

Ministry of
Employment and
Income Assistance

2007/08
Annual Service Plan Report



Due to policy changes by the National Library of Canada
cataloguing information is no longer available for Annual Service Plan Reports.

For more information on how to contact the British Columbia
Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance,
see Ministry Contact Information on Page 32 or contact:

Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance
PO BOX 9934
STN PROV GOVT
VICTORIA BC
V8W 9R2

or visit our website at
www.gov.bc.ca/eia/

Published by the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance



Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance is a leader in delivering services and supports in innovative ways. Our award-winning practices are making a real difference to British Columbians most in need. Because of the hard work and dedication that ministry employees demonstrate everyday, we made many milestone achievements throughout 2007/08 that I would like to acknowledge and celebrate.

Budget 2007 contained great news for families, children and employable singles on income assistance. We raised rates across the board for all ministry clients in April — the first significant rate increases in more than 10 years.

Another achievement of which I am particularly proud is the Provincial Government's signing of the new Labour Market Agreement and Labour Market Development Agreement with the Government of Canada. Combined, the two agreements present an unprecedented opportunity to create a cohesive “made-in-B.C.” system of employment services that best meet the province's unique labour market priorities and local training needs.

The Ministry has the solid track record to make sure these new and devolved employment services work for British Columbians. Thanks in large part to the success of our employment programs, the Ministry's caseload has changed dramatically for the good. The caseload consisted primarily of employable clients in June 2001 — 87,329 cases. Today, there are less than 21,500 employable cases.

As we help people find and keep good jobs, we want to ensure British Columbians most in need have access to ministry supports and services. The Government continues to have success across the province with our Outreach Programs, through which ministry employees work with community groups, health authorities, police and different levels of government to connect hard-to-reach homeless individuals with income assistance, housing, mental health supports and addiction services.

We continue to simplify the Ministry's policies and procedures to make them easier for clients to follow and understand. For example, the introduction of the Immediate Needs process guarantees applicants will have their immediate needs — such as those for food, shelter or urgent medical attention — looked after in the timeliest manner when they first contact a ministry office. A noteworthy achievement is that the Ministry's Provincial Services Branch won the Premier's Award for Innovation and Excellence in the category of Organizational Excellence for streamlining processes to make response times to clients on eligibility decisions much faster.

More than two-thirds of the Ministry's clients are Persons with Disabilities and Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers to Employment. As the lead on the Provincial Disability Strategy, the Ministry is working with numerous community partners and people with disabilities to make British Columbia a leader in Canada as a place where all people can live the life they choose.

Once again, I would like to extend my thanks to the public servants whose ideas and hard work make healthy, welcoming and accessible communities in British Columbia a reality.

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance *2007/08 Annual Service Plan Report* compares the actual results to the expected results identified in the Ministry's *2007/08–2009/10 Service Plan*. I am accountable for those results as reported.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Claude Richmond". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "C".

Honourable Claude Richmond
Minister of Employment and Income Assistance

June 18, 2008

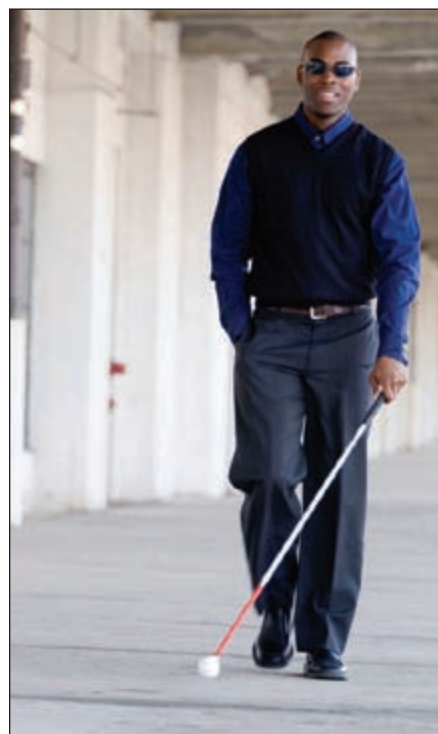
Table of Contents

Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement	3
Highlights of the Year	7
Purpose of Ministry	11
Strategic Context	13
Report on Performance	15
Performance Plan Summary Table	15
Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Results	16
Report on Resources	30
Resource Summary Table	30
Annual Service Plan Report Appendices	31
Appendix A: Services Map	31
Appendix B: Ministry Contact Information	32
Appendix C: Additional Information	34

