communities throughout the province through a hub and spoke network to address interpersonal and systemic racism and hate.

Multiculturalism Grant Program – Ongoing

In 2023, \$300,000 was allocated to 60 community-based organizations throughout British Columbia for projects aimed at dismantling systemic racism, addressing hate incidents, and supporting racialized communities. Organizations received up to \$5,000 with preference for funding given to applications from racialized and otherwise marginalized groups.

Anti-Racism Data Act – Ongoing

The Anti-Racism Data Act, enacted in 2022, enables the collection, use and disclosure of personal information to help identify and eliminate systemic racism in government programs and services.

In June 2023, the Province launched the BC Demographic Survey as a first step to better understand where systemic racism exists in programs and services.

Information from the BC Demographic Survey is being used to carry out anti-racism research priorities, which were announced in May 2023. This information will help government make informed changes to existing services to better serve everyone in British Columbia.

Anti-Racism Act – Ongoing

In 2023, the Ministry of Attorney General continued its work to finalize the Anti-Racism Act, for introduction in spring 2024. The Anti-Racism Act establishes a whole-of-government approach to dismantling systemic racism and advancing racial equity, with a specific focus on addressing Indigenous-specific racism.

INDIGENOUS JUSTICE SECRETARIAT

Implementation of the First Nations Justice Strategy and development of a Métis Justice Strategy for British Columbia – Ongoing

A new cross-ministry Indigenous Justice Secretariat was created in 2023, a commitment outlined in the BC First Nations Justice Strategy. The secretariat will work with all partners to ensure Indigenous Peoples are no longer disproportionately interacting with or impacted by the justice system.

In partnership with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and the BC First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC), the Ministry of Attorney General will continue implementing the BC First Nations Justice Strategy. The strategy works to reform the justice system to be safer and more responsive to Indigenous Peoples and to restore First Nations justice systems, legal traditions, and structures.

The ministries will also continue to work with Métis Nation BC to develop, endorse and advance the Métis Justice Strategy.

BC First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC) and Province open new Indigenous Justice Centres – Ongoing

The BC First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC) has identified Indigenous Justice Centres (IJC) as a cornerstone of the First Nations Justice Strategy. IJCs provide wraparound service capacity, primarily focusing on criminal law and child protection issues. BCFNJC operates four IJCs in Chilliwack, Merritt, Prince George, and Prince Rupert, as well as a Virtual Indigenous Justice Centre, which provides services for people who are not able to access an in-person centre.

JUSTICE SERVICES BRANCH

Justice Access Centres and Family Justice Centres – Ongoing

Justice Access Centres (JACs) and Family Justice Centres help people find early and affordable solutions by providing self-help and information services; dispute resolution and mediation options; referrals to legal advice; and access to community resources, agencies, and publications. There are 19 Family Justice Centres throughout the province, and five JACs (Abbotsford, Nanaimo, Surrey, Vancouver (Robson) and Victoria). All services are offered free of charge.

Family Justice Services to Indigenous clients in community – Ongoing

Family Justice Services are provided in Indigenous community organizations for Indigenous clients. This provides service to Indigenous clients in a more culturally safe environment and allows easier involvement of a support person.

Parenting After Separation (PAS) courses – Ongoing

As of January 4, 2022, completion of a Parenting After Separation (PAS) course – free and online – became a requirement in all Provincial Court registries in B.C. prior to appearing in court on family law matters. These courses can also be completed by anyone who is interested.

PAS (Punjabi): a PAS course became available in the Punjabi language in April 2023, with visual content reflective of Punjabi families.

Legal Aid BC – financial eligibility – Ongoing

As of December 2022, Legal Aid BC adjusted financial eligibility thresholds across all areas of law to increase the number of clients who can access legal aid services. This resulted in over 3,300 additional contracts being issued between December 2022 and January 2024.

BC Human Rights Tribunal – Ongoing

In 2023, the Province increased funding for the BC Human Rights Tribunal (BCHRT) and Community Legal Assistance Society (CLAS) by \$3.119 million per year. The additional funding will support the BCHRT in addressing the increased caseload and allow CLAS to hire more lawyers, legal advocates, and support staff to meet clients' needs.

BC Labour Relations Board (BCLRB) – Ongoing

The Labour Relations Board is an independent administrative tribunal which governs unionized workplaces in British Columbia.

There is a long-standing fee waiver process in place for individuals who cannot afford to pay the filing fees prescribed by regulation. The board is also in the process of converting its website and other information into plain language to make them more accessible to self-represented individuals and members of the public.

Civil Resolution Tribunal – Ongoing

The Civil Resolution Tribunal (CRT) Reconcili(action) Plan 2021-2024 sets out the tribunal's commitment to implement specific, measurable, and timely actions toward reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. It includes short- and long-term actions to better serve Indigenous Peoples through the CRT process, including identifying and eliminating systemic and procedural barriers that Indigenous participants may experience.

Child Support Recalculation Service – Ongoing

The Child Support Recalculation Service promotes the objectives of the Child Support Guidelines by ensuring that child support orders and agreements are based on the updated income of parents. It is a free service that helps families with child support orders and written agreements by administratively recalculating child support amounts each year by applying the Child Support Guidelines to updated income amounts from payors. The service adjusts the child support amount if income has gone up or down so that parents do not have to return to court to have their child support amounts reviewed.

Funding for Rise Women's Legal Centre

To help more low-income women and gender-diverse people access the free legal services they need to keep their families safe and healthy, the Province provided \$1 million in funding to Rise Women's Legal Centre. Rise provides free legal services for protection orders, divorce or separation, parenting arrangements, and spousal support to over 1,700 women and gender-diverse people each year.

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

Funding allocation for children and youth with disabilities – Ongoing

As of January 2022, a disability supplement is provided to families who are caring for a child under a court-ordered out-of-care agreement who is approved for the federal disability tax credit and child disability benefit.

Annual affordability payment – Child in Home of Relative Program (CIHR) – Started in 2023

In summer 2023, the Ministry of Children and Family Development introduced an annual affordability payment for children and youth in the care of relatives under the CIHR program. The CIHR payment assists families who provide care to children in their extended families with additional financial supports to assist with the cost of raising these children.

The annual affordability payment is prorated up to \$8,797.36 annually for children/youth ages 14-17 and \$8,177.92 for youth aged 18. The payment is available per year and offered until the youth's 19th birthday, concluding by fiscal 2028-29 when the last children/youth remaining in the program turn 19.

Children and Youth with Support Needs – Respite – Started in 2023

Budget 2023 provided an increase to the annual standard respite rate from \$3,080 to \$4,135 making it easier for families to get the supports they need.

Families that receive the Ministry of Children and Family Development's Children and Youth with Support Needs Direct Funding/At Home Program respite funds can use the standard amount of \$4,135 per year in a flexible manner. Flexible options include household supports, caregiving supports and program support for children.

At Home Program – Started in 2023

In 2023, the Ministry of Children and Family Development doubled the hourly reimbursement rate of \$80 per hour to \$160 per hour for direct therapy services through the At Home Program's School Aged-Extended Therapy. This increased the annual reimbursement to families to \$5,760 per year.

Pilot family connections centres – Started in 2023

Four pilot family connections centres opened in 2023. The centres offer therapies, interventions, and services to children and youth with support needs and their families based on their unique needs, regardless of whether they have a diagnosis.

Healthy Connections Through Culture Program – Ongoing

The Healthy Connections Through Culture program provides support to Indigenous youth involved in the youth justice system, at risk of involvement, or with previous involvement.

Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment (SAJE) Program – Ongoing

Youth and young adults who have been in government care in British Columbia are receiving expanded supports through the program (since 2022). In 2023, enhancements include eye exam coverage, a dental coverage increase, a counselling benefit, expanded housing flexibility and expanding the maximum duration of supports for up to 84 months until age 27.

a. SAJE: Permanent Housing Support – Ongoing

To increase housing options, prevent homelessness, and address some of the challenges that young adults face as they transition out of government care, the ministry has maintained COVID-19 emergency housing

supports up to age 21, which support young people transitioning to living independently with living expenses and for some young adults to remain in their existing living arrangements.

b. SAJE: Rent Supplement Program – Ongoing

Over 1,400 young adults from care have received rent supplements by the end of 2023.

Rent supplements of \$600 a month are available for young adults renting in the private rental market for up to two years or until the month of their 27th birthday (whichever comes first).

Intake periods for rent supplements occur twice a year and 50% of the rent supplements in each intake period are available to Indigenous young adults.

c. SAJE: Guide and Navigator transition support workers – Ongoing

The youth transition worker support is being implemented throughout the province in three phases between 2022 and 2024, with hiring beginning in fall 2022. Transition workers assist youth, starting at age 14 to 25, to plan for their transition from care, articulate and action their goals, and connect the youth and young adults to services and supports for a successful transition to adulthood.

d. SAJE: Life-skills, Training and Cultural Connections funding – Started in 2023

In the fall of 2023, funding was introduced to provide support to young adults in the Agreements for Young Adults (AYA) program. The funding was available to those focused on developing life-skills, allowing them to access up to \$5,500 in a single year. The maximum amount available was \$11,000 during AYA participation, starting at age 19 up until their 27th birthday, to support the pursuit of their goals.

The requirement for young adults to access a life-skill program from a pre-approved list has also been removed.

e. SAJE: Mental Health and Counselling Benefit – Started in 2023

Provides \$1,500 per calendar year for young adults who are transitioning from government care and are currently in the Agreements for Young Adults program or have a SAJE Support Agreement (SSA) or SAJE Housing Agreement (SHA) to access and receive counselling services of their choice through eligible service providers.

f. SAJE: Enhanced Dental and Expanded Optical Benefits – Started in 2023

In April 2023, dental and optical benefits available to young adults participating in the SAJE program were increased.

The annual dental limit was raised from \$700 to \$1,000, and the \$600 optical benefits were expanded to cover eye exams.

Meeting digital needs of former youth in care (ages 19+) – Ongoing

First launched in 2017, the B.C. government collaborated with TELUS to establish the Mobility for Good (M4G) program, in which eligible young adults from care can receive a free cell phone, \$0 plans and have access to digital literacy and safety workshops to help them stay connected to their communities and support networks. Young adults participating in the M4G program are eligible to access the TELUS Internet for Good program, which offers an unlimited internet plan for \$9.95 per month (plus applicable taxes) for 24 months.

No cost smartphones & data plans for youth (ages 13-19) – Ongoing

Approximately 3,600 youth have benefited from Phones4Youth program since 2021. The first of its kind in B.C., this program distributes iPhones with data plans and accessory packages to in government care and out-of-care youth aged 13 or older.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development is also providing mobile phones to children and youth with out-of-care arrangements and in the ministry's other programs based on need.

Indigenous jurisdiction in child and family services – Ongoing

British Columbia has changed provincial legislation to remove barriers for Indigenous Peoples exercising jurisdiction over child and family services, becoming one of the first provinces in Canada to expressly recognize this inherent right within provincial legislation.

The legislation, the Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Amendment Act, was developed through engagement with Indigenous partners to align with the federal Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families and brings provincial child and family service law into better alignment with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development signed B.C.'s first tripartite co-ordination agreement with Splatsin and Canada in March 2023.

The ministry launched an Indigenous child and family services funding model co-development process in September 2023. Co-development sessions are ongoing.

Enhancing support to caregivers – Ongoing

In 2022, the ministry began implementing the Enhanced Out-of-Care program throughout the province to enable children and youth living with moderate-to-significant support needs to reside with extended family or people known to them. This supports fewer children and youth being brought into care, residing in foster homes, or specialized homes.

In 2023, the Province provided \$84.9 million to boost monthly caregiver rates by up to 47%. The increase will benefit approximately 7,800 children, youth, and their caregivers.

Youth Emergency Shelter (YES) pilot – Started in 2023

The new Youth Emergency Shelter (YES) in Maple Ridge is a pilot project that provides supports to youth aged 15 to 18 who are in crisis, or at risk of harm or homelessness. Youth can access short term overnight accommodation, outreach services and day programming.

Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Early Years (EASE) – Ongoing

The ministry expanded the Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Educators (EASE) prevention and early intervention online suite of courses and resources for kindergarten to Grade 12 students (2019-2022). It now includes an early years version for professionals supporting parents and families with young children ages 0-6.

Anxiety and depression prevention resources for foster care providers and out of care/kinship care and depression prevention resources for parents and care providers: Walking Alongside Youth with Depression – Started in 2023

The ministry developed new Indigenous-informed online courses and resources to build the mental health literacy of care providers and increase their capacity to support children and youth in their care who are experiencing mild-to-moderate anxiety or depression.

Walking Alongside Youth with Anxiety and Walking Alongside Youth with Depression is a collection of online information and learning material available on the ministry's HealthyMinds BC website – healthymindsbc.gov.bc.ca.

Suicide prevention and non-suicidal self injury resources for parents and care providers – Started in 2023

The ministry developed new mental health literacy resources and videos to reduce stigma and build the capacity of parents and care providers to support them in identifying and responding to youth experiencing suicidal and self-harm behaviours.

This is available on the ministry's HealthyMinds BC website – healthymindsbc.gov.bc.ca.

Services for Indigenous communities – Ongoing

Since 2018, the ministry offers \$30,000 to each of the First Nations and Métis organizations in B.C. to deliver community-based, family support and prevention services.

MINISTRY OF CITIZENS' SERVICES

Housing and homelessness – Ongoing

Real Property Division (RPD) worked with the Ministry of Housing (HOUS) to complete a major review of provincial lands and assets for affordable housing opportunities.

RPD's Surplus Properties Program provides ministries and agencies with an opportunity to review details of surplus properties. As a result of this process, RPD has facilitated six internal property transfers within government since 2022, three of which supported affordable and supportive housing and accessibility.

More than 100 Residential Tenancy Branch web pages, whose audience is landlords and renters, were updated, condensed, redesigned and rewritten so that the information was easier to find and understand for people in all rental housing situations.

Indigenous Procurement Initiative – Ongoing

Fulfilling the commitment made in the British Columbia Procurement Strategy Update 2020, the Indigenous Procurement Initiative formed an external advisory committee to advise on the development and implementation of specific short-, medium-, and long-term actions to:

- » Develop a co-ordinated, B.C. government-wide approach to goods and services procurement with Indigenous Peoples;
- » Develop new, or revise existing, procurement policies, practices, programs and supports; and
- » Address gaps, barriers, and inequities in those policies, practices, and programs and supports that exclude Indigenous businesses, organizations, communities and individuals and prevent them from participating in the Province's procurement opportunities.

Preventing and Reducing Homelessness: An Integrated Data Project – See Ministry of Housing

Connecting British Columbia – Ongoing

The Ministry of Citizens' Services has a provincial mandate to connect all homes to high-speed internet services by 2027 and deliver on the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People Act – Action Plan item 4.36 "To ensure every First Nations community in B.C. has high-speed internet services."

Since 2017, the Province has invested over \$584 million into the expansion of high-speed, broadband internet and cellular services throughout B.C. and leveraged funds from other levels of government and the private sector. This includes the announcement in Budget 2023 of an additional \$75 million to support extending cellular services to

another 550 km of highway by 2027, building on the government's \$15-million commitment in 2020.

As of January 2024, 96.1% of households in B.C. will have access to high-speed internet services.

Rural communities and First Nation reserves have seen significant increases in available internet since 2017:

- » In 2017, only 57% of homes in rural and remote areas and 66% of homes on First Nation reserves had access to high-speed internet.
- » As of January 2024, 76.5% of rural homes and 80% of homes on First Nation reserves and Modern Treaty Nation lands will have access to high-speed internet.

The Ministry of Citizens' Services is also working in partnership with the Ministry of Water Land and Resource Stewardship to accelerate natural resource permitting for internet connectivity projects.

Gender and Sex Data Standard – Started in 2023

The new Gender and Sex Data Standard will help make data collection more inclusive, provide more accurate information for programs and services, and help make programs and services more equitable.

Service BC Centres – Ongoing

For more than five years, Service BC and the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR) have implemented an integrated service model in 48 different communities around the Province, helping to break down the stigma for vulnerable people needing to access income assistance services, and providing a better service experience. Service BC deployed their Queue Management System to SDPR offices to enhance service delivery through service metrics.

B.C. launched a new, dedicated portal to provide information for Ukrainians who are moving to the province, including what to do when first arriving, getting settled in B.C. and how to access services such health care and financial assistance.

Service BC also launched the Mobile Outreach program, which provides access to service specifically in rural and remote communities, such as driver's licence Information and appointment booking, B.C. identification information (BC Services Card/ BCID), Medical Services Plan applications, and information on income and disability assistance.

Digital Accessibility – Ongoing

In 2023, the Government Digital Experience Division (GDX) tested a new look and feel for gov.bc.ca that is optimized for an accessible experience, for mobile devices, and for useability.

Multi-language Program – Ongoing

The Multi-language Program was a two-year joint initiative between GDX and Government Communications and Public Engagement (GCPE), focused on talking to and hearing from people about how to make government's communications more accessible and meet the diverse needs of people in B.C.

In partnership with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, resources for newcomers in French, Punjabi, Simplified Chinese & Traditional Chinese were added on government's website on the topics of driving, health, emergencies and anti-racism. This was a culmination of talking to more than 200 people in 14 communities about what information is important to them when they first arrive in B.C.

BC Demographic Survey – See Ministry of Attorney General

Short-Term Rental Registry [New]

BC Registries and Online Services (BCROS) is working with the Ministry of Housing (HOUS) to develop a Short-Term Rental Registry that will be operated by HOUS.

By tracking and limiting the number of B.C. properties used for short-term rentals, more homes will be made available for long-term living.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE

BC Tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA) – Ongoing

The BCTEA promotes systemic shifts and collective efforts that will support improved educational outcomes of First Nation students living on reserve and attending public school in B.C. In 2022-23, approximately 4,600 Indigenous learners living on-reserve were supported by up to \$3.8 million in funding from Canada to enable safe and effective transportation to and from school and to extracurricular activities. The Government of Canada invested \$100 million over five years (2018 – 2023) to support the BCTEA. The parties to BCTEA have endorsed an extension of the agreement until June 2025.

In November 2023, the Province made amendments to the School Act to fulfil commitments in the Declaration Act Action Plan and the BCTEA. The legislation ensures that First Nations and Treaty First Nations have the option to apply a model local education agreement (LEA) with boards of education should a First Nation request it.

The ministry is actively working with the First Nations Education Steering Committee to develop an LEA policy to require boards to enter into LEAs, and a provincial LEA template that will apply at the request of a First Nation.

Provides equitable opportunities for Indigenous students to attend safe learning environments free from discrimination and racism.

All 60 school districts have been engaged in the project since the 2022-23 school year (representing over 70,000 Indigenous learners or 100% of the Indigenous student population in B.C. public schools) taking actions to address systemic barriers impacting Indigenous student achievement.

The ministry has provided school districts with a data dashboard specific to Indigenous learners providing data at the district, school and student level to inform educator practice and systemic interventions.

School districts are building capacity, using data and engaging in professional learning on equity, race, bias, privilege, and responding to the lived experience of racism felt by Indigenous learners.

