



February 21, 2017

BACKGROUND

NEARLY \$3 BILLION WORTH OF INVESTMENTS IN PRIORITY AREAS

A total of \$4.2 billion has been added to the Ministry of Health budget compared to its 2016-17 base budget. In addition, *Budget 2017* invests nearly \$3 billion in other priority programs and services over the next three years compared to Budget 2016. These investments include:

- \$796 million for children, families and those in need.
- \$740 million for the K-12 sector, including \$320 million to address the recent interim agreement with the BCTF.
- More than \$700 million for first time homebuyers, building on \$920 million for housing affordability and assistance.
- \$249 million for communities and economic development.
- \$149 million for parks and environmental protection.
- \$280 million for other programs and services.

Support for families and people in need:

- \$267 million to support services for vulnerable youth and those with special needs and to help keep families together.
- \$199 million to increase assistance rates by \$600 per year for more than 100,000 persons with disabilities.
- \$175 million for caseload growth in income assistance.
- \$135 million for community living services, including Community Living B.C.
- \$20 million for child care including up to 2,000 new child care spaces.

New mental health funding with a focus on youth:

- \$45 million to Ministry of Children and Family Development over 3 years for more mental health counselling and treatment for children.
- \$12 million for up to 28 additional specialized youth addictions treatment beds.
- \$9 million for the expansion of youth service centres at up to five sites, each expected to reach 1,200-2,500 more clients annually.
- Up to \$5 million to support mental health services for post-secondary students.
- \$11 million over 3 years for the BC Centre for Substance Use.
- \$65 million to provide affordable housing for the homeless, including people with mental health or substance use issues.

Investing in Housing Supply and Affordability:

- Government is supporting the creation of nearly 5,300 units of affordable and supportive housing.
- BC HOME Partnership program will provide over \$700 million in mortgage down payment assistance loans to an estimated 42,000 first-time home buyers over the next three years.
- Rental assistance programs for low-income families and seniors support over 33,000 households each year.
- Increasing the threshold for the first time homebuyers' exemption from property transfer tax to \$500,000 from \$475,000.

K-12 Education — \$740 million over three years, including:

- \$320 million over three years in interim funding pending the conclusion of a final agreement with the BC Teachers' Federation on class size and composition.
- \$228 million to fund enrolment growth across the fiscal plan period.
- \$54 million to eliminate bus fees for regular students and mitigate rural school closures.
- \$29 million for supplies and resources that reduce costs for parents and help teachers deliver B.C.'s new curriculum.

Communities and economic development:

- \$40 million to extend rural broadband service.
- \$6 million to continue the Buy Local program to support B.C. agriculture.
- \$10 million for the Island Coastal Economic Trust for economic initiatives.
- \$6 million for three new international trade offices in Southeast Asia.
- \$50 million for local government infrastructure projects under Building Canada and the Clean Water Wastewater Fund.
- \$15 million for a new community gaming grants capital program.
- \$12 million for maintain provincial highways to appropriate standards.
- \$23 million for the Guns and Gangs strategy and community safety
- \$87 million for an enhanced technology strategy, with details to be announced at the BC Tech Summit, March 2017.

Parks and environmental protection:

- \$36 million for the Parks Future Strategy.
- \$18 million for mines permitting and oversight.
- \$9 million for *Environmental Management Act* compliance and enforcement.
- \$27 million for the Caribou recovery program.
- \$9 million for enhanced reforestation work.
- \$40 million for the Clean Energy Vehicle program.

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