Highlights of the Year

Enhanced Client Capacity:

- **Increased Rates:** The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance introduced rate increases in 2007/08 worth \$185 million over three years — \$58 million for 2007/08. Maximum shelter rates were increased by \$50 a month for all clients. Families with children were also provided with increases to shelter and support rates ranging from \$97 to well over \$200 a month, depending on the number of children. Total rates for employable singles were increased by \$100 to \$610 a month — an increase of 20 per cent.
- **A Brighter Future for Families with Children:** The single-parent caseload decreased by 63 per cent between 2001/02 and 2007/08 as they were supported to achieve independence through employment — one of the largest caseload decreases in ministry history. The Ministry's Family Maintenance Program also supported the independence of families with children by assisting custodial parents in obtaining, varying and defending spousal and child support orders.
- **Support for Persons with Disabilities:** Since June 2001, the number of Persons with Disabilities receiving assistance has increased by 54 per cent. With rate increases and earnings exemptions, a single disability assistance client had the opportunity to receive a monthly income of approximately \$1,400 in 2007/08.
- **Transportation Supplement:** A new transportation supplement was introduced to provide assistance to clients travelling to a residential drug or alcohol treatment facility.



Responsive Employment Programs:

- **Labour Market Development Agreement:** The Government of British Columbia and Government of Canada signed a new Labour Market Development Agreement under which the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance will assume lead responsibility for Employment Insurance Part II programs and services in February 2009. This transition will be supported by the transfer of approximately 250 staff and \$280 million annually.
- **BC Employment Program:** The \$35 million BC Employment Program provided almost 15,000 employable clients with individualized employment services in 2007/08. The average wage for clients placed in a job through the Program was over \$13 per hour.

- **Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities:** Under the revised \$20 million Program, three prime contractors delivered employment services to persons with disabilities across the province, utilizing 30 service providers and over 70 community partners. Six community-based service providers received a total of \$900,000 to deliver supplemental services not covered by the core contracted service providers.

Citizen-Centred Service Delivery:

- **Integrated Case Management Solution:** The Ministry collaborated with the Ministry of Children and Family Development and Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services to procure a common caseload management system. This system will support a citizen-centred service delivery model, provide staff with better tools and simpler processes, and improve information sharing across the social sector.
- **Simplification:** As part of the simplification of client service practices, the Ministry introduced a new Immediate Needs process, which triages and expedites applications for assistance in situations where an applicant has an immediate need for food, shelter or urgent medical attention, while meeting the applicant's immediate need until the intake process is completed.
- **Child in the Home of a Relative Screening:** The Ministry introduced a mandatory requirement for all Child in the Home of a Relative care providers, and other adults in the household, to be screened by the Ministry of Children and Family Development to assess possible risks to the child prior to any placement in a home.
- **Aboriginal Self-Identifier:** A voluntary and confidential Aboriginal Self-Identifier tool was implemented to collect data on Aboriginal status from ministry clients to better connect Aboriginal clients to appropriate supports and services.
- **Multi-Function Devices:** These devices were introduced in all ministry offices — a first amongst provincial ministries and accomplished in only five months. They allow ministry staff to upload and securely share electronic documents through the Client Transaction System, streamlining information flow and paperwork processes and providing staff with more time to spend serving clients instead of searching for paper-based information.

Innovative Partnerships:

- **Integration and Outreach:** Three million dollars was invested in outreach services to vulnerable groups throughout the province, including homeless individuals, immigrants, women fleeing abuse and individuals who were being released from hospitals, drug or alcohol treatment facilities and correctional facilities. In addition to assisting individuals in accessing ministry programs and services, outreach activities also provided linkages to supports and services provided by other ministries and organizations.

Outreach Staff:

The Ministry had 34 full-time staff specifically assigned to outreach activities in 2007/08.