Legislative changes to support First Nations jurisdiction over education – Ongoing

On November 25, 2021, legislative changes received royal assent, making it possible for the Province to provide operational support for a new certification and regulation process for First Nations participating in jurisdiction over education, including greater control over teacher certification and regulation.

B.C. and the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) negotiated an updated B.C.-FNESC Agreement under the Education Jurisdiction Framework Agreement (EJFA), separate B.C.-and Participating First Nation (PFN) Agreements, and a B.C.-FNEA (First Nations Education Authority) Agreement. These agreements were all signed as of August 2022.

In July 2023, the Ministry of Education and Child Care, FNESC and the FNEA signed the Coordination Agreement, which outlines how the Province will support the First Nations Education Authority with the implementation of teacher certification and regulation under First Nations jurisdiction by providing investigative and advisory assistance at the request of the First Nations Education Authority.

Canim Lake Band, Ditidaht First Nation, and Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) became PFNs on July 1, 2023, and entered into B.C.-PFN Agreements in summer 2023. These Nations join aq'am First Nation, Cowichan Tribes, Seabird Island, and Lil'wat First Nation – the first four Nations to complete a school year under their own jurisdiction agreements.

CommunityLINK – Ongoing

Provides funding to school districts for programs and services focused on vulnerable students. Annually, about 25% of CommunityLINK funding is spent on food programs. Government invested \$56.5 million in the 2022-23 school year.

StrongStart BC – Ongoing

StrongStart BC (SSBC) centres and outreach programs reduce young children's vulnerability and increase success in school throughout the early years as well as later in life.

In 2022-23, there were a total of 329 SSBC programs, serving approximately 22,000 children in 59 school districts. Government invested over \$10.5 million in the 2022-23 school year.

Child care pilots on school grounds – Ongoing

Starting in 2019-20, the Ministry of Education encouraged selected school districts to develop capacity in directly operating various models of child care where the board of education is the licensee. Budget 2021-22 provided funding to expand these pilot programs and introduced new funding to build capacity for child care on school grounds through new early learning and child care (ELCC) leads positions.

In 2022-23, 56 of 60 school districts hired ELCC leads. These leads will continue to support expansion of programs like Seamless Day Kindergarten (integrates before- and after-school care into the classroom with instructional support from certified early childhood educators), JUST B4 program (a half-day early childhood education program in schools for four year olds), the Integration Inquiry Project (seeks to explore a holistic approach to early learning and child care on school grounds through the establishment and expansion on school grounds) and ongoing support for the expansion of child care spaces on school grounds through New Spaces funding.

As of 2023, the Province invested \$4.1 million in new funding to support the Seamless Day Kindergarten pilot.

New Spaces Fund – Ongoing

Since 2018, the Province has invested \$4.8 billion in ChildCareBC, including funding the creation of more than 37,000 new licensed child care spaces through the New Spaces Fund and other space-creation programs.

- » 18,000 spaces are open and more than 19,000 are in development or construction. These funded spaces include:
 - ◇ More than 28,100 spaces for children ages 0-5, and;
 - ◇ More than 6,900 spaces for children ages 6-12

In 2023, the New Spaces Fund funded the creation of more than 1,930 new child care spaces for school-aged children.

\$10 a Day ChildCareBC and Affordability – Ongoing

On average, during the 2023-24 fiscal year, there were over 13,500 \$10 a Day ChildCareBC spaces in B.C., which surpassed the goal of 12,500. Along with work to expand access to \$10-a-day funding for all licensed providers, enhancements to the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI) are bringing quick relief to families with over

130,700 spaces offered at reduced fees up to \$900 per month, per child.

Early Childhood Educators (ECE) Bursaries and Workforce Support – Ongoing

A one-time, \$49.2-million investment by the Government of Canada through the 2021-22 to 2024-25 Canada-British Columbia Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Agreement will better support workforce development in the child care sector. This includes \$25.5 million to help provide ECE bursaries for three academic years, which began in September 2021.

In 2023, as part of the Stronger BC: Future Ready Action Plan, the Province accelerated the expansion of early childhood education programs so 1,300 more people will have access over the next three years. This will address staffing pressures and prepare for anticipated job openings for certified ECEs and ECE assistants.

Additionally, early childhood professionals who completed training outside Canada, or francophone Canadians who have documents in French, are now able to apply for a grant of as much as \$2,500 when they apply for ECE certification with the BC ECE Registry.

A recruitment and retention strategy was included as part of B.C.'s ChildCareBC plan, launched in 2018. In addition to bursaries, the Province is:

- » Creating new ECE student spaces at post-secondary schools, more than doubling the number of seats since 2018; and
- » Enhancing ECE compensation by \$6 per hour for most ECEs in the province
- » Investing in new ECE dual credit programs in 30 school districts so students in grades 11 and 12 can get a head start on their ECE post-secondary training while earning credits to graduate from high school
- » Prioritizing international ECEs under the Provincial Nominee Program – creating immigration pathways for ECEs and helping employers secure staff

External Credentials Program – Ongoing

Students in B.C. now have new possibilities to earn credits for First Nations language and culture programs through the expansion of the External Credentials Program (ECP). Since 2022, First Nations are able to create and approve their language and cultural learning programs to be recognized by the Ministry of Education and Child Care as external credentials that students can use toward graduating.

First Nations Children and Youth in Care Protocol – Ongoing

The First Nations Children and Youth in Care Protocol, signed May 26, 2020, commits the Province and First Nations to work together to engage in dialogue and joint action on specific issues and initiatives, seeking to improve the educational outcomes and well-being of Indigenous children and youth in care, and former youth in care through legislative, policy and practice reform.

Work is underway through the First Nations Children and Youth in Care Working Group to develop a workplan under the Protocol.

Equity of Opportunity Supplement – Ongoing

The Equity of Opportunity Supplement provides funding to school districts to support additional services to students by recognizing children and youth in care, children and youth receiving non-clinical mental health supports and low-income families. The supplement was set at \$24 million for the 2022-23 school year.

K-12 Anti-Racism in Education Action Plan – Ongoing

The K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan, released in January 2023, is a comprehensive multi-year strategy to address racism and discrimination in education and create a culture and climate of belonging for all students and staff.

Key initiatives within the Action Plan include:

- » Creation of Anti-Racism in Education: A Guide for Teachers (released in February 2023)
- » Ongoing youth engagement
- » Creation of an Inclusion Calendar Guide to promote anti-racism messages, understand shared history, and celebrate diversity in schools and communities (released in September 2023)
- » Development of foundational online professional learning resources for employees within B.C.'s education sector (to be completed in 2024)
- » Development of Racism Incident Response Guidelines to support districts and schools to identify and respond to incidents of racism in a trauma-informed and responsive manner (to be completed in 2024)

Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement – Ongoing

The new Indigenous-focused graduation requirement will come into effect in the 2023-24 school year so that all students working towards the B.C. Certificate of Graduation (Dogwood Diploma) – in English or French – will be required to complete the new graduation requirement, including students at B.C.-certified offshore schools.

British Columbia Training and Education Savings Grant – Ongoing

The B.C. Training and Education Savings Grant helps parents plan and save early for their child's post-secondary education by providing a one-time, \$1,200 grant into a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) of eligible children.

New and improved schools – Ongoing

Since September 2017, the Government of B.C. has announced \$3 billion for new and improved schools and land purchases for future schools throughout the province. This includes adding more than 20,000 new student spaces and 33,000 seismically safe seats at B.C. schools. Budget 2022 included \$3.1 billion over the next three years.

As of 2023, the Province has provided over 6,400 seats for new and current elementary and high schools throughout B.C.

As part of Budget 2023, the Province is providing \$261.1 million in 2023-24 for school maintenance projects, including \$41 million to upgrade heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems at 101 schools throughout B.C. As part of the school maintenance funding, \$13 million will go toward the purchase of at least 67 new school buses. Additional funding is being made available through the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation for school districts that buy electric buses.

Student and Family Affordability Fund – Ongoing

For the 2022-23 school year, the Ministry of Education and Child Care allocated \$60 million to schools and districts to directly support parents and guardians of K-12 students who are temporarily facing financial challenges and need temporary assistance with the costs of school supplies, education-related fees, and dealing with food insecurity.

Feeding Futures Fund – Started in 2023

Budget 2023 committed \$214.5 million in operating funding over three years to make sure students are fed and ready to learn by expanding existing school food programs in districts and schools that already have them and creating new ones in districts and schools without.

For the 2023-24 school year, the Ministry of Education and Child Care allocated \$71.5 million directly to school districts with flexible funding criteria to address the immediate need of feeding hungry students in a stigma and barrier-free manner while longer-term approaches for school food programs are put into place.

The ministry also allocated \$5 million for minor capital enhancements required for school food programs through the Food Infrastructure Program.

The Ministry of Education and Child Care is working with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food to include the Feed BC program in school food programs.

Teacher recruitment incentive – Started 2023

The Province, in partnership with the BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) and the British Columbia School Superintendents Association (BCSSA) northern chapter, launched the teacher-recruitment incentives in spring 2023 with \$400,000 in funding to address the immediate need for teachers in the North.

As of 2023, K-12 students in some of B.C.'s rural and remote communities are learning from 50 new teachers who were recruited through the Province's new hiring incentives.

MINISTRY OF ENERGY, MINES AND LOW CARBON INNOVATION

Economic and Community Development Agreements – Ongoing

Government engaged with First Nations throughout B.C. on agreements in the sharing of direct mineral tax revenues on new mines and major mine expansions. These agreements are known as Economic and Community Development Agreements (ECDAs). There are 54 signed ECDAs with 49 First Nations for 25 mines.

Up to 37.5% of incremental mineral tax is shared with First Nations (FN) for new mines and expansions with \$87 million in payments made in 2023 and \$326 million shared since the program's inception in 2008.

CleanBC Better Homes and Better Building Program – Ongoing

Offers specialized energy coaching and high-value rebates for heat pumps in Indigenous communities, with \$4.65 million in incentives spent from 2020-2023.

Over the 2023 calendar year, the Province delivered \$28.4 million in rebates to more than 4,500 income-qualified households in B.C.

CleanBC Social Housing Incentives Program – Ongoing

The program offers energy study funding, project implementation support, and greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction incentives for social housing providers, which will reduce energy costs for tenants. From 2018-2023, 23 projects were completed, with \$740,000 spent on incentives.

CleanBC Remote Community Energy Strategy – Ongoing

The CleanBC Remote Community Energy Strategy (RCES) includes three streams of action: (1) build remote community capacity to lead energy efficiency and clean energy projects; (2) support remote community efforts

to improve energy efficiency and minimize GHG emissions in new and existing buildings; and (3) implement renewable energy generation projects to displace diesel generation.

Indigenous Clean Energy Opportunities (ICEO) – Ongoing

Through the Indigenous Clean Energy Opportunities (ICEO) process, the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation and the First Nations Energy and Mining Council in partnership with the First Nations Leadership Council, are seeking to engage First Nations rightsholders and organizations in a collaborative dialogue to:

- » Position First Nations to fully participate in current and future opportunities in B.C.'s clean energy sector; and
- » Align the Province's strategic clean energy policy and legislation with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous people

BC Indigenous Clean Energy Initiative (BCICEI) – Ongoing

CleanBC, has funded 67 projects totalling almost \$12 million.

\$140 million announced in 2023 will help fund a new funding stream for BCICEI in 2024. The funding stream will further support First Nations clean-energy projects, and will be a collaborative effort between the Province, New Relationship Trust (NRT) and PacifiCan. The new stream will allow small-scale renewable-energy projects that are ineligible to submit to BC Hydro's calls for power due to their size, to move forward and contribute to the power grid.

Energy Affordability Working Group – Ongoing

The cross-government Energy Affordability Working Group (EAWG) continues to assess options to provide assistance to utility customers in crisis, as well as to reduce ongoing energy costs for vulnerable utility customers.

BC HYDRO

Customer Crisis Fund – Ongoing

On June 22, 2021, the Province continued BC Hydro's Customer Crisis Fund to provide support for people in financial crisis and help avoid disconnections of their electricity service while potential alternatives for a permanent crisis program are evaluated.

- » An additional \$6 million was approved by government in November 2022, which should allow the program to continue in its current form until fall 2025.
- » BC Hydro also increased the maximum amount of the grants to \$800 for an electrically heated home (up from \$600) and \$700 for a non-electrically heated home (up from \$500).

In 2023, BC Hydro provided support to 5,621 customers.

BC Hydro flexible payment plans – Ongoing

BC Hydro offers a number of payment plan options to help customers avoid disconnection of service, including: equal payment plans that spread out the cost of seasonally high bills equally on monthly bills throughout the year; one-time payment deferrals; and interest-free repayment of overdue balances and need extra time to pay their bills.

BC Hydro changes to customer disconnection policy – Ongoing

BC Hydro does not disconnect residential customers for non-payment during periods of extreme temperature.

This includes a complete moratorium on non-payment disconnections in the North Interior and South Interior from November to March. In response to extreme temperatures in summer 2021, BC Hydro implemented a high temperature disconnection policy when temperatures were expected to reach 35 degrees Celsius. In 2022, BC Hydro aligned the policy with the Province's new Heat Alert and Response System.

In response to increasing wildfire and flooding events, BC Hydro implemented tariff changes to allow electricity charges to be waived for residential and small business customers under an evacuation order that has been in place for at least five days. For residential customers whose property was unfortunately destroyed as a result of the natural disaster, BC Hydro automatically waives the customer's last bill, as well as the charge to establish a new electric service when they rebuild, if not covered by their insurance.

BC Hydro has also established processes with the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction to avoid security deposits and postpone disconnections for customers awaiting decisions on applications for support. BC Hydro also implemented tariff changes to allow another customer to act as a guarantor for a residential customer account as an alternative to providing a security deposit.

BC Hydro has implemented changes that will delay disconnections where customers demonstrate a medical reason for requiring power.

Social Housing Retrofit Support Program – Ongoing

The Social Housing Retrofit Support Program provides funding to social housing providers to investigate and implement energy efficiency projects and rebates to install energy-saving products.

BC Hydro, along with FortisBC, the BC Non-Profit Housing Association and BC Housing are working together to make it easier for customers to participate by reducing application process time, integrating BC Hydro funding for electrification opportunities, and increasing energy management support by funding dedicated energy manager positions, education and training curriculum development and data integration support.

Low-Income Conservation Programs – Ongoing

BC Hydro, in partnership with FortisBC, has two offers for eligible low-income households – the Energy Conservation Assistance Program and Energy Saving Kits.

In 2023-24, BC Hydro spent approximately \$15 million on low-income energy efficiency programs and products to help low-income customers save approximately five gigawatt hours of electricity. As a result, participating customers saved a total of \$621,000 on their annual electricity bills.

In 2023-24, over 2,800 households went through the Energy Conservation Assistance Program and over 10,000 households received an energy saving kit.

Portable air conditioner offer – New

On June 28, 2023, the Government of B.C. announced it was providing \$10 million to expand the Energy Conservation Assistance Program to include portable air conditioners to support vulnerable customers who meet the income qualification requirements of the program. BC Hydro installed more than 4,000 units in 2023-24.

BC Hydro's Indigenous Scholarships and Bursary Program – Ongoing

The Indigenous scholarships and bursary program supports students to attend post-secondary education programs. In 2023, BC Hydro awarded 35 \$5,000 scholarships for full-time students; two \$2,000 bursaries; and one \$8,000 Randy Brandt Award. The total value of the scholarships and bursaries program for 2023-24 was \$180,000.

BC Hydro Contracts and Procurement to Indigenous Designated Businesses – Ongoing

Through its Indigenous Contract and Procurement Policy, BC Hydro works with First Nations and their designated businesses with whom BC Hydro has agreements to provide direct procurement opportunities. The value of Indigenous procurement in 2023 was \$206.6 million in direct contracts to First Nations-designated businesses.

Indigenous Communities Conservation Program – Ongoing

The BC Hydro and FortisBC Indigenous Communities Conservation Program (ICCP) supports Indigenous communities looking to improve the energy efficiency and comfort of their homes. Through two program offers, Indigenous communities can receive salary support and training, free energy-saving products and rebates to implement home energy upgrades for their community members.

In 2023-24:

- » Three Indigenous communities installed free energy-saving products and completed basic home condition assessments in 185 homes with support from the ICCP Home Energy Check-up.
- » Four Indigenous communities, as well as the Aboriginal Housing Management Association, completed energy efficiency upgrades in 153 homes with support from the ICCP Home Energy Upgrade Rebates. Projects underway encompass an additional 132 homes.

BC ENERGY REGULATOR (BCER)

Natural Resource Aboriginal Liaison Program – Ongoing

The Natural Resource Aboriginal Liaison Program supports strengthening relationships and reconciliation between the Province and Indigenous communities by creating greater Indigenous community awareness of natural resource development, safety, environmental and emergency management, and restoration activities.

The program receives funding from the Indigenous Funding Program through the Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship and the Canada Energy Regulator, with a budget exceeding \$1 million. The BC Energy Regulator dedicates three full-time positions to administer the program.

Indigenous Training Opportunities:

The BCER collaborated on five provincial initiatives, allocating \$85,000 in funding for 2023 to support priority action areas, guiding principles and key population groups of TogetherBC. Indigenous learners from throughout the Province participated in diverse programs as follows:

- » **Tea Creek:** An Indigenous-led endeavor situated in Kitwanga, dedicated to land-based food sovereignty and trades training, participants at Tea Creek undergo comprehensive training in horticulture, carpentry, drone mapping, and heavy equipment operation, alongside learning to create media stories for effective project communications.
- » **Mind Over Metal:** The Mind Over Metal youth camps, for youth ages 12-17, are focused on reshaping the perception of welding and welding-related careers.
- » **University of Northern BC's Active Minds camp:** Active Minds provides a comprehensive array of science, engineering, and computer camps, events, and workshops tailored for children ages 6 to 16. These activities are carried out across Northern B.C. at multiple locations throughout the summer months.
- » **Qwelmínte Secwépemc Knowledge Builders:** Drawing upon the Skú7pecen telling and Walking on Two Legs concept, technicians from both Indigenous and western backgrounds come together as a collective, sharing values and principles to bridge existing knowledge gaps.

- » **University of Victoria (UVic) – Restoration of Natural Systems:** Each year, a sum of \$5,000 is allocated for a few awards, which are available for Indigenous students from First Nations in B.C. who are enrolled in the Restoration of Natural Systems Diploma or Certificate program at UVic.

Columbia Basin Trust

The Columbia Basin Trust is a statutory Crown corporation focused on the region most impacted by the Columbia River Treaty. The trust has dual accountabilities to the Province as shareholder, and to basin residents who, through required engagement to develop management plans, set priorities for the trust spending to enhance the economic, environmental and social well-being of basin residents.

Training Fee Support Program – Completed in 2023

187 unemployed or underemployed people received grants in 2023 to complete short-term training or certification to increase their chances of securing jobs. Investment in 2023 was \$330,000.

Basin Farmers' Market Co-operation Nutrition Coupon Program – Ongoing

In partnership with the BC Association of Farmers' Markets, the trust committed \$506,400 over four years (2022-2025) towards the program, which enables lower-income families, seniors and pregnant women to buy fresh, locally grown food from basin farmers.