- **Housing Integrated Task Team:** Building on the Ministry's successful collaboration with the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Police Department, the Ministry expanded the Housing Integrated Task Team to additional communities on Vancouver Island and in the Fraser Valley. This initiative targets illegal landlord practices to prevent individuals from being victimized by unscrupulous landlords.
- **Social Housing:** In 2007/08, the Ministry contributed \$20 million towards the Province's comprehensive housing initiative, which assisted with the purchase of additional low-income housing units in communities such as Vancouver, Victoria, Surrey, Burnaby, Nanaimo, Smithers and Cranbrook.
- **Direct Deposit Partnership:** The Ministry's Kelowna Dilworth office and TD Canada Trust's Kelowna Spall Plaza branch won a regional Premier's Award for Innovation and Excellence in the category of Partnership for their direct deposit partnership. This partnership has been expanded to offices in all regions of the province.
- **"Welcome to Your Home" Starter Kits:** Building on the \$1 million in funding announced in May 2007, an additional \$2 million was provided to the BC Non-Profit Housing Association for tenant starter kits to assist individuals who are moving into non-profit housing. These kits contain over 100 essential items for the kitchen, bedroom and bathroom.
- **Supporting Dental Health:** Low-cost/no-cost community dental clinics in Abbotsford, Victoria, Salmon Arm, Vernon, Prince George, Vancouver and Kamloops received a total of \$500,000 in funding. The Ministry also partnered with the Ministry of Education and school boards to increase participation in the \$19 million Healthy Kids Program by providing 400,000 school children with promotional toothbrushes, stickers, tattoos and program information cards.

Direct Deposit Partnership:

"Bank accounts connect people more closely to society and their community and contribute to greater stability in individual finances. TD Canada Trust is pleased to work with the Ministry and to have our staff attend ministry offices and assist clients in setting up bank accounts and direct deposit, giving them increased control over their finances while reducing the costs of accessing their funds."

— Jeff Gunn, TD Canada Trust



Disability Strategy:

- **10 by 10 Challenge:** The Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities' 10 by 10 Challenge engages communities and industry sectors to increase employment for persons with disabilities by 10 per cent by 2010. By the end of 2007/08, 56 communities had signed up for the Challenge, representing 64 per cent of the total population target.

- **Registered Disability Savings Plan:**

In response to the 2007 Federal Budget, British Columbia was the first jurisdiction to fully exempt Registered Disability Savings Plans when determining eligibility for disability assistance, thereby providing greater certainty for parents planning for children with disabilities

Registered Disability Savings Plan:

“The BC Government’s act represents a new way forward, a huge first step in a new prosperity agenda for people with disabilities. This action begins to turn disability benefits into a floor, encouraging people with disabilities to get ahead, rather than a ceiling, above which people can’t expect to rise.”

— Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network

- **Marketing and Mentoring:**

In 2007/08, a team of marketers with disabilities were hired to take the business case of hiring persons with disabilities directly to employers across the province. Over the course of the year, the marketers spoke directly with 314 employers across British Columbia.

- **Accessible Communities:** The Ministry announced a variety of community accessibility initiatives provided through 2010 Legacies Now, including the:

- Measuring Up Accessibility and Inclusion Fund to provide grants of up to \$25,000 for community projects aimed at increasing accessibility and inclusion for persons with disabilities — total investment of \$2.6 million;
- Access Works program to help persons with disabilities benefit from employment and volunteer opportunities resulting from the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games — total investment of \$900,000; and
- Accessible Tourism Initiative to support accessible and inclusive tourism — total investment of \$1.14 million.

- **Medical Aids and Assistive Devices:** The Ministry announced support for a variety of organizations to provide specialized assistance to persons with disabilities, including the:

- BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports and Communication Assistance for Young Adults program to provide high-tech communication devices and supports — total investment of \$4.7 million;
- Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to provide assistive hearing devices to British Columbians with a hearing loss — total investment of \$500,000;
- University of Victoria’s CanAssist team to build individualized technology for persons with disabilities — total investment of \$2.25 million; and
- Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians to provide visual aids to visually impaired British Columbians — total investment of \$355,000.

- **Streamlined Application Processes:** Streamlined processes were provided for individuals transitioning to disability assistance from both the Ministry of Children and Family Development’s At Home Program and the Federal Government’s on-reserve disability assistance program.