Child Care Support Program – Ongoing

The Child Care Support Program has supported access to affordable licensed child care with \$11.7 million committed since 2017. The program focuses on improving the quality and sustainability of existing child care spaces and creating new child care spaces in the basin, supporting recruitment and retention of the early childhood educator (ECE) workforce through the ECE Wage Subsidy and ECE Training Wage programs and providing advisory services to strengthen the capacity of child care providers.

Affordable Housing Program – Ongoing

The Columbia Basin Trust's Affordable Housing program helps ensure that existing affordable housing units are maintained and are energy efficient and comfortable for residents. The trust has invested \$47 million in affordable housing since 2016.

In 2023, the trust provided development support towards the creation of 87 new units and supported the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) arrays in 33 affordable housing units to reduce utility costs and maintain affordability.

Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy – Ongoing

In partnership with the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy, in 2023, the trust provided \$500,000 to deliver more than 60 literacy programs and workshops, totalling 5,270 sessions reaching 6,955 children and youth and 5,516 adults.

First Nations Housing Sustainability Initiative – Ongoing

The Columbia Basin Trust's First Nations Housing Sustainability Initiative supports First Nations communities in the basin to enhance and increase their local affordable housing. Since 2017, the initiative has invested \$10.4 million to support local First Nations' housing needs.

With nearly \$215,000 in funding committed in 2023, the trust is helping to install renewable energy generation in 25 units to reduce utility costs to maintain affordability.

Student Wage Subsidy – Ongoing

Student Wage Subsidy programs are focused on addressing the needs of small businesses, building a stronger local economy, and creating a skilled workforce. Since 2010, \$13.24 million has helped employers hire full-time students on a part-time basis throughout the school year and hire full-time students over the summer.

In 2023, the Columbia Basin Trust provided over \$692,000 in wage subsidies to support 164 organizations to hire 104 students and train 60 individuals.

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

Climate Preparedness and Adaption Strategy – Ongoing

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, in partnership with the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, is undertaking a provincewide Disaster and Climate Risk and Resilience Assessment (DCRRA), to be completed in 2024. The DCRRA is explicitly including assessment of disaster and climate risks for vulnerable populations and is considering the disproportionate risks to Indigenous communities.

CleanBC 2030 Roadmap – Ongoing

CleanBC Communities Fund is a federal-provincial program to provide green infrastructure funding to local governments. The third and final intake is approved by both B.C. and Canada, with announcements underway, and 27 projects totaling \$151.1 million. This intake supports projects starting in 2023 and completing by March 2027 (previous intakes: Intake 1 (2019): 16 projects totaling \$54.4 million; Intake 2 (2020-2021): 19 projects totaling \$47.6 million).

Clean Coast Clean Waters (CCCW) – Ongoing

The [Clean Coast Clean Waters](#) (CCCW) initiative received an additional \$25 million in funding in 2023, bringing the total to \$49.83 million. This funding program supports job creation, including youth employment and jobs for First Nation communities and will be used for projects in 2023 and 2024. Funding is directed toward marine coastal First Nations, local governments, and non-profit organizations in B.C.

Organics Infrastructure Program (OIP) and CleanBC Organics Infrastructure and Collections Program – Ongoing

The OIP is a federal-provincial grant program that supports the new organics processing infrastructure in B.C. Up to \$30 million will be invested in facilities in B.C., with \$10 million from the province, \$10 million from the federal government, and the remaining \$10 million from project proponents. The CleanBC Organics Infrastructure and Collection Program is investing over \$25 million in new organics processing facilities and new residential organics collection programs. These funds support rural and remote communities, including investing in new long term green jobs. In 2023-24, construction of 33 facilities throughout B.C. was completed, with 13 anticipated to be complete in 2024-25.

Environmental Emergency Program – Ongoing

Funding agreements for Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Technique, After-Action Reviews of spill incidents, cultural heritage assessment, improved First Nation spills notification and water quality sampling were supported in 2023.

Indigenous Climate-Resilience Capacity Pilot Program – Started 2023

The Province is helping First Nations communities strengthen their resilience to the adverse effects of climate change through the launch of an Indigenous climate-resilience capacity-building pilot program. The Province has

provided \$2 million to fund a one-year pilot program that will be delivered by two First Nations organizations with experience delivering environmental programs: the Coastal First Nations-Great Bear Initiative and First Nations Emergency Services Society.

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

B.C. Family Benefit – Ongoing

The B.C. Family Benefit provides a tax-free monthly payment to families with children under the age of 18. The program launched in October 2020 and supports around 285,000 families with children under the age of 18 through monthly payments.

As of July 2023, the maximum benefit increased by an additional \$250 per year for a two-parent family of four and as much as \$750 for a single-parent family with two children. Approximately 95% of single-parent families in B.C. get the benefit, with payments averaging approximately \$2,200 over the year.

The benefit was temporarily enhanced for the first three months of 2023 to help address the cost of living. Eligible families received up to an additional \$175 per child between January 2023 and March 2023, providing more money to 75% of B.C. families with children.

Pay Transparency Act – Started in 2023

In spring 2023, B.C. passed the Pay Transparency Act, requiring employers to adopt more transparent pay practices to alleviate discrimination in pay and reduce the gender pay gap. In 2023, women in B.C. were typically paid 17% less than men, and the gap was even larger for women and gender-diverse people who were Indigenous, racialized, newcomer, disabled and/or 2SLGBTQIA+. All provincially regulated employers are now required to include pay ranges on job postings and refrain from behaviour that contributes to the gap, such as punishing employees who reveal their pay to their coworkers. Through a phased approach that began in November 2023, large and medium-sized employers will be required to publicly report their pay gap.

B.C.'s Gender-Based Violence Action Plan – Started in 2023

On December 10, 2023, B.C. released Safe and Supported: B.C.'s Gender-Based Violence Action Plan. The three-year plan reported on vital work underway across government and highlighted actions to come, including boosting programming and supports for survivors, strengthening government's response to the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and ramping up prevention and awareness campaigns. The action plan was informed by engagements in 2022 with community partners, service providers and advocates, and further shaped through focused engagement in 2023 with First Nations, Metis, Inuit and urban and rural or remote Indigenous participants and organizations. B.C. also expanded the mandate of the Gender-Based Violence Action Plan Advisory Committee to provide continued advice and leadership through the life of the action plan. In December 2023, the federal government committed \$61.9 million in new investments over four years for the plan under a new Canada-British Columbia bilateral agreement to end gender-based violence.

Climate Action Tax Credit – Ongoing

In 2023, the Province raised income thresholds and increased the climate action tax credit to ensure B.C.'s clean transition remains affordable for more people. The increased thresholds mean more people were eligible for the money with an estimated 70% of eligible families and individuals receiving the maximum amounts. The income ceiling for the credit will increase annually, with a goal to reach 80% of households in B.C. by 2030.

The Province provided enhancements to the credit beginning in July 2023, which means a single person could receive up to \$447 per year, an increase of \$250 from the base tax credit amounts in 2022.

Affordability Credits paid through the Climate Action Tax Credit – Complete

For October 2022, January 2023 and April 2023 the B.C. government introduced three affordability credits as temporary enhancements to the climate action tax credit. The maximum amount for each payment was increased to \$212.38 per individual, \$212.38 for a spouse or common-law partner (or first child if a single parent), and \$55.13 for each child. This included a \$164 enhancement for individuals and their spouses, as well as a \$41 enhancement for each child.

Indigenous Youth Internship Program – Ongoing

The Indigenous Youth Internship Program offers a 12-month internship program that is culturally responsive and supported. Interns work for nine months in the B.C. Public Service, followed by three months in an Indigenous organization. It is intended to encourage Indigenous youth to consider the B.C. Public Service or Indigenous organizations as a place to pursue a rewarding career; support Indigenous youth to develop their leadership skills; provide opportunities for Indigenous youth to contribute and improve relationship building between Indigenous communities/organizations and the provincial government; and contribute to closing the social and economic gaps that exist between Indigenous people and other people in B.C.

Work-Able – Ongoing

Work-Able is a 12-month paid internship with the B.C. Public Service for recent (within the last three years) post-secondary graduates who self-identify as having a disability. This unique program provides learning, coaching, and mentorship to help participants build successful careers in the B.C. Public Service.

Indigenous Applicant Advisory Service – Ongoing

The Indigenous Applicant Advisory Service is available to Indigenous applicants (First Nations [status or non-status], Métis or Inuit) seeking work or already employed in the B.C. Public Service. This service aims to increase representation of Indigenous people in the B.C. Public Service by providing advice and guidance on the hiring process and informs improvements.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Doulas for Aboriginal Families Grant Program (DAFGP) – Ongoing

The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres launched the DAFGP in 2013 and is currently the only organization to administer a provincial doula support grant for Indigenous families in B.C. The DAFGP aims to increase healthy birth outcomes for Indigenous families in B.C. and removes the cost barrier to doula services by providing grant support for full spectrum, labour/ birth, and postpartum doula services. DAFGP also actively works to increase the number of Indigenous doulas registered and offers Indigenous doula training and community of practice supports. The DAFGP has supported 3,037 Indigenous families throughout B.C. since 2013.

Expanded travel programs for cancer patients

On March 31, 2023, the Canadian Cancer Society (CCS) and Hope Air each received \$10 million in grant funding to support the delivery of services they provide to people in B.C. who must travel for cancer treatment. This funding is part of B.C.'s 10-Year Cancer Action Plan.

With the \$10 million investment, the CCS expanded its three existing travel programs and added a new program.

Provincial Perinatal Substance Use Program (PPSUP) – Complete

PPSUP is an ongoing program delivered through B.C. Women's Hospital to advance provincial capacity and services

to improve health outcomes for pregnant and early parenting women who use substances and their infants.

Beginning in 2022-23, the PHSA was allocated \$7 million in annual ongoing funding to continue the B.C. Women's Hospital's existing model with centralized PPSUP leadership and co-ordination.

Peers / People with lived and living experience of substance use – Ongoing

The Ministry of Health is supporting the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions in its development of a provincial peer training curriculum for people with lived and living experience (PWLLE) with substance use. The ministry has also supported the uptake and implementation of the BCCDC-developed [Peer Payment Standards for Short Term Engagement](#).

Standards development for supportive recovery homes – Complete

The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions are working with partners to develop draft provincial standards for registered assisted living supportive recovery services.

Primary Care Strategy and Primary Care Networks (PCNs) – Ongoing

Through the refreshed primary care strategy, B.C. is increasing the number of people living in B.C. with access to a doctor by recruiting and supporting more family doctors with a new payment model for family physicians.

The Ministry of Health continues to implement Primary Care Networks (PCNs) throughout the province to improve access to care.

1,820 team-based care FTEs have been hired by over 350 clinics and regional hubs across all provincial primary care initiatives. There are 77 PCNs in various stages of implementation, 32 Urgent and Primary Care Centres, 10 Community Health Centres, and two First Nation-led Primary Care Centres are up and running with 13 more planned, in partnership with the First Nations Health Authority.

Real time virtual support services for Indigenous Peoples:

First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day (FNvDOD) and First Nations Virtual Substance Use and Psychiatry Service (FNvSUPs) provide Indigenous patients and their families with access to virtual primary care physicians, psychiatrists, addictions specialists, and other providers specialized in culturally safe care. In fiscal year 2023-24 the ministry provided \$6.9 million for FNvDOD and FNvSUPs (includes payments to the Northern Health Authority to manage physician contracts, and to FNHA for operations). From inception in April 2020 to January 2024, there were 38,842 FNvDOD and 6,243 FNvSUPs encounters.

Longitudinal Family Physician (LFP) Payment Model – Ongoing

The new Longitudinal Family Physician Payment Model, launched on February 1, 2023, helps streamline and simplify the administrative 'burden' on family physicians (FPs), ensuring FPs can spend more time with vulnerable and complex patients and their families. 4,103 physicians have registered for the new LFP payment model.

Nurse-family Partnership – Ongoing

Since 2012, the Nurse-family Partnership program (part of a \$23-million Healthy Start Initiative) has provided an intensive, home visiting program offered by specialized public health nurses aimed at supporting young, first-time mothers vulnerable to structural and systemic inequities and their children up to age two years. B.C. has delivered the program to over 2,200 families with inequities since its inception.

Early identification of autism assessment – Ongoing

In June 2021, BCAAN conducted a Streamlined Assessment Process (SAP) pilot to assess those who are nonverbal

and showing severe signs of autism typical behaviours for children aged three and a half and younger. This model of care was rolled out throughout the province in spring/summer 2022. The streamlined assessments were shown to be effective. 97% of children seen through SAP were diagnosed with autism and wait times for this group were reduced by 28.4%.

Partnership with First Nations Health Authority – Ongoing

The Joint Project Board (JPB) is a partnership between the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and the Ministry of Health. Through this partnership, annual funding of up to \$15.33 million supports 27 community-driven, Nation-based primary care projects in First Nations throughout the province. The Ministry of Health also partners with the First Nations Health Council (FNHC), FNHA, First Nations Health Directors Association, provincial partner ministries, and the Government of Canada to advance community-driven, Nation-based approaches supporting the social determinants of mental health and wellness, per the [2018 Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding](#). Implementation of the memorandum was extended in to April 2, 2025 to continue supporting these approaches as the partners work towards implementation of the tripartite [10-year social determinants of health strategy](#) approved by First Nations Chiefs and Councils in 2023.

Partnership with BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres – Ongoing

Since 2016-17, the Ministry of Health has provided the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres \$200,000 in annual funding to develop and deliver health and wellness programming supporting urban Indigenous Peoples.

Health Career Access Program (HCAP) – Ongoing

As part of the StrongerBC economic recovery framework, the Health Career Access Program (HCAP) is a fully funded work-integrated learning program designed to increase the supply of health care assistants in B.C. HCAP provides people in B.C. without prior health-care education or experience with accessible, low-barrier opportunities to enter high-demand careers within the health sector. Since September 2020, over 7,500 HCAP participants have been hired in long-term care, assisted living, and acute care facilities, as well as home support services throughout the province.

Internationally Educated Nurses – Ongoing

The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the BC College of Nurses and Midwives (BCCNM), Nursing Community Assessment Service (NCAS) and Health Match BC (HMBC), invested more than \$13 million to support internationally educated nurses to practise in B.C.

Internationally Educated Allied Health Professionals (IEAHPs) – Ongoing

In July 2022, the Ministry of Health announced \$4.5 million in funding to support IEAHPs from high-priority occupations that want to work in B.C.'s public health system. Budget 2023 provided \$11.3 million of funding over three years for this action.

Nursing Bursaries

\$68.1 million in 2023-24, including:

- » **\$2,000 per year in tuition credits for nursing students** enrolled in BSc Nursing, BSc Psychiatric Nursing, and Practical Nursing programs at a public post-secondary institution
- » **\$5,000 per year in tuition credits for Indigenous nursing students** enrolled in BSc Nursing at a public post-secondary institution (this credit is already provided to Indigenous students in BSc Psychiatric Nursing, and Practical Nursing programs)

- » **\$3 million in 2022 for bursaries up to \$10,000 to health care assistants to become LPNs through a recognized access to practical nursing (APN) program**
- » As of March 31, 2023: 21 graduate LPNs have received the full bursary, and 65 student participants are receiving semester-based bursary payments
- » The APN bursaries are continued through HHR Strategy Action 57 with **\$15.4 million over three years for priority education programs**

Community Food Action Initiative – Ongoing

The Community Food Action Initiative (CFAI) supports health authorities to improve food security in their regions. Since 2005, the health authorities have received a combined total of \$1.5 million annually in CFAI funding. In 2021 the Ministry of Health provided a permanent \$1-million uplift to funds to reduce the need for short-term, unsustainable responses to food insecurity by strengthening community capacity to improve food access and availability in the province, with a focus on remote and Indigenous communities.

In Plain Sight Task Team – Ongoing

The In Plain Sight **Recommendations Implementation – Ongoing**

- » In June 2023, the In Plain Sight Task Team, including representation from ministries, Métis Nation BC, First Nations Health Authority, the First Nations Leadership Council, and health system partners, concluded their two-year mandate to drive forward the implementation of the 24 recommendations identified in the report In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care, across the health-care system.
- » The task team's mandate was for a minimum 20-month term and a full report on progress was publicly released in October 2023. The Ministry of Health continues to work towards the implementation of the report recommendations and reporting on progress is embedded within the DRIPA Action Plan as Action 3.7.

National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health (NCCIH) – Ongoing

Ongoing efforts to make health-care systems culturally safe and accessible for all First Nations Peoples, Inuit, and Métis people in B.C. and across Canada are being strengthened with the creation of a ground-breaking repository of resources at the National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health (NCCIH). New public funding will support the NCCIH to grow the first-ever collection of cultural safety and Indigenous-specific anti-racism tools and resources. Indigenous Services Canada is providing \$520,000 over five years to support this initiative nationally and the Government of B.C. is contributing \$550,000 to enable B.C. health system partners to create tools, strategies, and resources to enhance culturally safe service delivery and practices across the health system.

Enhancing health-care services in Northern B.C. – Ongoing

To help people living in Northern B.C. access health-care services, the Province is providing up to \$6.38 million for programs and incentives to encourage more health workers to work and live in the North.

First Link – Ongoing

First Link provides support to people living with dementia and their caregivers throughout the progression of the disease. People can connect to First Link through a self-referral or through a friend or health-care provider.

PharmaCare– Ongoing

Expanded coverage and added 24 new drugs to the PharmaCare formulary in 2023.

Effective April 1, 2023, PharmaCare covers over the full cost of more than 60 commonly used birth-control methods.

Minor Ailments and Contraception Service (MACS) was launched on June 1, 2023. B.C. residents can see a pharmacist for a comprehensive assessment and clinical advice and treatment for 21 minor ailments and contraception at no charge.

Home and community care client rates for Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) Arrivals – Ongoing

A new temporary policy supports CUAET arrivals who require home and community care (HCC) services but may not be able to afford the client rates.

If the individual does not have income or is unable to provide any proof of their financial situation, then the HCC client rate will be waived, and the individual will be assessed a \$0-client rate for their HCC service for up to one year. The client rate will be recalculated if the individual gains income during that year or becomes able to provide proof of their financial situation.

Health of Métis People – Ongoing

In February 2022, Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) and the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, along with the Ministry of Health, released the report *Taanishi Kiiya? Miiyayow Métis Saantii Pi Miyooayann Didaan BC* – the Métis Public Health Surveillance Program Baseline Report (MPHSP). The program identifies key health indicators and sets recommendations, goals and benchmarks to monitor and report on the health and wellness of Métis People over the next decade. The initiative will include releasing interim reports every three years to assess progress on achieving the 10-year health and wellness targets outlined in the report.

In 2023-24, the Ministry of Health provided MNBC with \$375,000 to support health and wellness initiatives benefiting Métis Peoples and communities in B.C., including partnership development, supporting the MPHSP and engagement and collaboration opportunities with partners across the health care spectrum. In 2022-23, the ministry also provided \$1 million to support the development of a Métis Health and Wellness Strategy.

In 2023, the Ministries of Health, Mental Health and Addictions, and Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation partnered with MNBC to create a Health, Mental Health and Wellness, and Harm Reduction Table to uphold Métis self-determination in health care and to advance Métis health and wellness priorities.