Purpose of Ministry

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance provides income assistance and employment programming for British Columbians in need through the BC Employment and Assistance program. The Program is guided by the *Employment and Assistance Act* and the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*, which came into effect in September 2002.

The Ministry continues to focus on the customer by transforming the way we deliver services in employment and assistance, using effective and outcome based practices, and working in collaboration with ministries, other levels of government and service agencies.

Who Our Clients Are:

The Ministry delivered a variety of assistance programs and services to a monthly average of 140,000 individuals in 2007/08 in various client groups:

- **Expected to Work:** Employable clients in need of short-term income assistance and supports, as well as those who are temporarily excused from employment obligations or have limited employment obligations, due to a medical condition or family situation.
- **Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers:** Clients with a medical condition and significant barriers to employment who are not expected to gain complete independence through employment.
- **Persons with Disabilities:** Clients with a severe physical or mental impairment who require assistance as a result of significant restrictions in their ability to perform daily living activities.
- **Child in the Home of a Relative:** Minor children whose parents have placed them in the care of a relative to whom the Ministry provides financial assistance for the child.



In addition to these direct clients, the Ministry provided other targeted programs for:

- **Seniors:** Persons aged 65 years or older with low income who are eligible for the Senior's Supplement and subsidized bus passes.
- **Low and moderate-income families:** Families who are not direct clients of the Ministry but are eligible for the Healthy Kids Program, which provides dental and optical assistance for children based on the family's income.

- **Other persons with disabilities:** Persons with disabilities who do not receive disability assistance from the Ministry but receive some disability services, including specialized employment programming and information, access and referrals for personal supports.

Services We Provide:

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance offers a wide variety of assistance and supports to our client groups, reflective of their client designations as well as their individual and family circumstances. These include temporary assistance, disability assistance, supplementary assistance and employment programs.

Ministry supports are part of a larger network of assistance provided by a number of provincial ministries and the federal government. Clients receiving our assistance and supports may also receive additional benefits¹, which substantially increase their available income and financial independence.

Where We Deliver Our Services:

Approximately 2,000 ministry staff deliver services across the province through 89 ministry offices, 19 Service BC branches and three telephone Service Centres. Individuals have the option of accessing some services online or contacting the Ministry's toll-free call centres to ask questions or apply for assistance. The Ministry delivers employment and life-skills programs through contracts with external service providers in all regions of the province.

¹ Examples include the B.C. Sales Tax Credit, GST Credit, Universal Child Care Benefit, National Child Benefit and Child Care Subsidy.

Strategic Context

Provincial economy and local labour markets

In 2007, British Columbia's economy continued its strong performance after three straight years of over 3.0 per cent growth. The province's real gross domestic product grew an estimated 3.1 per cent in 2007. British Columbia's strong pace of domestic demand offset weakness in the province's export markets. Employment in British Columbia grew faster than the province's labour force in 2007, pushing the annual unemployment rate down 0.6 percentage points to 4.2 per cent. This was the lowest annual rate of unemployment in more than 30 years.

The robust provincial economy, strong labour markets and ministry policies and programs that support employment and independence have resulted in historically low numbers of employable British Columbians receiving temporary assistance. Employable clients who have left the caseload have benefited from higher household incomes from employment.

Since the provincial economy is the largest single determinant of the Ministry's caseload and expenditures, economic fluctuations or unexpected shocks (e.g., the mountain pine beetle infestation, trade disputes, etc.) that pose risks to the provincial economy and regional labour markets had the potential to impact ministry operations as well as its fiscal and service targets. Natural population growth and migration into the province also increased demand for the Ministry's programs and services.

The Ministry closely monitored these and other risks to align ministry assistance and employment programs to the changing needs of clients and their communities and local labour markets. The Ministry also monitored the caseload against forecasts to identify variances from the budget and to allocate resources to areas in need.

Demographic shifts and changes in the caseload

The number of Persons with Disabilities clients and other clients who face more serious barriers to employment and inclusion has steadily increased in recent years due to an increasing proportion of the population more prone to illness as it ages and longer life expectancies for individuals experiencing significant health issues, including HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis-C, and drug and alcohol dependencies.