Age-Friendly Communities (AFC) Program – Ongoing

The Ministry of Health (HLTH), through the Age-friendly BC (AFBC) Strategy, provides Age-friendly grants, supports, tools, resources, and recognition to local governments and Indigenous communities to develop policies, programs, and services that allow older adults from all cultures, identities, and abilities to age-in-place in their communities.

In 2023, 25 communities throughout B.C. were successful in their application for grant funding, including six Indigenous communities.

HLTH also administers the AFC Recognition program, which recognizes communities who have taken concrete steps to commit to being an age friendly community. There are currently [61 communities in B.C.](#) who have received this recognition status since 2012.

BC Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupon Program – Ongoing

In 2021-22, the Ministry of Health provided the BC Association of Farmers' Markets (BCAFM) with over \$12 million to support the BC Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupon Program, which provides coupons for lower-income people living in B.C. to purchase fresh, healthy, local food at B.C. farmers' markets. The program is run by community organizations provincewide. \$3 million of this funding will support an increase in the number of seniors

participating in the program over three years (\$1 million each year). In 2023, over 12,000 B.C. households benefited from this program, an increase from 10,152 in 2022.

Medical Services Plan coverage for individuals arriving under the Canada Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel – Ongoing

Individuals from Ukraine who arrive in B.C. as Canadian citizens, permanent residents, or deemed residents (including those who arrived through the CUAET) will be provided Medical Services Plan (MSP) coverage effective on the first day of the month in which their application for MSP enrolment is submitted.

Effective October 1, 2022, individuals who are enrolled in MSP and who must complete the federal medical exam or diagnostic services should not receive a bill. Practitioners and diagnostic facilities can bill the Ministry of Health directly.

Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel International Student Health Fee Remission Regulation – Ongoing

To support individuals arriving under the federal Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET), the CUAET International Student Health Fee Remission Regulation was enacted so that individuals enrolled in the Medical Services Plan with a CUAET study permit will not be required to pay the \$75 a month international student health fee.

B.C.'s Health Human Resource Strategy – Ongoing

B.C.'s Health Human Resources Strategy (the strategy) aims to optimize the health system, expand training, and improve health-care worker recruitment and retention.

Implementation of the strategy is aligned with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, the In Plain Sight Report, and the B.C. Cultural Safety and Humility Standard and includes funding for Indigenous employee advisors, an Indigenous leader recruitment and support initiative, an Indigenous-specific recruitment strategy, expanded cultural safety training, and post-secondary educational programs.

FOODSAFE Program innovation – Ongoing

The Provincial FOODSAFE Program is a suite of food safety courses that support safe food processing, preparation, and handling practices.

Many staff members who are required to take FOODSAFE Level 1 earn minimum wage.

In 2022, the cost of the FOODSAFE Level 1 course was reduced from \$115 to \$99. In April 2023, course was reduced from \$99 to \$88 by offering students the ability to self-study. Further efforts will be made in 2024 to 2026 to continue to bring the cost of the online FOODSAFE Level 1 course down.

Complex center for young people – Started 2023

The centre will be for young people living with complex, chronic conditions and will support children, families, caregivers and health-care providers through care co-ordination, training and education, offered online and in person.

The construction of a new centre for child and youth living with complex health-care needs will start in 2025.

Long-term care homes – Started 2023

As of December 2023, there are more than 553 long-term care homes throughout B.C. that are open, under construction, in development, or initiated.

Free COVID-19 and influenza vaccines – Ongoing

Immunization against influenza and COVID-19 continues to be free for anyone over the age of six months in B.C. and enhanced influenza vaccines are offered to seniors.

For the 2023-24 (most recent) viral respiratory illness season, the province invested \$27.635 million to purchase influenza vaccine. Of this amount, \$9.114 million was for purchasing enhanced influenza vaccines for seniors.

As of March 31, 2024, B.C. had administered 1,457,246 doses of COVID-19 vaccines and 1,562,023 doses of influenza vaccines.

MINISTRY OF HOUSING

Indigenous Partnerships – Ongoing

The Province committed to providing \$550 million over 10 years, from 2018-2028, to the Indigenous Housing Fund, to build new units of Indigenous housing throughout B.C. in urban, rural, and remote areas, on- and off-reserve. Budget 2023 provided an additional \$1.3 billion to the Indigenous Housing Fund to double the number of units, bringing the total to 3,500 units and approximately \$1.8 billion in funding.

In 2023, the Ministry of Housing (HOUS) established the Indigenous Housing Partnerships team to advance its commitments to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and align the ministry's engagement and consultation with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

Affordable housing through BC Housing – Ongoing

In 2023, new affordable housing for families, seniors and/or people with disabilities was announced in 22 locations throughout B.C.

More than 2,500 homes throughout B.C. were completed under Building BC programs in 2023.

Strengthening enforcement – Ongoing

On December 28, 2022, government announced additional funding to the Residential Tenancy Branch that includes doubling the size of its Compliance and Enforcement Unit (CEU), which will support expanded enforcement of Residential Tenancy Act contraventions.

In 2023, the CEU received 386 complaints. With its expanded capacity, the CEU initiated 51 investigations and issued 14 monetary penalties totalling \$56,200. Many of these complaints were resolved by voluntary compliance without the need for an investigation.

BC Rent Bank – Ongoing

As of November 2021, low-to-moderate-income renters in every part of B.C. now have access to rent bank services through an extended partnership between BC Rent Bank and the Kamloops & District Elizabeth Fry Society. B.C. is the first province to provide 100% Rent Bank coverage.

Rent banks continue to play an instrumental role in helping vulnerable renters maintain housing during times of temporary crisis. The combination of loans and non-repayable grants has opened up opportunities for rent banks to assist more renters. In 2022-23, the number of rent bank loans had increased by 31%, helping over 1,100 households.

Homelessness Community Action Grants – Ongoing

In 2019, the Province invested \$6 million to support local groups and organizations working on the front lines in B.C. communities through the Homelessness Community Action Grant program. Grants are administered by the Social Planning and Research Council of B.C. (SPARC BC).

- » Municipalities and community organizations can apply for up to \$50,000 in funding
- » 197 projects have been approved with total funding totaling \$5.2 million to date. The average grant amount is \$27,547
- » Grants have been awarded for projects in 46 communities and regions throughout B.C., including First Nations communities
- » Grants focusing on Indigenous Peoples comprise 21% of the total number of grants and 25% of total grant funding. Other grants include Indigenous Peoples without designating them as a primary focus

SPARC BC used interest earnings on the fund to purchase 13,500 smartphones to distribute to homeless and other vulnerable people during the COVID-19 pandemic. An additional 10,000 smartphones are planned for distribution.

In 2023, the Province created 100 new bed shelters for people experiencing homelessness.

In partnership with SPARC BC, rent banks deliver Welcome Home Kits (made up of gift cards or household items) to those with a history of homelessness that have moved into housing.

BC Homeless Count – Ongoing

In Budget 2022, the Province allocated \$828,000 to the 2023 point-in-time (PiT) counts, which includes funding to conduct counts in 20 communities and compilation and reporting of all counts to get a provincial total.

The third provincewide PiT homeless count was completed in the spring of 2023. This count builds on the previous provincial counts conducted in 2017-18 and 2020-21.

Data from the 20 provincially funded counts will be combined with nine other counts that are funded by the federal government and independent sources, to produce a provincial summary comprising 29 communities. The report is planned for release in spring 2024.

Preventing and Reducing Homelessness Integrated Data Project – Ongoing

The Preventing & Reducing Homelessness Integrated Data Project is a multi-ministry initiative to better understand and measure homelessness in B.C. based on administrative data. Findings from 2019, 2020 and 2021 on the flows into and out of homelessness were released in 2023.

Homelessness Framework Engagement – Ongoing

The 2022 Budget announced \$633 million over three years to support individuals experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. Part of this action includes co-creating homelessness solutions with Indigenous Peoples and people with lived/living experiences of homelessness through engagement.

Budget 2022 actions and engagement is ongoing and includes:

- » Funding for external and Indigenous partner engagement on the Integrated Support Framework, which is now publicly released and available online.
- » Three-year funding for an Indigenous Advisory Committee and a Persons with Lived Experience Advisory Committee, both of which are in place.

Maximum allowable rent increase – Ongoing

B.C.'s maximum allowable rent increase amount for 2023 was set at 2%, well below the prevailing rate of inflation. This increase took effect January 1, 2023. If landlords choose to increase rent, they must provide a full three months' notice to tenants using the correct notice of rent increase form.

Downtown Eastside Provincial Partnership Plan – Started 2023

Initiated in March 2023, the Downtown Eastside (DTES) Provincial Partnership Plan is a multi-partner, cross-ministry plan focused on improving community health and well-being in the DTES.

Accomplishments through the plan so far include:

- » More than 575 new and renovated housing units in the DTES
- » Expanded shelter and outreach services
- » New integrated health services to support people across a variety of settings
- » Targeted investments to support non-profit service providers
- » Trilateral work on single room occupancy (SRO) revitalization

Downtown Eastside SRO Grant – Completed in 2023

The Province provided \$11 million to Downtown Eastside SRO Collaborative Society (SRO-C) to improve access to services and supports.

SRO-C is a non-profit organization working to improve habitability, affordability, safety, health and housing security for tenants living in privately owned SROs who are at risk of eviction and homelessness.

Housing Supply Act – Ongoing

The Housing Supply Act enables the Province to set housing targets for municipalities specified in the Housing Supply Regulation. The Housing Targets Branch provides provincial leadership on increasing housing supply and expanding diversity of housing options and consults municipalities on housing targets to support the delivery of net-new supply across the housing continuum. The branch set housing targets for the first cohort of 10 municipalities in September 2023. Consultation with an additional 20 municipalities will be conducted in spring 2024 with housing targets set in July 2024.

Growing Communities Fund – Started 2023

In 2023, the Growing Communities Fund provided a one-time total of \$1 billion in grants distributed among all of B.C.'s local governments.

The grants support the delivery of infrastructure projects necessary to enable community growth, including more housing.

Legislation to turn short-term rentals back into long-term homes – Started 2023

As part of the Province's Homes for People action plan, new legislation supports turning short-term rentals back into homes. The legislation focuses on:

- » Increasing fines and strengthening tools for local governments;
- » Returning more short-term rentals to long-term homes; and
- » Establishing provincial rules and enforcement.

Legislations to streamline delivery of homes, services, infrastructure – Started 2023

In 2023, the Province introduced Bill 44, Housing Statutes (Residential Development) Amendment Act, 2023. The bill amended the Local Government Act and Vancouver Charter to reduce the number of local government rezonings by shifting the local planning and land use framework to emphasize up-front planning and zoning.

Legislation introduced to deliver more homes near transit hubs – Started 2023

As part of Budget 2023, the Province committed \$394 million to deliver thousands of units at or near transit over the next 10 to 15 years.

In 2023, the Province passed Bill 47, Housing Statutes (Transit-Oriented Areas) Amendment Act, 2023, which supports the Province's commitment to address the housing crisis by ensuring that higher-density residential development and complete communities can be built around key transit hubs throughout B.C.

Bill 47 requires 31 municipalities to designate transit-oriented areas (TOAs) by bylaw around the 104 transit stations that are listed in the regulations.

On December 7, 2023, the Province designated TOAs around 52 transit stations, where the legislation is currently in effect. TOAs will be designated by municipalities around all 104 transit stations by June 30, 2024.

New funding supports for local governments with housing initiatives – Started 2023

A new provincial funding commitment of \$51 million is supporting local governments to meet new housing-density initiatives stemming from Bill 44 and Bill 47 (above). Additionally, Bills 46 and 16 enable local governments with new and updated development finance tools and authorities for inclusionary zoning, tenant protection bylaws, and transportation demand management works and services.

In addition, in 2023, \$10 million was provided for a second intake of the Local Government Development Approvals Process fund administered by the Union of BC Municipalities. This program is now underway, and will support local governments to accelerate the housing approval processes to get more homes built faster.

Expanding Speculation Tax – Started 2023

As part of B.C.'s Homes for People plan, the Province is taking action to fight real estate speculation and turn more empty units into homes for people by expanding the speculation and vacancy tax to 13 new municipalities. An independent review released in 2022 found that the tax had helped deliver more than 20,000 homes in Metro Vancouver alone.

BC HOUSING

Community Housing Fund (CHF) – Ongoing

CHF is part of the Budget 2018 10-year, \$7-billion housing plan. This program will provide close to \$1.9 billion over 10 years to build and operate 14,350 affordable new rental homes for seniors, families, low-income and middle-income earners, with a particular focus on the "missing middle".

Budget 2023 committed a further \$1.4 billion over 10 years to build an additional 6,000 affordable homes for people with moderate- and low-income households by 2031-32. There are nearly 9,000 homes complete or underway through this program.

Women's Transition Housing Fund – Ongoing

In April 2023, as part of the Homes for People plan, the Province committed to funding an additional 1,500 new

units to the Women's Transition Housing Fund program, for a total of 3,000 units to be delivered by 2031-32.

This program supports three types of housing for women and gender diverse people and their children leaving violence, including transition housing, second-stage housing and long-term affordable rental housing.

Through this program, there are currently 459 affordable units that have opened since 2017 and an additional 599 are underway.

Women's Transition Housing and Supports Program – Ongoing

BC Housing supports more than 100 transition houses and safe homes for women — with or without children — who are at risk of violence, or who have experienced violence.

The programs provide women and children with a temporary place to stay, support services, referrals and assistance in planning next steps.

Supportive Housing Fund – Ongoing

Budget 2018 provided \$1.2 billion over 10 years to build and operate 3,800 units of supportive housing with 24/7 support services for those who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

The Province committed an additional \$2.146 billion in capital investment to deliver a total of 5,700 supportive homes available to those who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. This type of housing includes support services, such as staff on site 24/7, daily meal programs, life-skills training, mental health and wellness support and assistance with accessing other social service programs.

As of December 31, 2023, 4,454 supportive housing units are in progress. Of these, 2,272 are completed, 1,112 are under construction, 465 are in development and 605 have been initiated.

270 Indigenous affiliated supportive housing units are in progress. Of these, 95 are completed, 140 are under construction and 35 have been initiated.

Indigenous Housing Fund (IHF) – Ongoing

This program will provide \$1.8 billion to build and operate 3,500 homes of affordable rental housing built on or off reserve. These projects provide affordable rental homes for Indigenous Peoples throughout B.C. and are made possible through partnerships with Indigenous non-profit housing providers, First Nations, and other Indigenous organizations.

» As of December 31, 2023, there are 623 units complete and 936 units underway.

As of November 30, 2023, BC Housing is accepting proposals through the IHF from prospective partners. The call closes May 15, 2024. This is the second Request for Proposals (RFP) through the IHF. The first RFP round took place in November 2018.

Rapid Response to Homelessness Initiative – Ongoing

As part of the Budget 2017 update, the provincial government announced an investment of \$291 million to build 2,000 modular housing units for those who are experiencing homelessness. As of December 31, 2022, 1,894 units are completed.

Education Awards Program – Ongoing

The Education Awards Program provides a total of seven bursaries and awards for post-secondary education and training programs. Eligible recipients include residents in a household receiving a subsidy from BC Housing or rental assistance through the Rental Assistance Program.

Extreme Weather Response (EWR) – Ongoing

The Extreme Weather Response (EWR) program funds temporary shelter spaces for individuals who are experiencing homelessness that are made available only when the community has issued an extreme weather alert. The EWR program operates during the winter season, generally, from November 1 to March 31.

In 2023-24, the Province, through BC Housing, is funding a total of 6,105 shelter spaces in more than 50 communities throughout B.C., including permanent, temporary, and extreme weather response (EWR shelters).

Emergency Shelter Program – Ongoing

Emergency shelters provide temporary but immediate places to stay for anyone who is experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

BC Housing funds three types of shelters, including permanent shelters, temporary shelters, and Extreme Weather Response (EWR) shelters. EWR funding is seasonal and remained available until April 15, 2023.

Homeless Outreach Program – Ongoing

The Homeless Outreach Program (HOP) provides culturally appropriate services to Indigenous Peoples. Outreach workers meet their clients where they are – in the street, shelters or in a temporary place – and can help connect clients with services and housing that is appropriate and available.

The Indigenous Outreach Stream, formerly known as the Aboriginal Homeless Outreach Program, was included in the HOP framework in 2018. HOP includes targeted funding to enable Indigenous Peoples who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk to homelessness to access housing, support services and other culturally appropriate community resources.

Homeless Prevention Program – Ongoing

This program assists at-risk groups facing homelessness by providing rent supplements and support services to help them access rental housing in the private (non-subsidized) market. BC Housing provides funding for the program, which is administered by community-based agencies and homeless outreach providers.

As of December 31, 2023, 1,756 rent supplements were allocated under the Homeless Outreach Program and 1,729 rent supplements were allocated under the Homeless Prevention Program. This compares to just over 1,690 supplements allocated on March 31, 2018.

Rental Assistance Program – Ongoing

The Rental Assistance Program (RAP) supports working families earning less than \$40,000 a year with cash assistance to help with their monthly rent payments in the private market. As of December 31, 2023, there were 3,919 households receiving RAP with an average monthly subsidy of \$384.

Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters – Ongoing

The Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program provides rent supplements in the private market to low-income seniors (aged 60+).

As of December 31, 2023, there were 22,896 households receiving SAFER with an average monthly subsidy of \$195.

BC Rebate for Accessible Home Adaptations (BC RAHA) – Ongoing

The BC RAHA program has replaced the Home Adaptations for Independence program and provides eligible low- and moderate-income households up to \$20,000 in rebates to complete home adaptations. The program allows

seniors and people with permanent disabilities or diminished ability to gain greater independence within their homes.

Some program changes include: removing the need to obtain a quote for standard accessibility adaptations; ensuring more equitable access to funding by region and type of home adaptation; and increasing access to occupational therapists or other qualified professionals for assessments.

Homes for seniors displaced by flooding – Started in 2023

In 2023, 20 new temporary homes opened for seniors displaced by 2021 flooding, supported by the Province through BC Housing, the Town of Princeton and the Princeton and District Community Services Society.

Provincial investment in non-profit housing providers – Started 2023

A new provincial funding commitment of \$14.8 million is supporting the operations and growth of non-profit housing providers to bring more housing and services to people in B.C. Approximately \$10.2 million of the one-time funding has been distributed among numerous non-profit housing organizations, with the remaining funding supporting education grants for non-profits, office and administration costs and financial assistance to several social housing projects in need of additional funding.

Homeless Encampment Action Response Temporary Housing (HEARTH) Program – Started 2023

In spring 2023, the Homeless Encampment Action Response Team (HEART) and the Homeless Encampment Action Response Temporary Housing (HEARTH) programs were announced under the provincial Belonging in BC Homelessness Plan.

Budget 2023 provides \$218 million over three years to for HEART/HEARTH as well as \$44 million for temporary modular housing.

The program provides emergency housing, shelter options and immediate co-ordinated supports to help people in encampments or sheltering in public spaces to move indoors and access temporary or permanent housing options that fit their needs.

Under HEARTH, in 2023-24, 308 units are now complete or tenanting is underway.

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

Community Well-Being Initiative – Ongoing

In 2023, the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation provided \$7.33 million towards Community Well-Being initiatives. Community well-being initiatives are community-based, socio-cultural reconciliation processes where Indigenous communities and the B.C. government work in partnership to identify priorities and implementation measures that advance self-determining, thriving Indigenous communities.

BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres – Ongoing

The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) is a key provincial partner providing supports and services to Indigenous people living off-reserve and/or in urban areas. Provincial funding in 2023 includes just over \$3 million for capacity, training, and towards initiatives such as Elder transportation and programs for youth such as Gathering our Voices and student bursary programs (2023).

MINISTRY OF JOBS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION

Digital Skills Bootcamps – Ongoing

As part of the Future Ready Skills Action Plan, the B.C. government is investing a further \$4.1 million to fund a new Digital Skills Bootcamp expected to launch by mid-2024 and run for the next two years. Over 1,700 small-medium sized businesses (SME) will receive training with regional and Indigenous SME representation.

Canadian Tech Talent Accelerator Program – Ongoing

As part of the Future Ready Skills Action Plan, the B.C. government is investing a further \$4 million to fund an additional 1,800 young people living in B.C. in the Canadian Tech Talent Accelerator program over the next two years. A key priority of this additional funding continues to be underrepresented youth in B.C.

Innovator Skills Initiative (ISI) Program – Ongoing

In June 2021, B.C. government provided \$15 million in one-time funding to launch the redesigned [Innovator Skills Initiative \(ISI\)](#) to increase diversity in the tech sector, and an extra \$583,000 in August 2022. 3,000 grant placements are due to be completed, with these grants providing a portion of employees' salary to help underrepresented people (women, IBPOC, etc.) to get their first job in the tech sector. The program has strong post-placement outcomes (70% of participants have been offered jobs. 100% of participants either work, start a new business or return to post-secondary studies).

In 2023, the Province invested an additional \$5 million to the ISI. A key priority of the program will be more Indigenous placements.

Trade Accelerator Program – Ongoing

The Ministry of Jobs and Economic Development (JEDI) provides support for export-ready underrepresented businesses to expand their international business development and increase export revenue through the Trade Accelerator Program (TAP). This program offers tailored cohorts for underrepresented groups, including Indigenous, women and youth-led businesses.

Since 2019, 55% of B.C.'s TAP businesses have been owned by underrepresented groups. In April 2023, JEDI provided funding of \$913,000 to support the program until 2026. Five cohorts took place in 2023, including an Indigenous cohort and a women-owned cohort. Five are scheduled for 2024.

Grants for rural development – Started in 2023

In 2023, the Province introduced legislative amendments that allow a total of \$30 million to be delivered to the Island Coastal Economic Trust, Northern Development Initiative Trust, and the Economic Trust of the Southern Interior in 2023-34. Each trust has received \$10 million to invest in their regions.

British Columbia Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) Centre of Excellence in First Nations Economic Development – Ongoing

A key commitment in 2022's StrongerBC Economic Plan was the co-development of a new Indigenous-led economic development entity. The commitment was met when the Province made an initial investment of \$1.2 million in January 2023, for BCAFN to establish the B.C. First Nations Centre of Excellence for Economic Development (FNCOE).

As a BCAFN initiative, the FNCOE, officially launched in October 2023, is inherently First Nations-focused. It seeks to develop policy, build relationships and provide important tools and resources to advance First Nations' economic interests and priorities.

BC Manufacturing Jobs Fund – Ongoing

In 2023, the government committed over \$62 million towards various manufacturing projects throughout B.C. through the BC Manufacturing Jobs Fund (BCMJF), which aims to increase and protect well-paying, sustainable job opportunities for local workers in all regions in the province, especially in communities impacted by economic downturns. These capital projects will result in over 2,300 well-paying, sustainable jobs created and protected.

Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program – Ongoing

In fiscal 2022-2023, the Province doubled the funding, up to \$66 million, for the Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program (REDIP). REDIP promotes economic diversification, clean-economy opportunities and infrastructure development in rural B.C. A total of 26 communities received the maximum \$1-million project funding.

Rural Business and Community Recovery Initiative – Ongoing

The Rural Business and Community Recovery Initiative (RBCRI) was created in 2021 to support rural communities in responding to the economic impacts resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Funds are administered through the three regional economic trusts and are available to local governments, First Nations and not-for-profit organizations.

In 2023, phase 2 of the RBCRI was announced, providing an additional \$4.5 million (adding on to \$4.5 million followed by \$740,000 in phase 1) to the regional trusts to fund advisory positions to support communities and businesses transition, following disruptions with major employers. Priority is given to those areas significantly impacted by deferrals and other fibre supply disruptions.

Youth in Manufacturing Initiative – Started 2023

The Province is investing \$3 million over three years for the new Youth in Manufacturing Initiative delivered by the Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium. In addition to paid work experience and industry-recognized training, youth (ages 16-24) can receive credits toward secondary-school graduation and apprenticeship certification. Eligible employers receive \$3,500 per placement to offset onboarding and wage costs for this on-the-job training.

Progress Update on the StrongerBC Economic Plan – Ongoing

A Progress Update on the 2022 StrongerBC Economic Plan was released in August 2023. Of the 70 actions outlined in the Plan, 28 are complete and 42 more are underway.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR

Improving access to Employment Standards Branch Services – Ongoing

The Employment Standards Branch (ESB) in the Ministry of Labour interprets, applies and enforces the Employment Standards Act (ESA) and the Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act (TFWPA).

- » The ESA covers minimum standards for such things as payment of wages, termination, statutory holiday pay and vacation pay. The TFWPA protects vulnerable foreign workers from exploitative recruitment and employer practices.

Workers often rely on the ESB to assist them in being paid their earned wages. ESB's 2023 budget included an increase of \$11.94 million to add resources to address the significant and longstanding queue of complaints.

Minimum wage increase – Ongoing

On June 1, 2023, B.C.'s general minimum wage increased from \$15.65 to \$16.75 an hour; the sixth increase since the start of 2018.

The 6.9% increase on June 1, 2023, also applied to minimum-wage rates for resident caretakers, live-in home-support workers and live-in camp leaders.

Workers' Compensation – Ongoing

Effective January 1, 2023, workers' compensation benefits are indexed to the full rate of annual percentage changes in the Canadian Consumer Price Index (CPI) up to 4%. WorkSafeBC has the discretion to approve annual indexation above 4%, if the percentage change in the CPI exceeds that amount.

Since 2002 and until this change, cost-of-living increases for benefits were indexed to the rate of annual changes in the CPI minus one percentage point, to a maximum of 4%.

Protections for app-based ride-hail and delivery services workers – Ongoing

In 2023, the Province sought feedback on possible solutions to provide better working conditions for app-based ride-hailing and delivery services workers.

Following this engagement, in Fall 2023, Bill 48, the Labour Statutes Amendment Act, 2023, was passed, amending legislation to allow for the development of regulations that will entitle app-based ride-hail and delivery services workers to improved employment standards and workers compensation and occupation health and safety protections.

MINISTRY OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Initiatives for children, youth and young adults:

a. Integrated Child and Youth (ICY) teams – Ongoing program (new sites in 2023)

Integrated Child and Youth (ICY) teams are community-based, multidisciplinary teams that deliver integrated mental health and addictions care for children and youth, including those with different abilities, backgrounds and situations.

- ◇ In February 2023, seven additional school district communities were announced and are implementing 11 teams.
- ◇ The Province invested \$101 million over three years to implement teams in 20 school districts by 2024 to be fully operational by 2025.

b. Foundry Centres and Virtual Supports – Ongoing, new funding announced via Budget 2023 and new initiative to support employment

Foundry is a provincewide network of integrated youth centres and virtual supports, offering free and confidential counselling, primary-care, sexual-health and addictions services to young people 12-24 years and their families. Budget 2023 included \$74.9 million to open an additional 12 Foundry centres. By the end of 2023, 16 Foundry centres were open around the Province and nine others were in development. The province plans for a total of 35 centres when expansion is complete.

Through a \$16.2-million grant to Foundry via the 2022-23 Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Development Agreement, starting in 2023 (for three years), youth who want to help other youth could begin to train for jobs in the health and social services sector as youth peer support workers. This funding will also

evaluate the effectiveness of youth peer support as a core service in primary care settings for young people.

c. New youth treatment and recovery beds – Ongoing program, new beds opened in 2023 to support better access to substance use care

Government continues to add more youth substance use treatment and recovery beds throughout the province, with \$50.55 million in funding to health authorities between 2021-22 and 2023-24. In 2023, the Province added 15 new substance-use treatment beds.

d. New and expanded youth substance use services – Ongoing

Budget 2023 included more than \$236 million (including the nearly \$74.9 million for Foundry noted above) over three years to create more services for young people, including crisis supports, culturally safe wraparound services, school and community-based prevention and early intervention resources, enhanced transition services and improved emergency room hospital-based care and discharge planning.

Indigenous-led solutions:

a. FNHA land-based healing services – Ongoing work, new funding and projects

The Province continues its commitment to support Indigenous-led land-based and culturally safe treatment services through annual investment of \$10.8 million provided to the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA).

b. Culturally appropriate supports in Northern regions – Started in 2023

In 2023, the Northwest Working Group was formed, comprised of representatives from the Northern First Nations Alliance, Northern Health Authority, First Nations Health Authority and the Province. The group aims to address the disproportionate impact of the toxic drug crisis in Terrace by implementing more culturally appropriate resources to better serve people living with addiction in the North.

c. The Mental Health and Wellness Tripartite MOU – Ongoing

The Mental Health and Wellness Tripartite MOU was signed in 2018 by the First Nations Health Council (FNHC), with the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) as a supporter, the Province of B.C., and the Government of Canada (Canada), and supported by an initial tripartite investment of \$30 million. A key feature of this approach has been the ability to provide First Nations flexible funding to fill service gaps across a continuum of care and to integrate clinical and traditional approaches to mental health and wellness. 173 First Nation communities have participated in this process, with over 61 projects funded throughout B.C.

The MOU was extended to April 2, 2025, to permit continued implementation of initiatives under existing funding commitments. In 2022-2023, the Province provided an additional \$5 million to support the implementation of the MOU initiatives.

As part of the Tripartite MOU, the Province also invested \$20 million (of a total \$60 million investment) to support First Nations-Run Treatment Centres to improve accessibility to culturally safe services. This includes the replacement of six existing First Nation-run treatment facilities and the building of two new facilities across all regions of the Province. In 2023, the Province contributed additional \$35 million to support the completion of the eight First Nations-run treatment Centres. In November 2023, the Tsow-Tun Le Lum Healing House in Duncan was completed, marking the first treatment centre to be operational with the support of this funding.

d. Partnership with Métis Nation BC (MNBC) – Ongoing, new funding in 2023

The Province continues to provide \$375,000 annually in funding to MNBC to advance Métis-specific priorities and to support their participation in the planning, design and implementation of the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions-led initiatives.

In 2023, the Government of B.C. provided \$500,000 for Métis Nation BC to host two gatherings in the fall. In one, Métis girls and two-spirit people will address self-harm, engaging in Elder-led teaching around mental

wellness. In another, community members participate in safe conversations to discuss alcohol.

e. Partnership with BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) – Ongoing

The Province continues to provide \$375,000 annually in funding to the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) to build capacity and support implementation of recommendations outlined in the Urban Indigenous Wellness Report (2020) to address priorities and support needs for urban Indigenous Peoples in B.C.

Reducing Risk:

a. More funding for life-saving overdose prevention supports – Ongoing

Overdose prevention services were supported as part of \$10.5 million in funding to respond to the overdose crisis in August 2020. Budget 2021 extended this funding by committing \$45 million to ensure the stability of overdose prevention services around the province, support integrated interdisciplinary teams, and increase nursing care.

b. Grant funding to Moms Stop the Harm for the provision of family support services – Ongoing

Funding has been provided to Moms Stop the Harm through the Community Crisis Innovation Fund to provide support for families affected by substance use and families grieving the loss of a loved one due to illicit drug toxicity. In addition, funding will be used for support group expansion, health system navigation, capacity building, stigma reduction activities, and additional initiatives.

c. Community Action Teams (CATs) – Ongoing

Originally established in 2018, Community Action Teams lead local co-ordination and communication to mount a robust response to the needs of those most at risk of overdose in their communities.

In fiscal year 2023-24, the Government of B.C. invested \$2.926 million to support new and existing CATs, bringing the total number of teams in B.C. to 36.

d. Provincial Peer Network – Ongoing

Funding has been provided through the Crisis Innovation Fund to the Provincial Peer Network (PPN), a provincial network of drug user-led organizations that serves to strengthen collaboration and information sharing between the organizations through regional and provincial capacity building and the development of a network structure.

In fiscal year 2023-24, the Government of B.C. invested \$2 million to the PPN.

e. HarmCheck – Ongoing

Building on a \$305,000 investment in HarmCheck (a drug-checking technology), starting in 2023, confirmatory drug checking of samples from other health regions, as well as in-person drug checking through store-front service in Victoria was provided.

Connecting people to care:

a. Expanding adult substance use treatment and recovery bed-based services – Ongoing work

Building on previous investments, Budget 2023 provided a total of \$157.5 million over three years for Road to Recovery, a made-in-B.C. model of addictions care that seamlessly move people through detox, treatment and recovery services without delay.

- ◇ Road to Recovery Vancouver: 34 additional beds in operation, including 14 detox beds at St. Paul's Hospital, opened in September 2023, and 20 transitional care beds in the community, opened in October 2023.

- ◇ In Vancouver Coastal Health, clients call the Vancouver Access Central phone line. Between October 1, 2023, and February 29, 2024, Vancouver Access Central received 7,855 calls.

In addition to the Road to Recovery beds, in 2023, 116 adult health authority-funded community substance use beds were implemented.

- b. In March 2023, the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions provided \$73.2 million to the Canadian Mental Health Association-BC to continue funding 105 beds opened through Budget 2021 funding, and to add another 180 new beds.**

- c. Expanded access to OAT medication – Ongoing work, new benefits implemented in 2023**

The monthly counts of total OAT clients increased from 14,743 patients in January 2015 to 24,232 patients in December 2023.

The number of health-care practitioners prescribing any form of OAT increased from 773 in June 2017 to 2,007 in December 2023.

Starting June 2023, OAT medications are covered through Plan Z, the Province's universal coverage plan, providing full coverage for B.C. residents with an active medical services plan.

PharmaCare paid some or all of the costs for 94% of the 34,000 patients that were dispensed OAT medications between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2023.

- d. Nurse prescribing for Opioid Use Disorder – Ongoing work, new actions.**

Effective November 1, 2023, the temporary authorization for registered nurses (RN) and registered psychiatric nurses (RPN) to diagnose and treat opioid use disorder became permanent through regulation changes and the establishment of a certified practice for opioid use disorder.

In April 2023, amendments to the nursing regulations were approved to permanently enable RNs and RPNs, who have a certified practice designation established by the BC College of Nurses and Midwives (BCCNM), to diagnose OUD and prescribe OAT for the treatment of OUD.

As of December 2023, 272 nurses had enrolled in training and 167 had completed training, and 594 people had been dispensed OAT prescribed by an RN or RPN.

- e. Community Counselling Grants – Ongoing program, new funding provided in 2023.**

The Province funds the community counselling grant program, supporting 49 organizations to provide low- and no-cost mental-health and substance-use counselling services, including virtual services. In March 2023, the province provided an additional \$15 million to fund these services over two years, bringing the total to \$35 million since 2018-2019.

Crisis Response:

- a. Peer Assisted Care Teams (PACT) – Ongoing, new teams announced in 2023**

The Province, with the support of the Canadian Mental Health Association, B.C. Division launched [Peer Assisted Care Teams](#) in Victoria, New Westminster and North Shore. These bring together trained peers and mental-health professionals, such as social workers and counsellors, to offer trauma-informed and culturally safe support with a civilian-based approach to mental-health and addiction-related crises. In 2023, the Victoria and New Westminster PACTs responded to more than 1,500 calls for help, and only approximately 1% of the calls between April and December 2023 required police intervention. In 2023, the Province announced an additional three PACTs in Prince George, Kamloops and Comox Valley (to be launched in 2024).

- b. Mobile Integrated Crisis Response Teams – Ongoing, new teams launched in 2023**

In 2023, the Province announced an expansion of Mobile Integrated Crisis Response (MICR) Teams (also known as Car programs) to nine communities in B.C. MICR Teams are specialized crisis-response teams that

pair a police officer with a health-care professional to deliver an immediate, empathetic response to mental-health and substance-use emergencies. The Province committed \$3 million in 2023 to help fund their implementation, and new teams launched in Burnaby, Chilliwack, Coquitlam/Port Coquitlam and Vernon.

c. 988 Suicide Crisis Helpline – Started in 2023 (federal initiative, but links to B.C. providers)

Launched by the federal government in November 2023, 988 provides a free, easy-to-remember call or text option that ensures immediate and effective response for people calling in to speak with crisis line responders, 24/7 and from anywhere in the province.

Supporting well-being and recovery:

a. Recovery support for men in addiction – Started in 2023

[New Roads Recovery](#) Community in Victoria provides support for men who have experienced repeated incarceration, housing instability and addiction. In November 2023, the Province provided \$4.39 million to continue funding for this initiative that will support an estimated 330 people in the recovery program over the next three years.

b. Complex Care Housing – Ongoing, new investments in Budget 2023, new spaces opened

Through Budget 2022 and Budget 2023, government is investing in Complex Care Housing to address the health, housing, cultural and social needs of people with overlapping mental-health challenges, addictions issues, and other significant health challenges.

Building on initial funding in Budget 2022, Budget 2023 invested a further \$266 million to fund Complex Care Housing services, including \$169 million in capital funding to build new homes for people.

At the end of 2023, Complex Care Housing services were in place for 252 people.

c. Urgent Homelessness Response (UHR) – Progress in 2023

UHR funding established in 2020-21 has enabled health authorities to respond to support the health needs of people experiencing homelessness.

d. Mental health supports for workers in long-term care and continuing care – Ongoing, new investments in 2023

As part of B.C.'s Health and Human Resources Strategy, the Province committed \$1.49 million to continue CareforCaregivers.ca, a website providing tailored mental health content for workers and managers, and Care to Speak, a peer-based text, chat and phone service providing emotional support and service navigation, up until 2025-26. These programs are led by the Canadian Mental Health Association – British Columbia, in partnership with SafeCare BC.

In addition, \$65,000 was provided to expand Leading from the Inside Out, a professional development program for leaders in long-term and home care to develop the skills to be resilient and effective while leading themselves and others through uncertainty.

e. Well-being website – refreshed in 2023

Government launched an updated website [HelpStartsHere.gov.bc.ca](https://helpstartshere.gov.bc.ca) with comprehensive information on mental health and addiction supports across the province.

The Stories of Support campaign, launched in December 2023, showcases real-life stories that highlight the various paths people take towards healing and recovery, and connects individuals to the website.

f. Support for people with brain injury from toxic drug poisonings

B.C. invested \$4.5 million in 2022-23 over three years for the Brain Injury Alliance to help people in B.C. who have an injury, including those resulting from toxic drug poisoning.