89 per cent of Expected to Work clients who left the caseload between 2002 and 2003 left for work, other sources of income or education. These individuals had higher incomes in the year after leaving assistance and their income continued to increase in subsequent years.

— Longitudinal Administrative Database,
Statistics Canada

Persons with Disabilities clients have also continued to leave disability assistance for employment in record numbers due to the strong labour market, increases in the accessibility and availability of assistive technology, and ministry programs and supports that enhance their capacity to work.

Complex social problems and integrated partnerships and solutions

Many of the complex social problems affecting B.C.'s most vulnerable citizens, including homelessness, mental health and addictions, are common to jurisdictions across North America. These problems have significant costs for individuals and communities. They require a co-ordinated approach with participation and commitment from all levels of government, ministries, communities, businesses and stakeholder groups. That is why the Ministry continued to build on the success of collaborative projects, including the Premier's Award-winning Vancouver Coastal Homeless Outreach project, by pursuing strategic partnerships to develop integrated services and solutions that are citizen-centred.

Catastrophic events and emergency management

During the 2007 Spring Freshet/Flooding event, the Ministry successfully activated its emergency response plan, working closely with its federal, provincial, municipal and community partners to develop and implement a co-ordinated, province-wide response. The Ministry convened its Ministry Operations Centre and Ministry Regional Operations Centres at the outset and utilized a 24/7 Focal Point communication and management system to ensure the Ministry was prepared to address impacts to ministry facilities, employees and clients. Lessons learned during that event have been used to further inform the Ministry's emergency response plan.

Employment Rates for British Columbians with Disabilities:

Of the over 300,000 working-age British Columbians with disabilities, only 44 per cent are employed, compared to 68 per cent for the general population. About half of those who are not working believe that they can work, and would like to do so.

— Participation and Activity Limitation Survey
2001, Statistics Canada

Report on Performance

Performance Plan Summary Table

Goal 1: Deliver responsive, innovative and effective services to clients in need For greater detail see pages 16 to 20	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual
1.1 Clients receive appropriate and responsive income and supplementary assistance supports that meet their changing needs Expected-to-Work clients as a per cent of B.C.'s adult population	0.89%	0.96% SUBSTANTIALLY ACHIEVED
1.2 Persons with disabilities who are unable to provide for their basic needs will receive the assistance they need and be supported in becoming as independence as possible Per cent of all clients who are Persons with Disabilities	60.6%	59.9% SUBSTANTIALLY ACHIEVED
1.4 Individuals have access to a fair and timely reconsideration and appeal process Per cent of reconsideration decisions that are made within 10 business days	90%	81% NOT ACHIEVED
Goal 2: Provide low-income persons with disabilities with the best system of support in Canada For greater detail see pages 20 to 24	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual
Average time to process new Persons with Disabilities applications	7.5 weeks	2.1 weeks EXCEEDED
2.1 Persons with disabilities who seek employment or volunteer opportunities are supported through the revised Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities Percentage of persons receiving disability assistance with income from working or a volunteer supplement	21.3%	21.1% SUBSTANTIALLY ACHIEVED
Goal 4: Provide employment programming that is flexible in meeting individual client needs to achieve sustainable employment For greater detail see pages 28 to 29	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual
Percentage of BC Employment Program clients who achieve \$560 or 70 hours per month	25%	30% EXCEEDED

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Results

Goal 1: Deliver responsive, innovative and effective services to clients in need

The Ministry's caseload has shifted in recent years and ministry programs and services have been reviewed and refocused to ensure they are responsive to the changing needs of clients. In 2007/08, the Ministry introduced rate increases for all ministry clients, including the first shelter rate increase since 1992.

Objective 1.1: Clients receive appropriate and responsive income and supplementary assistance supports that meet their changing needs

The Ministry provided temporary assistance clients with income assistance and a variety of supplementary assistance based on individual need, including diet and natal supplements, school start-up supplements, crisis supplements, dental and optical services, security and utility deposits and transportation supplements to access medical care or residential drug and alcohol treatment.

Strategies

- Conduct annual income assistance rates review in the context of changing client needs.
- Expand partnership with Service BC to maintain services in B.C. communities.
- Implement the Multi-Channel Service Delivery project, which improves consistency and choice in how and when clients access the Ministry's service and information.
- Provide current and complete information about policy and programs to the public through the Online Resource.