In 2023, a new program in Vancouver, the Cognitive Assessment and Rehabilitation for Substance use program opened to help people living with brain injury and their support persons.

MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

Community Gaming Grants – Ongoing

Community Gaming Grants are distributed to food banks, shelters, domestic violence supports, hospice, counselling services and others. In 2023-24, 1,278 not-for-profit organizations providing human and social services received approximately \$62.5 million to deliver their programs provincewide.

- » The [Community Gaming Grants program](#) provided a total of \$7.2 million to 87 not-for-profit groups for capital projects in 2023.

B.C.'s Strategic Plan for Public Library Service and public library COVID-19 relief and recovery initiatives – Ongoing

COVID-19 relief and recovery funding – a one-time investment of \$8 million in March 2022 – was distributed between 71 public libraries and sector organizations. Libraries began reporting on the use of funds in March 2023. People will see improvements at their local public libraries, including expanded digital collections, upgraded, barrier-free spaces, enhanced programming, and improved access to Wi-Fi and computers.

In March 2023, as part of B.C.'s Strategic Plan for Public Library Service, the province reinvested in public libraries with a historic \$45-million contribution.

Community Literacy: Literacy Outreach Co-ordination – Ongoing

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs awards \$2.185 million annually to Decoda Literacy Solution's Literacy Outreach Program. Decoda supports 100 literacy outreach co-ordinators who provide literacy programming support to 400 communities in B.C. The coordinator program received an additional \$1 million in enhancement funds that will help grow and sustain local community programs through 2024.

Raise-a-Reader Campaign – Ongoing

In 2023, the Province provided \$500,000 to the Raise-a-Reader campaign, which supports literacy by increasing awareness and raising money to fund community-based programs throughout B.C. Since 2017, the Province has donated \$3.5 million to the campaign. The Raise-a-Reader campaign has generated more than \$22 million to support literacy programs in B.C.

Expanded services for newcomers – Started in 2023

The Province has more than quadrupled funding for newcomer services, from \$6 million to \$25.6 million per year, partnering with 30 organizations throughout B.C. This annual support includes \$13.4 million through the new BC Newcomer Services program and \$12.2 million through the Safe Haven program.

Northern Healthy Communities Fund (NHCF) – Ongoing

The NHCF is supported by the B.C. government and administered by the Northern Development Initiative Trust. The NHCF is targeted to help address service needs in growing communities that are experiencing large-scale economic development. Eligible local governments, First Nations and non-profit organizations in growing communities near the LNG Canada and Coastal GasLink projects can apply for project funding.

In August 2023, Municipal Affairs announced a \$3.8-million investment from the NHCF to support 17 projects.

Since its beginning, the NHCF has supported approximately 100 projects with a total of \$18.6 million.

Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program (CERIP) – Ongoing

CERIP provided \$100 million in one-time infrastructure grants for projects that will improve community economic resilience, develop tourism infrastructure, support unique heritage infrastructure, and support economic recovery for rural communities. Project recipients are local governments, First Nations and not-for-profit organizations.

MINISTRY OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND FUTURE SKILLS

StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan – Started in 2023

The province's new \$480-million, three-year [StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan](#) is aimed at helping individuals gain skills for high-demand jobs and bridging the skills gap for businesses. The action plan focuses on affordability and accessibility of post-secondary education, assisting individuals in reskilling for in-demand jobs, eliminating barriers to employment, addressing the workforce priorities for Indigenous Peoples and ensuring people new to B.C. find employment in which they are trained.

The plan includes the future skills grant which covers a lifetime maximum of up to \$3,500 in eligible short-term skills training aligned with in-demand occupations at public post-secondary institutions, making advanced education more accessible. The program has already served over 7,000 learners across the province in 340 short-term skills training programs, helping people access training opportunities in industries such as health care, firefighting, cybersecurity and construction.

New tools to help with career opportunities – Started in 2023

With the new [Find Your Path](#) digital tool, people can explore in-demand careers and map out their educational journey, with easy-to-navigate steps to guide them.

Skills Training for Economic Recovery Initiative – Completed in 2023

Government's \$29-million investment provided short-term skills training to people most affected by COVID-19 so they could develop the knowledge, skills, and competencies for good job opportunities while the economy recovers. More than 2,000 people in B.C. quickly built the skills needed to access jobs in demand and get back to work sooner.

Pathways to Engagement and Employment Readiness (PEERS) Program – Ongoing

Nearly \$3.7 million from the Government of Canada and its Skills for Success program helped to support the Pathways to Engagement and Employment Readiness (PEERS) program and the services it provided, benefiting more than 2,600 people in B.C. experiencing or at risk of homelessness since 2021. The program provided participants with informal and flexible work placements in a safe and welcoming environment. In 2023, more than 800 participants were enrolled.

The B.C. Employer Training Grant (ETG) – Ongoing

ETG is a cost-sharing program that provides employers throughout B.C. with funding for skills training for their new or current employees. In 2023-24, the ETG provided funding to over 1,700 employers to support skills training for over 6,900 people. Nearly half of the workers surveyed (57%) indicated a wage increase as a result of ETG-supported skills training.

The Community Workforce Response Grant (CWRG) – Ongoing

Provides funding to communities and sectors for cohort-based, short-term (less than 52 weeks) skills training projects to address urgent or emerging workforce needs. Funding includes skills training and financial supports to help participants overcome training and employment barriers. In 2023-24, the CWRG funded 113 projects, providing skills training for over 1,200 people across various sectors and communities throughout the province.

Indigenous Skills Training and Education (ISTE) Program– Ongoing

ISTE provides funding to Indigenous communities to increase access to skills training and education. Wraparound supports such as child care, transportation, life skills, counselling, and cultural supports are provided to remove barriers to accessing and succeeding in the program.

In 2023-24, ISTE supported 73 First Nation, Métis, and urban Indigenous communities through 68 projects, with a total of \$31.5 million in provincial and federal funding. In total, approximately 6,000 participants will have been served, over 3,400 of which are expected to move on to employment and over 1,100 to further education.

Skills training for employment:

Young Adults and Young Adults at Risk Programs – Started in 2023

- » More than 3,000 people between 16 and 29 in B.C. will benefit over the next two years from the [Young Adults and Young Adults at Risk](#) programs. A partnership between the governments of B.C. and Canada, both programs provide needs-based skills training and employment supports to help overcome barriers to employment and give young people skills needed to succeed in the workplace and beyond. A total of 41 agreements were funded in 2023-24, with \$15 million provided by the Government of Canada through the Canada-B.C. Workforce Development Agreement (WDA).

Programs for individuals facing multiple barriers to employment – Started in 2023

- » [Skills Training for Employment programs for Individuals Facing Multiple Barriers to Employment](#) help people overcome obstacles to labour market participation through skills training, employment services, and wraparound supports. A total of 72 new agreements began October 1, 2023, and were funded in 2023-24 with \$20 million, provided by the Government of Canada through the Canada-BC WDA, and \$9.5 million provided through the StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan. Approximately 4,000 participants are expected to receive support each year.

BladeRunners Program – Ongoing

[BladeRunners](#) supports at-risk youth aged 15-30 to obtain life skills and job readiness training, job placement, and employment supports in a range of industries. In 2023-24, the BladeRunners program served approximately 1,300 participants in all B.C. regions. The budget for the program is \$6.2 million a year.

SkilledTradesBC Pre-Apprenticeship Trades Training – Ongoing

The Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills provides WDA funding to SkilledTradesBC for programs to prepare Indigenous people, women, persons with disabilities, and other equity-seeking groups for apprenticeships and jobs in trades. In 2023-24, [SkilledTradesBC pre-apprenticeship programs](#) served over 1,000 people through 16 programs, to a total of \$10 million.

Sector Labour Market Partnerships (SLMP) Program – Ongoing

The SLMP program provides \$6 million in project-based funding each year to support sectors, regions, and populations to better understand their workforce development needs and develop solutions to challenges. Current SLMP projects that support TogetherBC include:

- » Evaluation of the province's Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy to measure the

effectiveness of the strategy and inform future public sector recruitment and retention strategies (\$3 million over seven years, 2018-19 to 2024-25).

- » The Federation of Community Social Services' in-development Education and Training Strategy, supports the current and future delivery of community social services throughout B.C. (\$524,000 over 19 months, 2021-22 to 2023-24).
- » Inclusion Powell River Society is conducting labour market research on how employers can reduce barriers and create inclusive workplaces for persons with disabilities (\$803,000 over three years (2020-21 to 2023-24).

Bachelor of Language Fluency Degree Program – Ongoing

The Province continues to recognize the importance of First Nations-mandated institutes and First Nations language fluency degrees through a \$3-million investment over three years from the StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan (2022-23 to 2024-25).

The Indigenous Languages Fluency Degree Framework was initiated by First Nations and First Nations-mandated post-secondary institutes and continues to be First Nations-led.

Several First Nations are offering or preparing to offer Language Fluency Degree programs.

Adult Upgrading Grant – Ongoing

The province invests \$3.6 million annually to support the Adult Upgrading Grant. The Adult Upgrading Grant assists eligible low-income students in Adult Basic Education, Adult Special Education and English Language Learning to complete or upgrade their education by helping with education related costs. It also supports the cost of tuition for Adult Special Education programs. In 2022-23, it provided financial support to over 2,400 students to access applicable programs.

Community Adult Literacy Program – Ongoing

The province invests \$3.4 million annually to support the Community Adult Literacy Program. In 2023-24, this funding supported the delivery of 102 adult literacy programs by 71 providers in 132 communities throughout B.C.

Adult Basic Education/English Language Learning Pathways to High-Priority Career Programs – Started in 2022

In 2023-24, a \$3.8-million investment supported development and delivery of innovative pathways from Adult Basic Education and English Language Learning to high-priority career programs such as Practical Nursing, Health Care Assistant, Trades, Technology, and Early Childhood Education. This funding builds on the previous investment of \$3.6 million in 2022-23 to help students obtain pre-requisites for entry into the post-secondary programs they need to meet their career goals.

B.C. Access Grant – Ongoing

The needs-based B.C. Access Grant targets 40,000 low- and middle-income students. Post-secondary students eligible for the grant receive up to \$4,000 per year, which complements the Canada Student Grant programs. Government's annual investment in the grant is approximately \$41 million.

Aboriginal Service Plans – Ongoing

Government provides funding to support Aboriginal Service Plans at public post-secondary institutions, which foster partnerships between institutions and local Indigenous communities. Government invested \$6.4 million in 2023.

Expanded Provincial Tuition Waiver Program – Started in 2023

Effective Aug. 1, 2023, the province expanded the [Provincial Tuition Waiver Program](#) to all B.C. former youth in care at any age as part of the StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan.

Increased financial aid and more flexible repayment – Started in 2023

After making student loans interest-free in 2019, the B.C. government increased weekly student loan maximums for the first time since 2006.

Students applying for student financial assistance through [StudentAid BC](#) will automatically be considered for the B.C. Access Grant as part of the [StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan](#).

Effective August 2023, the Province changed student loan repayment terms to align with the federal government's Repayment Assistance Program, increasing the income level from \$25,000 to \$40,000, under which a student does not have to repay their loan. The maximum monthly repayment amount has been lowered from 20% to 10% of household income.

Supports for international credential recognition – Started in 2023

The Government of B.C. provided \$1.5 million in one-time funding to the [Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training](#) (ASPECT) for new grants to organizations that help internationally trained professionals get through the credential recognition process.

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SOLICITOR GENERAL

Victim Service and Violence Against Women Programs – Ongoing

The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (PSSG) provides over \$54 million annually to support more than 470 [victim service and violence against women programs](#) throughout the province, including over 159 police-based and community-based victim service programs, 239 Violence Against Women Counselling and Outreach programs, nine domestic violence units, 70 new sexual assault services programs (22 of which provide Indigenous-focused services), and five regional sexual assault centres.

In 2023, over 50,000 new clients were supported/served by the ministry's contracted police-based and community-based victim service programs, and over 19,000 new referrals were made to Violence Against Women Counselling and Outreach programs.

The new sexual assault services programs are a key component of [Safe and Supported: British Columbia's Gender-Based Violence Action Plan](#), released in December 2023.

The Ministry also funds VictimLink BC, a toll-free multilingual, confidential phone, email and text service available across B.C. and the Yukon 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, providing information and referral services to all victims of crime and immediate crisis support to victims of family and sexual violence.

Increased support services for victims of gender based violence – Completed

The Province provided \$150,000 to the [Ishtar Women's Resource Society](#) to increase its counselling and therapy services for women facing and recovering from gender-based violence.

Expansion of crisis-line supports – Ongoing

With new federal funding, The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General is supporting [Salal Sexual Violence Support Centre](#) and the [Indian Residential School Survivors Society](#) to enhance their crisis lines, which provide

24-hour, provincewide, comprehensive, specialized gender-based violence supports. Beginning in March 2023, the two organizations will receive \$2.75 million over four years.

Crime Victim Assistance Program – Ongoing

In 2022-2023, the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General provided approximately \$17 million in benefits for counselling and other supports to eligible victims, immediate family members, and some witnesses to assist in recovery from the impacts of violent crime.

Culturally appropriate supports for people at risk of entering justice system – Started in 2023

The Esk'etemc First Nation has launched an intervention circle to provide culturally appropriate supports for people at risk of harm or victimization. In 2023, The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General provided approximately \$100,000 in funding to support implementation of the Esk'etemc Intervention Circle.

Path Forward Community Fund – Ongoing

To support B.C.'s commitment to end violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people, the Province provided a grant of \$5.5 million to continue the [Path Forward Community Fund](#) managed by the [BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres](#). The grant is in addition to the foundational investment of \$5.3 million made in 2022 to respond to priorities identified through Indigenous community engagement.

As of December 31, 2023, the Path Forward Community Fund has supported 51 projects.

Increased supports for the Pacific Centre Family Services Association – Started and ended in 2023

The Province provided a one-time investment of \$130,000 to the [Pacific Centre Family Services Association](#) (PCFSA) to expand its Crime Reduction and Exploitation Diversion and Mobile Youth Service Team programs, with the funding allocated to increase staff and resourcing for the teams. The PCFSA is a non-profit organization that provides a wide range of community programs and services to vulnerable people and families in the Capital Regional District, such as parenting education, youth mentoring, and addiction-recovery services.

Increased supports to improve the safety and well-being of sex workers

One-time funding of \$500,000 was provided to [PEERS Victoria Resources Society](#) to support services such as drop-in centre, outreach mentorship program, group and one-on-one support services, counselling, peer health navigation, sharing circle, and public education, for the next 3 years.

One-time funding of \$500,000 was provided to PACE Society to support services such as drop-in centre, outreach mentorship program, group and one-on-one support services, counselling, peer health navigation, sharing circle, and public education, for the next 3 years.

The Province provided \$2 million to [WISH Drop-In Centre Society](#) to provide essential services to sex workers over the next three years through the daytime and overnight operation of the WISH MAP Van. The MAP Van provides outreach services to street-based sex workers throughout Vancouver from 12:00pm to 6:00pm and 11:00pm to 5:00am every day.

One-time funding of \$500,000 was provided to the BC BDAR Working Group to support the BC Bad Date Aggressor Reporting (BC BDAR) Project over two years which will create a province-wide bad date reporting system for sex workers to anonymously share with each other report about bad dates.

Gambling Support BC – Ongoing

[Gambling Support BC](#) provides multicultural and multilingual public education, outreach, support, treatment,

and referrals to prevent or treat the negative impacts of gambling. It also includes a dedicated Indigenous service stream.

In 2023, a Traditional Indigenous Games curriculum was developed by a contracted service provider in collaboration with community Elders. This project was funded by The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and piloted in Indigenous communities to help communities explore the relationship between traditional gambling practice, destigmatizing gambling, and integrating wholistic wellness and community connections through play.

BC Liquor Distribution Branch's Food Banks BC Campaign – Ongoing

Every year, the [BC Liquor Distribution Branch](#) (LDB) raises funds for [Food Banks BC](#). In 2023, the LDB held two campaigns through which BC Liquor Stores and BC Cannabis Stores collected customer donations and the funds were given to the food banks in the communities where they were collected. Donations are distributed to Food Banks BC's 107-member food banks, as well as several non-member banks. The two annual campaigns in 2023 raised a total of \$1.2 million.

Indigenous Communities Driver Licensing Outreach – Ongoing

The [Insurance Corporation of British Columbia](#) (ICBC) works with local driving schools throughout B.C. to remove key barriers for Indigenous Peoples in remote communities to obtain their driver's licence. Driver Licensing and Road Safety teams travel to remote communities throughout the province to offer knowledge and road-testing services on a regular basis to support Indigenous Peoples through their licensing journey.

ICBC secondary identification attestation – Ongoing

For individuals unable to secure secondary identification, ICBC may be able to provide an attestation option to enable them to obtain photo identification. ICBC does not charge for the BC Services Card if there is no driver's licence attached.

ICBC stability on rates – Ongoing

To support people with the ongoing impacts of global inflation, ICBC Basic insurance rates have stayed stable since 2021 and did not increase in 2023. With the introduction of Enhanced Care in May 2021, auto insurance rates in B.C. have gone from some of the most expensive in Canada to being among the most affordable.

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION

Stronger Community Services Fund – Started in 2023

\$60 million through the Stronger Community Services Fund building on the \$30-million Recovery and Resiliency fund in 2022. There are four streams of funding: local Community Foundations throughout the province; large, multi-service "lighthouse organizations" with provincial or regional reach, supporting poverty reduction; small local non-profits affected by the COVID-19 pandemic; and organizations run by and supporting people in the Indigenous, Black and people of colour (IBPOC) communities.

» Indigenous Recovery and Resiliency Fund – Ongoing

Approximately \$3 million of the \$60 million was designated for Indigenous-led and serving organizations through the New Relationship Trust, building on the \$5-million investment in 2022 through the Indigenous Resiliency and Recovery fund. The multi-year, flexible funding supports Indigenous organizations with pandemic-related recovery support and enhance organizational and economic resilience.

First Nations Well Being Fund – Ongoing

\$15 million through the First Nations Well Being Fund building on previous investments of \$5.4 million between 2020 and 2022. The fund, implemented by the First Nations Public Service Secretariat, supports First Nations and Tribal Councils to improve well-being within their communities, including poverty reduction and food security initiatives.

Victoria Foundation’s Food Security Provincial Initiatives Fund – Ongoing

\$1.3 million in funding for food security and food sovereignty programs will be distributed over two years through the Victoria Foundation's Food Security Provincial Initiatives Fund to increase local food production, expand and improve access to culturally appropriate food, and continue to advance meaningful reconciliation in local communities throughout the province.

The investment builds on \$3.8 million in grants provided by the Province to Victoria Foundation in 2019 and 2022, which helped establish and expand the Food Security Provincial Initiatives Fund.

Food security funding for Food Banks BC – Ongoing

\$15 million in funding to Food Banks BC (FBBC) is part of the historic \$200-million investment announced in March 2023 to strengthen food supply throughout B.C., increase the availability of fresh food, encourage more food production in remote areas, strengthen food infrastructure, and create more regional community food hubs.

\$5 million of this funding, allocated over three years, is going towards FBBC and the Public Health Association of BC (PHABC). Grants will support local food-access projects developed by organizations from northern B.C. that understand the unique challenges faced by rural, remote and First Nations communities. The funding will also be used to expand the approach of a Resilient North Research Project to investigate food access in other regions in B.C.

This funding builds on \$6 million for the Emergency Food Purchasing program and \$2.5 million for Perishable Food Refrigeration Grant in 2021, and \$1.455 million to provide rapid access to food for people affected by emergency events and to initiate the Resilient North Research Project in 2022.

The Critical Food Infrastructure Fund – Started in 2023

A provincial investment of \$14 million into the Critical Food Infrastructure Fund will help provide better access to nutritious food for people living on low incomes and experiencing food insecurity. The fund, administered by [United Way British Columbia](#), provides grants to local organizations to increase their capacity to provide nutritious and culturally appropriate food to the people who need it.

United Way BC Regional Community Food Hubs – Ongoing

\$7.5 million in food security funding to United Way BC in 2023 builds on previous investments of \$1.27 million in 2021 and \$1.4 million in 2022. The funding supports people in the Interior, Lower Mainland, central and north Vancouver Island to have better access to an increased supply of affordable food through local food hubs.

Grant to Support Network for Indigenous Women and Women of Colour – Started in 2022

\$350,000 in grants since 2022 support Indigenous and Black women, women of colour and their families through the Get Your Groceries program, offered through the Support Network for Indigenous Women and Women of Colour.

UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program – Ongoing

As part of B.C.'s Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Province provided \$5 million to the Union of BC Municipalities for

the Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program. Since the program began in 2019, 106 local governments have received a total of more than \$3.8 million for 63 poverty reduction plans and projects.

Period Poverty funding – Ongoing

Through a provincial grant announced in May 2022, United Way BC allocated approximately \$220,000 for 10 pilot projects that work toward the elimination of period poverty.

Funded pilot projects were completed by August 2023, and results contributed to a final report and recommendations (released by the Period Poverty Task Force in 2024).

Hardship Assistance for People Fleeing Armed Conflict Abroad – Implemented in 2022

As of July 1, 2022, displaced Ukrainians who arrive in B.C. through the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) visa are eligible for 12 months of hardship assistance under the Fleeing Armed Conflict Abroad category of the BC Employment and Assistance Program (BCEA) Program.

Grant to Immigrant Link Centre Society – Ongoing

Immigrant Link Centre Society received \$300,000, building on \$50,000 in 2022, to support their free food program From Pollution to Solution, which redistributes food for people facing food insecurity while keeping surplus food out of the landfill. Additionally, the program provides opportunities for newcomers to volunteer with the not-for-profit sector in B.C.

Welcome Home Kit Program – Ongoing

\$1 million was provided to the Social Planning and Research Council of B.C. in 2023, to deliver the Welcome Home Kits program as part of the Province's work to prevent and reduce chronic homelessness. The program provides kits for previously unhoused individuals who secure housing. Kits contain essential items needed to establish stable living arrangements.

This funding builds on a \$1 million investment in 2022 to establish the Welcome Home Kits program (e.g., dishes, towels, bedding). Since 2022, 2,755 Welcome Home Kits have been delivered, with 1,100 of those in 2023.

WorkBC Employment Services – Ongoing

WorkBC Employment Services are available to unemployed or precariously employed residents of B.C. This program supports key priorities of the Poverty Reduction Strategy by helping to break the cycle of poverty. On an annual basis, WorkBC Employment Services provides services to about 82,500 people and 35,000 clients are supported through their first year of employment.

WorkBC also provides services to about 13,900 people with disabilities each year and about 770 clients receive assistive technology supports at work through WorkBC Assistive Technology Services contracts.

The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction is working with provincial colleagues, the federal government, and Indigenous governments as well as service providers, including WorkBC Centres, to build relationships and enhance services for Indigenous Peoples.

In early 2023, WorkBC service eligibility was expanded to a broader range of newcomers, so refugee claimants can access comprehensive employment services and supports.

Co-op development in Surrey B.C. – Started in 2023

A \$1-million grant to [Solid State](#) Community Industries to launch 15 new co-ops over three years that will be owned-and-operated by low-income, racialized newcomers who are currently precariously employed in a range of occupations.

Since the program's launch, Solid State has worked with five co-op cohorts, creating 29 full-time jobs, 22 part-time jobs, 32 full-time summer jobs, and multiple contract positions, for racialized migrants from low-income backgrounds.

Defining best practice for employment interventions for youth with disabilities – Started in 2023

A \$2-million, three-year grant to [Delta Community Living Society](#) to explore best practices for employment interventions to support youth with developmental disabilities secure inclusive paid employment as they transition from high school.

Since the program's launch:

- » 114 youth have participated
- » 106 have completed the program
- » 51 participants got jobs (contract, full-time seasonal, part-time, part-time seasonal and self-employment)
- » 42 were placed in work experience

BC Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association Talent Attraction Program – Started in 2023

A \$3.9-million, three-year grant to the [BC Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association](#) to test a Talent Attraction Program to engage with underrepresented groups in the industry such as women, Indigenous Peoples, veterans, newcomers and individuals under 40 years of age.

This engagement will use innovative technology, improved training tools, communication campaigns and partnerships with organizations that work with each priority population.

Since the program's launch:

- » Travelling roadshow (complete with simulator technology) has held 11 events in seven communities
- » Engaged over 2,000 individuals through simulator experiences, offering realistic training on snowplow and heavy equipment operations
- » Developed a customized online training program, RoadReadyBC, aiming for 1,000 completions, set to launch June 2024

Reducing Poverty for Persons with Disabilities through Early Intervention and Effective Occupational Rehabilitation – Started in 2023

A \$3.9-million, three-year grant to the [National Institute of Disability Management and Research](#) to support persons with disabilities to remain in the workforce through early intervention, occupational rehabilitation, medical evaluation, job coaching and workplace accommodation.

Since the program's launch:

- » Pilot sites have been established in Nanaimo, Vancouver, Kelowna and Prince George, including focused engagement with local Indigenous bodies, WorkBC, local mayor and council, chambers of commerce and labour councils in each community to advise on the initiative and facilitate collaboration

Closing the Employment Gap for People with Disabilities: Innovative Assistive Technology Solutions – Started in 2023

A \$1-million, three-year grant to [CanAssist at the University of Victoria](#) to provide individuals with personalized technologies designed to address specific barriers to successful employment.

Trans+ Employment in B.C. Study - Ongoing

A \$200,000 grant to the University of Victoria to research barriers and challenges faced by Trans+ people (Trans, Nonbinary, Two-Spirit, and other gender-diverse people) in labour market and employment services, and to propose initiatives to make employment and employment services more inclusive of the Trans+ community. This project also includes a training component for WorkBC contractors to increase staff knowledge, skill and competency in serving Trans+ clients.

Supporting employers to build psychologically safe and healthy workplaces for employees living with mental illness(es) – Started in 2023

A \$700,000 grant to the Canadian Mental Health Association to support employers, particularly those with small- and medium-sized businesses/organizations, to build safe and healthy workplace cultures that promote mental health.

Employment for Youth with Disabilities - Ongoing

A \$4-million grant to [CanAssist](#) at University of Victoria to identify best practices, address gaps and duplications, develop strategies for the future of employment services for Youth with Disabilities and to determine a provincial strategy that will improve employment outcomes for Youth with Disabilities.

Provincial Low Barrier Employment Network AKA “SHIFT” – Completed in 2023

A \$566,000 grant to [Eastside Movement for Business and Economic Renewal Society](#) (EMBERS) to use the expertise of community organizations to test innovative, effective interventions to transition individuals with multiple barriers into meaningful and suitable employment.

The project resulted in the creation of a report with recommendations for how to effectively provide employment and wraparound support services to individuals with complex barriers.

Addressing the Gap: Responding to the Needs of Employers – Ongoing

A \$299,000, two-year grant to [BC Chamber of Commerce](#) to study the needs of employers and job seekers and identify new/improved employment practices in response to those needs.

Accessibility: Awareness, Education, and Support – British Columbia Small Business Community – Ongoing

A \$3-million, two-year grant to [Small Business BC](#) to provide education, awareness and tools to assist small business owners in understanding and implementing accessible workplaces.

Build Your Own Future – Started 2023

A \$2.955-million, three year grant to ICS-Hubspace supporting the development and delivery of an expedited training approach for displaced mill tradespeople so they are able to quickly transition into operating their own service business in their local community or region.

Indigenous Labour Market Fund – Started 2023

A \$23-million, three-year grant to New Relationship Trust to deliver non-repayable third-party grants to Indigenous organizations to conduct projects addressing labour market gaps in three areas: labour market studies, cultural recognition in the workplace and job fairs.

Bridging the Gap: Capacity Building in First Nations Administration – Started 2023

A \$4-million, three-year grant to First Nations Public Sector Secretariat to support the delivery of their mandate, as well as deliver on outcomes that will enhance employment opportunities for Indigenous public sector.

Expanded supports for vulnerable people in DTES – Started in 2023

A \$700,000 funding increase in 2023 for community partners and service providers means more access to supports for vulnerable people in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. As a result of the funding, community organizations can expand services and supports for the most vulnerable people at every stage of their journey.

Links to Employment Program – Started in 2023

An \$8.2-million provincial grant to the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) of BC improves employment supports for people with complex needs. The funding comes from the 2022-23 Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Development Agreement.

Investing in [Links to Employment](#), a three-year program for people who have multiple and persistent barriers to employment, is part of StrongerBC's Future Ready plan.

Since the program's launch, CMHA has delivered services to approximately 150 people in Vancouver, Vernon, Nanaimo and Prince George, in partnership with primary care providers in each community.

The Agriculture and Food Workforce Development Initiative – Started in 2023

The [Agriculture and Food Workforce Development Initiative](#) is a \$15-million fund provided by the Province and delivered through the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC. It is a three-year initiative supporting B.C.'s agriculture and food industry to recruit and retain workers, helping to provide a stable food supply. AgSafe was the first organization supported under the new program, receiving \$755,000 to expand mental-health services to the B.C. agriculture sector.

Since the program's launch:

- » A partnership has been developed with CMHA-BC, building a foundation for further co-operation to develop mental-health services for B.C. agriculture
- » Counselling services have been delivered to 127 farmers
- » A new web-based hub for mental health resources intended for B.C. agriculture has been developed

13 projects have been approved for funding under the Indigenous Food Systems & Agriculture Skills & Training program

60 eligible students have been approved for the Student Summer Farm Worker Bursary Program

Employment support for newcomers – Started in 2023

More newcomers to the province are now supported in finding rewarding, good jobs in their communities through \$7 million in funding from the Province to the [Immigrant Employment Council of BC](#) (IEC-BC). With this three-year grant, IEC-BC is providing extended mentorship to under-employed and unemployed newcomers that helps them understand and adapt their skills and experience to the Canadian labour market.

Since the start of the program:

- » Five Tech Connect events were held, connecting seven employers with approximately 350 newcomers with backgrounds in tech

- » There have been approximately 270 matches made between skilled newcomers and established professionals in occupation-specific mentoring relationships
- » The first cohort of the B2B Mentoring initiative, which connects larger businesses with experts in diversity, equity, and inclusion, is set to launch in June 2024

WorkBC Community and Employer Partnerships (CEP) – Ongoing

In 2023 more than \$6.7 million was committed to CEP, which prioritizes projects that create work experience and training opportunities to prepare job seekers for available jobs and support an inclusive economic recovery in B.C. communities. Projects include:

- » **Training for Women in the Truck Driving Industry – Started in 2023**

The Young Women’s Christian Association received more than \$1.6 million for the [YWCA Changing Gears](#) truck-driver training program offered at various Valley Driving School locations in the Lower Mainland. As many as 50 women are able to train for jobs in the truck-driving industry through this CEP project.

- » **Malahat Nation Solar Earth Project – Started in 2023**

Work experience in a high opportunity occupation was available for four members of the Malahat Nation while supporting the Nation with implementing a new solar technology to reduce their energy costs and carbon footprint. This project, valued at \$247,000, will allow in-community hiring for future projects that align with the Nation’s energy strategies where skilled labour will be needed.

- » **Electrical Foundations with Squamish Nation – Started in 2023**

Skills training and work experience was available for 13 Indigenous people to prepare for employment as commercial or residential electricians through a project-based labour market training project with Squamish Nation valued at \$229,000.

- » **Training for jobs as Social Services and Community Support Workers – Started in 2023**

Skills training and work experience was available for 30 participants to prepare for employment as Social Services & Community Support Workers. Partners in Resources Inc. received \$577,000 to provide this training that targeted persons with a disability in the Kootenay and Okanagan regions.

Training for jobs as Certified Community Support Workers – Started in 2023

\$300,000 in funding was provided to the Canadian Mental Health Association to deliver, together with its partners, the community support worker diploma training project in Northern B.C.

Foundry Works! – Ongoing

The Province is providing Foundry with a one-time grant of \$5.1 million to administer Foundry Works! over the next three years. This program provides better access to services for young people with persistent and multiple barriers to employment or education. Since the start of the program:

- » Over 800 youth have been engaged and supported, with over 100 youth consenting to participate in the program’s research study
- » Over 70% of youth who have completed the program have gained employment or returned to school
- » Over 350 new health, community, and employer partnerships have been developed around the province

Foundry – Youth Supporting Youth – Started in 2023

The Province invested \$16.2 million to support youth to train for jobs in the health and social services sector as

youth peer support workers. The funding expands innovative youth peer support services at [Foundry](#) centers throughout B.C. The provincial grant is for three years and comes from the 2022-23 Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Development Agreement.

Since the start of the program:

- » 17 Foundry centres have hired a full complement of Youth Peer Support teams, including 16 peer support supervisors, and over 80 youth peer support workers (64 funded by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction) with diverse lived and living experiences
- » 50 youth peer support workers completed the Foundry Youth Peer Support training, with 20 more currently enrolled
- » Youth peer support workers have engaged and built relationships with over 100 community partners throughout B.C., to enhance service delivery for young people

Employment Grants Support Survivors of Violence – Started in 2023

More women and non-binary newcomers and refugees who have experienced violence, abuse and/or trauma now have access to employment services and supports through a \$2.4-million grant to YWCA Metro Vancouver, through the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Development Agreement. The three-year grant enhanced and expanded [Axis YWCA Metro Vancouver](#), a trauma-informed, culturally safe employment program.

Since the start of the program:

- » 180 participants, with 90% program completion rate, participated in pre-employment skills training, with services provided in over 20 languages

Supportive employment services for people in recovery – Started in 2023

People recovering from mental-health and addiction challenges have benefited from a new three-year pilot program that integrates employment services within treatment and recovery centres. Through a \$4.9-million grant, the [Canadian Mental Health Association](#) (CMHA) of British Columbia provided people undergoing treatment at bed-based recovery centres access to employment services as part of their recovery process, gaining the skills and support needed to enter and thrive in the labour market.

Since the program's launch, CMHA has delivered services to approximately 70 people in Kamloops, Nanaimo, Penticton, Vernon and Prince Rupert, in partnership with bed-based recovery providers in each community.

Grant to Canadian National Institute for the Blind – Ongoing

The Province awarded the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) a \$2.5-million grant to expand its employment program dedicated to blind or partially sighted people over three years. The program expansion will also address systemic barriers to meaningful employment for youth and Indigenous Peoples who are blind or partially sighted.

Since the start of the program, over 300 blind or partially sighted job seekers have been recruited to CNIB's Talent Pool, in which they are provided with one-on-one pre-employment supports through job-readiness workshops and training.

Employer Supports for Persons with Disabilities Project – Ongoing

Employers in B.C. are receiving support to create inclusive work environments for people with disabilities through a \$4.8-million grant from the Province. Over the next three years, Small Business BC will work with the Presidents Group on the Employer Supports for Persons with Disabilities project to support employers to hire, rehire and retain people with disabilities for long-term successful employment.

Since the start of this program over 300 Small Business Accessibility Grants have been distributed.

National Institute of Disability Management and Research (NIDMAR) – Ongoing

The Province is providing the National Institute of Disability Management and Research with \$6 million in a one-time grant to administer a return-to-work and disability management education program and support project over the next six years.

- » Since the start of this program:15 scholarships in the Bachelor of Disability Management Program have been disbursed
- » Over 5,000 Disability Management continuing education modules have been delivered
- » 27 individuals have obtained Certified Disability Management Professional certification and Certified Return to Work Coordinator certification

Indigenous Youth Leadership Development – Started in 2023

New funding helped support the BC Association of Friendship Centres to expand access, education and training opportunities for Indigenous youth in B.C. during the annual [Gathering Our Voices](#) Indigenous youth leadership conference. The \$10.35-million grant from the Province enables approximately 500 more Indigenous youth from First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban and off-reserve communities to attend Gathering Our Voices annually for the next five years.

Gathering Our Voices is an Indigenous-led event for Indigenous youth and is co-hosted by BC Friendship Centres with the support of First Nations throughout the province. This event focuses on providing Indigenous youth with a safe and inclusive environment, free from the impacts of racism, exclusion and poverty, to celebrate Indigenous culture, dream about the future, and engage in career building, training, workshops and tours. In 2023, Gathering Our Voices was held March 22-25 in Vancouver.

Reconciliation Funding – Started in 2022

The Province is investing \$9.6 million to advance reconciliation in the B.C. community social services sector. The funding will support the development of a reconciliation framework for the community social services sector over five years, overseen by the British Columbia Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC).

Partnership with Services Canada – Ongoing

The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction works with Indigenous Services Canada to ensure that Indigenous Peoples in B.C. who live on reserve lands have access to similar poverty reduction benefits to those living off-reserve lands.

Improved public services for First Nations governments and youth – Started in 2023

The B.C. government has provided more than \$5.5 million to the First Nations Public Service Secretariat (FNPS) to research workforce needs and to support training and employment opportunities, particularly for young people in the First Nations public sector. The funding supports improved economic opportunities, better services for people and First-Nations-led solutions to manage infrastructure and other resources. This provincial funding comes from the 2022-23 Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Development Agreement.

Community Integration Specialists – Ongoing

In 2019, the Province established the Community Integration Specialist role to connect underserved individuals with financial assistance and access to community supports. The community integration specialists work collaboratively with community partners and agencies, meeting individuals “where they are at.”

As of December 2023, the program has more than doubled, growing from an initial staff compliment of 72 to 165 community integration specialist. Positions are allocated amongst 11 teams throughout the province, based on homelessness data by census area, health authorities, complex care housing sites, partnerships with Friendship Centres, as well as SDPR client data of individuals with no fixed address (including encampments).

As of December 2023, there are 11 current partnerships with Friendship Centres throughout B.C., and 13 Community Integration Specialist staff working out of these Centres.

Tax AID Program – Ongoing

People with disabilities and other barriers will continue to receive free help filing their income tax and accessing tax credits and benefits, thanks to \$1.18 million in provincial funding. Disability Alliance BC (DABC) has been operating the Tax Assistance and Information program (Tax AID) since 2015, providing free community-based income tax-filing services for persons with disabilities and persons with persistent multiple barriers living in B.C.

Access to critical services for vulnerable people – Started in 2023

Vulnerable and low-income people have more access to essential identification documents that will help them access critical government services with new funding provided to the [Community Social Planning Council](#) (CSPC) of Victoria. Supported by a \$200,000 grant, the council will help more people from underserved populations obtain personal identification documents that range from birth certificates and health-care cards to BC Services Cards. The Co-ordinated ID Services Program is one of the ways CSPC supports people and families experiencing homelessness and housing instability in Greater Victoria.

Vulnerable and unhoused individuals living in the Ruth and Naomi's Mission (RAN) shelter continue to have access to meaningful work cleaning streets, supporting snow removal and drainage clearing with the Downtown Chilliwack Street Team. The expansion of this employment opportunity was supported by the Province through a one-time grant of \$125,000 in 2023.

Downtown Eastside support – Started in 2023

The Province provided a \$600,000 one-time conditional grant in 2023 to the DTES Women's Centre to renovate its facilities, such as centralized office spaces, upgraded accessibility features, programming space and a kitchen that will provide meals for more than 900 women.

The Province provided a \$21,000 one-time conditional grant in 2023 to the Overdose Prevention Society for the DTES Distribution Hub.

The Province provided a \$54,000 one-time conditional grant in 2023 to update the Wish Drop-In Centre Society's facilities.

The Province provided a \$25,000 one-time conditional grant to Make Way Charitable Society for the Binner's Project to purchase supplies, safety gear and uniforms.

Access to Benefits Advocacy Fund – Ongoing

The Province awarded the Vancouver Foundation a \$5-million grant over five years to establish an advocacy fund for advocacy organizations to support ministry clients to access unclaimed benefits such as Canadian Pension Plan Disability, Old Age Security, Guaranteed Income Supplement, Canadian Dental Care Plan, and any other federal or provincial benefits they may be eligible for. In addition, advocates will be able to assist clients with filing income tax, obtaining identification, etc.

A total of 32 advocacy organizations were awarded \$150,000 over five payments to expand their services of providing assistance to access unclaimed benefits. The following number of organizations chosen fall within the following categories:

- » Nine Indigenous-serving organizations
- » 10 smaller and/or rural-serving organizations
- » Nine large urban-population-serving organizations
- » Four provincewide and/or regional-mandate organizations

Expansion of the Accessibility Professional Network – Started in 2022

The Province provided \$2.5 million in grants, which will expand the Accessibility Professional Network throughout the province and increase use of the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification rating.

Accessibility supports for people with disabilities – Started in 2023

People with temporary and permanent disabilities, seniors and parents with strollers are benefiting from accessibility improvements supported by \$5 million in provincial funding to the [Rick Hansen Foundation](#).

Grant to BC Paraplegic Foundation – Started in 2022

A range of community services for people with disabilities throughout B.C. will be expanded, thanks to a provincial grant of \$3 million over three years. With the renewed funding, the BC Paraplegic Foundation will support the BC Spinal Cord Injury Community Services Network so it can continue to focus on initiatives to improve inclusion for people with disabilities.

Provincial Accessibility Committee (PAC) – Started in 2021

In January 2023, the Provincial Accessibility Committee began work to develop the first accessibility standards under the Accessible B.C. Act. These standards will aim to reduce barriers to accessibility related to employment and the receipt of goods and services.

The Provincial Accessibility Committee aims to initiate public consultation on these standards in spring 2024.

Accessibility Grants – Ongoing

In May 2023, as part of the Province’s ongoing commitment to increasing accessibility and improving community inclusion, the Province announced funding for community-based accessibility projects. 12 applicants have been selected to receive grants up to \$40,000.

Accessible B.C. Act – Started in 2021

The Accessible B.C. Act establishes a legal framework for government to work with people with disabilities and the broader community to address barriers to full and equal participation. The legislation allows for the development of accessibility standards in a range of different areas.

Key actions taken between 2021 and 2023 to implement the Accessible B.C. Act include the publication of AccessibleBC: B.C.’s Three-Year Accessibility Plan, establishment of B.C.’s Provincial Accessibility Committee, and establishment of an accessibility feedback tool.

In 2022, the Province adopted the Accessible B.C. Regulation which establishes new accessibility requirements for more than 750 organizations across B.C.’s public sector.

Local Government Accessibility Grants – Started in 2023

The Province provided \$5 million to the Social Planning and Research Council of B.C. to support local government accessibility initiatives with grants of up to \$25,000.

COMMUNITY LIVING BC

CLBC-funded employment support services/COVID Recovery – Ongoing

People with developmental disabilities who are eligible for Community Living BC (CLBC) services received support to return to the workforce and increase their digital literacy.

Funding of \$10 million supported CLBC to hire additional employment support staff to help people find or reconnect to employment through support with job searching, assisting people in understanding and following COVID-19 workplace requirements and helping people reconnect with former employers.

Throughout the province, digital literacy tutors were trained to assist individuals to develop their computer and online skills.

CLBC dedicated \$21.1 million for employment services in fiscal year 2022-2023.

CLBC's commitment to employment has been consistent since the Community Action Employment Plan launched in 2012-13. Since then, employment has grown from 14% to 22% of working aged people eligible for CLBC services.

Supporting Provincial Leadership of People with Developmental Disabilities – Ongoing

Through this initiative, Community Living BC (CLBC) is increasing the number of people with developmental disabilities in leadership roles. This ensures that people with lived experience are involved in decision making processes that affect them.

Approximately \$65,000 was invested in 2022-23 to support the leadership of people with developmental disabilities, including funding for:

- » Four self-advocate organizations to lead social connection and leadership building events/activities in communities throughout B.C.
- » A four-day Provincial Self Advocacy Leadership Institute led by and for people with developmental disabilities
- » Workshops led by Empowering Self Advocates to take Action Cooperative that mentor people with developmental disabilities to speak up and plan for a life they desire

A shared policy working group between CLBC and BC People First, the provincial organization representing people with developmental disabilitiesExpansion of STEPS Forward – Ongoing

STEPS Forward's BC Initiative for Inclusive Post-Secondary Education provides inclusion support for students with developmental disabilities to access post-secondary education. Community Living BC (CLBC) has supported this initiative since 2014-15. STEPS Forward continues to expand this service throughout the province with financial support from CLBC. In fiscal year 2022-2023, \$1.048 million was provided to support 47 individuals at 11 campuses in all five CLBC regions throughout B.C.

Inclusive Housing Initiative – Ongoing

Community Living BC (CLBC) sponsored Inclusive Housing sessions at the Housing Central Conference to raise awareness for the need of inclusive housing outside of the community living sector. Approximately \$33,000 was invested in the initiative in 2023.

CLBC was provided with 50 portable rental supplements from BC Housing, which are anticipated to be available for distribution in 2024.

Building on prior work with key community partners, CLBC engaged to develop a more robust plan as part of the Re-imagining Community Inclusion initiative. The plan includes a focus on cultural safety for Indigenous people,

including people with developmental disabilities in planned or underway housing initiatives, and exploring options to close the gap between current income and affordable housing rates.

CLBC also initiated a process of evaluating current tools, processes, practices, and options for alternative housing supports. CLBC implemented a project to forecast future housing and service needs more accurately for eligible individuals, which will assist response by local government, housing developers, and non-profit providers.

LIFE-based services – Ongoing

In 2022-23, Community Living BC (CLBC) invested \$2.8 million to expand its LIFE-based services (with goals for learning, inclusion, friendship and employment), offering 23 in total, across all five of CLBC's regions.

MINISTRY OF TOURISM, ARTS, CULTURE AND SPORT

KidSport BC – Ongoing

Sport BC's (a non-profit organization) KidSport BC program provides grants to lower-income families to help cover the costs of a season of sport. The Province provides \$400,000 annually to KidSport BC which helps it provide support to more than 7,300 children annually.

BC Sport Participation Program (BCSPP) – Ongoing

The Province continued its partnership with the federal government to jointly fund the BC Sport Participation Program and Indigenous youth programs to a total of just over \$1.3 million. This funding supports sports and physical activity opportunities for underrepresented populations (e.g., low income, Indigenous, new Canadians, females, disability and older adult populations). This investment includes annual support to the Urban Native Youth Association (in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside) for its Aboriginal Youth First Sport and Recreation programs to deliver sport and recreation programs for youth.

After-School Sport and Arts Initiative (ASSAI) – Ongoing

The Province supports After-School Sport and Arts Initiative through \$1.4 million in annual funding. The initiative brings free sport, physical activity and creative arts programming to 22 school districts throughout the province with a focus on children and youth (grades K-8) who face barriers to sport or arts participation.

Creative Pathways – Ongoing

Creative Pathways is an industry initiative to increase workforce capacity and provide clear entry points into the motion picture industry, with streams for equity-seeking groups.

In 2023, this initiative was funded by The Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sports (\$300,000 for 2023-24 for Creative Pathways and Reel Green) and through a Sector Labour Market Partnership with the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (\$88,455 in 2022-23), which were delivered by Creative BC.

First Peoples' Cultural Council funding – Ongoing

Amplify BC provides \$500,000 annually to the First Peoples' Cultural Council to support Indigenous artists and industry professionals. This funding facilitates expanded opportunities for mentorship, access to recording studios, and development of artists from Indigenous communities.

BC Arts Council (BCAC) funding: First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) – Ongoing

The Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sports provides \$1.725 million in annual funding through the BC Arts Council to the [First Peoples' Cultural Council](#) to support its Indigenous Arts Awards program, a continuation of a 25-year partnership to directly support Indigenous artists, communities and cultural practices.

Targeted outreach and support for applicants – Ongoing

Creative BC hires consultants from underserved cultural communities to lead outreach activities, and offers one-on-one grant coaching sessions to applicants from underrepresented groups, helping those new to funding navigate program guidelines and applications.

In 2023, a portion of The Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sports' funding provided to Creative BC (\$3.215 million) supported this work.

Strategic Framework for Tourism 2022-2024 – Ongoing

In 2022, B.C. launched a three-year road map for rebuilding and revitalizing tourism and creating jobs and opportunities for people and communities in every part of the province. Requested by B.C. tourism industry leaders and the Tourism Task Force, the updated framework focuses on provincial priorities of putting people first; lasting and meaningful reconciliation, equity and anti-racism; a better future through fighting climate change and a strong and sustainable economy that works for everyone.

Indigenous Tourism funding – Started in 2023

Led by [Indigenous Tourism BC](#), a \$6-million Indigenous Tourism Training Initiative will support current and aspiring Indigenous tourism workers and employers by providing Indigenous-led and culturally focused training and educational opportunities that help attract and retain Indigenous tourism talent. It's anticipated that more than 240 Indigenous tourism businesses will benefit from the Indigenous Tourism Training Initiative, including 45 communities and more than 1,400 people.

Destination BC (DBC)

In 2023, Destination BC (DBC) launched a three-year diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA) corporate strategy and road map as part of a commitment to telling B.C.'s stories through a diversity of voices.

Royal BC Museum and BC Archives (the Museum)

The Royal BC Museum and BC Archives began multiple initiatives in 2023 to address affordability, and support inclusive and equitable access to the Museum:

- » In April 2023, fees were removed from BC Archives supporting greater access and reducing barriers to use
- » **Royal BC Museum initiatives that continued throughout 2023 and are ongoing:**
 - » Free use of learning outreach kits for the public, free educator resources and access to the online Learning Portal, regularly updated with new content
 - » Complimentary admission to the Royal BC Museum during regular operating hours to self-identified Indigenous Peoples
 - » Complimentary admission to B.C. school children through educator group bookings
 - » Provided a series of free online and in-person community engagement events, including special free screenings at IMAX® Victoria

- » Admission by donation several days throughout the year, including B.C. Family Day

BC Arts Council

COVID Resilience Funding – One-time

- » In 2023, the BC Arts Council delivered an additional \$30 million in funding from the Province to 337 arts organizations.

Extending Foundations: Action Plan 2022 – 2024 – Ongoing with new projects

- » In 2022, the BC Arts Council (BCAC) extended its 2018-2022 strategic plan (including the priorities of Indigenous arts and culture, equity, diversity and access, and regional arts and community arts) through the introduction of Extending Foundations: Action Plan 2022-2024. In 2023, BCAC implemented:
 - ◇ [Accelerate pilot program](#): two-year initiative to improve access and reduce barriers to funding for equity-deserving and regional arts and culture organizations and collectives. The program will be continued in 2024
 - ◇ Pathways pilot program: a year-long, cohort-based, no-cost program provides arts, culture and heritage organizations and practitioners with learnings and resources to integrate equity and access in their work and organizations. The program will be continued in 2024. <https://manypathways.ca/>
 - ◇ Application assistance and access support – Ongoing accessibility programs for arts and culture practitioners who are deaf or have a disability and for deaf or disability-serving organizations

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Active Transportation Grant Programs – Ongoing

Provincial investments in active transportation (bike, walking, e assisted devices, other self-propelled transportation) are made by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to increase the availability and quality of active transportation infrastructure. This includes incorporating active transportation facilities into major infrastructure projects and a provincial grant program that provides cost-shared funding to Indigenous and local governments to build active transportation networks and infrastructure.

Projects funded through the [Active Transportation Infrastructure Grants Program](#) provide safe, accessible transportation options, which benefit low-income British Columbians, especially those without access to a vehicle.

E-bike Rebate Program – Started in 2023

On June 1, 2023, the Province launched income-tested rebates totaling \$6 million on the purchase of eligible new e-bikes. The program is fully subscribed and has distributed nearly 4,600 rebates, 99% of recipients had low enough incomes to qualify for one of the income-qualified rebate tiers of \$1,000 or \$1,400, with most (91%) qualifying for the \$1,400 rebate.

BC Bus North – Ongoing

In 2023, the Province contributed \$5 million to continue BC Bus North and the Northern Community Shuttle Program until 2026-27, ensuring the continuation of transportation services that connect people in rural communities to regional centres.

- » People who live and work in the North continue to rely on inter-city bus services. In 2021, administration of BC Bus North was transferred from BC Transit to the [Northern Development Initiative Trust](#) (NDIT), with \$7.9

million in provincial funding to support services to March 31, 2025. The Province and Government of Canada also provided a one-time grant of \$1.6 million to support services for the period of March 2021-March 2022

- » Under the Northern Community Shuttle Program, administered by the NDIT, vehicles are operated by local governments, First Nations communities or non-profit organizations to meet community needs

U-Pass BC – Ongoing

The U Pass BC program, which began in 2011 and has been extended through April 2025, is a partnership between the Province, TransLink, participating public post-secondary institutions and their student associations. The program provides better access to subsidized transit for as many as 140,000 students.

Federal Pandemic Funding (including Safe Restart) – Ongoing

The Province and Canada have provided funding to local governments and TransLink to help offset the loss of fare revenue due to a drop in ridership related to the pandemic. This funding also ensured that transit fare increases were capped at 2.3% through 2024 on TransLink's system and 2024-25 on BC Transit's system to ensure affordability.

Passenger Transportation Accessibility Program – Launched in 2023

To support greater access to transportation for all, the Province provided \$2.6 million in grants to 51 taxi companies in 2023, and \$7 million to 59 companies in 2024, as incentives for taxi companies and drivers to invest in wheelchair-accessible vehicles. This funding helps reduce the financial effects of necessary maintenance work, operating costs, and the costs of purchasing and converting wheelchair-accessible taxis.

Changes to support higher density near transit hubs – Ongoing

Bill 47, Housing Statutes (Transit-Oriented Areas) Amendment Act, 2023 amends the Local Government Act and Vancouver Charter to build on work underway to facilitate more transit-oriented development, create more livable communities and tackle the housing crisis.

First Nations Community Access and Resiliency Program – Started in 2023

The First Nations Community Access and Resiliency Program, delivered through the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure's Preservation Program, funds projects that improve safety and access for First Nations communities, including First Nations women and girls, along with other projects to rehabilitate and improve safety on B.C.'s highways, sideroads and bridges.

This program, announced in 2023-24, will invest \$120 million over nine years, including \$40 million over the next three years, beginning in 2024-25, to support projects that improve access and resiliency for First Nations communities.

Projects are prioritized in response to requests and input received directly from First Nations communities both through direct contact with ministry staff and Minister meetings at the annual First Nations Leaders' Gathering. Many of the projects delivered under this program will include partnering with First Nations communities to deliver the work.

Coastal Ferries

In 2023, the Province provided BC Ferries with a \$500-million contribution to keep ferry fares affordable for all people in B.C. As a result of this funding commitment, the BC Ferries Commissioner made a final price cap decision in September 2023 to allow fare increases, on average, at 3.2% per annum each year and 12.8% in total over four years.

MINISTRY OF WATER LAND AND RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

New Permitting Strategy – Housing – Ongoing

A cross-ministry Housing Action Taskforce (HAT) was established in January 2023 to prioritize criteria for housing projects across natural resource ministries and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, including accelerating permitting for housing, and prioritizing housing projects that focus on social housing, rental housing, and projects that are Indigenous-led and provide the highest number of housing units.

The Single Housing Application Service and the Enhanced Housing Navigator Service are tools released by the HAT in September 2023 to help homebuilders navigate the natural resource permitting process and enable the coordination of applications across the ministries.

The natural resource ministry single window for housing ([Permit Connect BC](#)) website, released in March 2023, provides a one-stop shop for homebuilders accessing natural resource permits.

By applying the tools noted above the natural resource ministries have contributed to the approval of an estimated additional 151,000 housing units in 2023.

First Nations Land Transfers – Ongoing

The ministry transferred six land parcels identified in reconciliatory agreements with Lake Babine, Homalco Indian Band, West Moberly, We Wai Kai & Snuneymuxw First Nations. Work is ongoing to implement land commitments and transfer land under agreements with First Nations, including We Wai Kum, Ts'uubaa-asatx, We Wai Kai, Malahat, Leq'á:mel, Matsqui and Sumas, shishalh, West Moberly, Lake Babine, Cheslatta, Kitselas, Metlakatla, Halfway River, Blueberry River, and Doig River.

Stewardship – Ongoing

In April 2023, B.C. committed \$8.9 million over three years to partner with First Nations representatives to develop the Guardians and Stewardship Training Initiative. Guardians increase the capacity of First Nations to steward and govern their land and waters and partner with B.C. on co-management initiatives.

There are several other initiatives in the collaborative stewardship context that work to support sustainable economic development, including the Marine Plan Partnership (MaPP) and Marine Protected Areas Network (MPAN), the Great Bear Rainforest Agreement, the Aboriginal Liaison Program, Modernized Land Use Planning and Forest Landscape Planning Projects, and the Collaborative Stewardship Framework.

Salmon habitat and population management:

[British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund](#) (BCSRIF) has been a successful joint initiative with the federal government to deliver funding to projects that support the protection and revitalization of wild salmon in B.C. Currently, 58 projects that were announced in December 2023, are underway. These projects received \$86 million in funding. The 97 projects funded through Phase 1 of BCSRIF were completed in March 2024, using the initial investment of \$142.85 million.

There has been significant involvement of First Nations within projects, with about 40% of projects led by Indigenous groups and over 20% of projects having First Nations partnerships.



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