Performance Results

Performance Measure	2001/02 Baseline	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual
Expected-to-Work clients as a per cent of B.C.'s adult population	3.4%	0.97%	0.91%	0.89%	0.96% SUBSTANTIALLY ACHIEVED

Data Source: Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch, Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.

Discussion of Results

This measure tracks the percentage of B.C.'s working age population receiving temporary assistance with employment related obligations. A lower percentage indicates that fewer people are in need of temporary assistance. Within the context of the strong provincial economy, the Ministry's policy framework and employment programs that encourage independence influenced the result for this measure in 2007/08. The baseline reflects the Ministry's caseload for March 2002, the month prior to the introduction of the BC Employment and Assistance program.

While the percentage of the provincial population receiving temporary assistance was largely unchanged over the past year, the result for this measure was slightly higher than anticipated for 2007/08. This result was due in large part to the concerted outreach efforts the Ministry is taking, in partnership with BC Housing, municipal governments and community groups, to ensure that people who are typically hard to reach — people who are homeless or who have mental health and addictions problems — are connected to the income and supports they are eligible for. Efforts taken to simplify policy and procedures and provide assistance in a more streamlined and accessible manner have also impacted the number of Expected to Work clients.

Objective 1.2: Persons with disabilities who are unable to provide for their basic needs will receive the assistance they need and be supported in becoming as independent as possible

The Ministry provided its highest rates of assistance to Persons with Disabilities clients, as well as access to specialized employment programming for those who want to work. These clients also had access to an enriched suite of supplementary assistance, including low-cost bus passes, nutritional supplements, enhanced dental and orthodontic services and access to a range of medical equipment and supplies.

Strategies

- Support employment, volunteerism and community engagement among Persons with Disabilities through employment programs and supporting the Minister's Council's *10 by 10 Challenge* to increase employment for all persons with disabilities by 10 per cent by 2010. The Challenge is supported by the 2010 Legacies Now *Measuring Up* program.
- Enhance service delivery options such as the Internet to better accommodate the needs of Persons with Disabilities.



Performance Results

Performance Measure	2001/02 Baseline	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual
Per cent of all clients who are Persons with Disabilities	29.6%	55.6%	58.9%	60.6%	59.9% SUBSTANTIALLY ACHIEVED

Data Source: Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch, Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.

Discussion of Results

This measure tracks the percentage of the total caseload receiving disability assistance. The baseline is March 2002, the month prior to the introduction of the BC Employment and Assistance Program.

The Ministry substantially achieved the target for this performance measure in 2007/08. The shortfall is explained by a slightly higher than expected number of employable individuals receiving temporary assistance in 2007/08.

There was a transition in service planning with the 2008/09–2010/11 service plans. Performance measures were streamlined to better meet ministries' core priorities and, as a result, this performance measure will not appear in future Annual Service Plan Reports. The Ministry remains committed to assisting those most in need and will continue to include data on historical and future disability assistance caseload trends in subsequent Annual Service Plan Reports.

Objective 1.3: Reinforce high quality, citizen-centred services that are consistent, respectful, innovative and accountable

In keeping with the principle of citizen-centred service delivery, the Ministry continued to simplify and streamline the delivery of critical services to make them more accessible for British Columbia's most vulnerable citizens. The Ministry also continued to develop the people, culture and technologies required to deliver critical services to the public.

Strategies

- Continue implementation of the Ministry's performance management framework.
- Continue integration of the Ministry's Values and Service Code with all Ministry activities.

Performance Results

Performance Measure	2007/08 Baseline	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual
Per cent of Ministry services provided to clients that meet or exceed established service standards	N/A	N/A	N/A	To be developed for 2008/09	To be developed for 2008/09

Data Source: Corporate Planning and Operations Division, Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.

Discussion of Results

The Ministry's Service Standards for key ministry services were publicly announced in March 2008. They clearly communicate to citizens what they can expect when accessing ministry services. This measure tracks the Ministry's success in meeting its Service Standards' targets. A higher percentage for this measure indicates that citizens receive more consistent and timely service when interacting with the Ministry. Reporting ministry performance in meeting these targets informs citizens, stakeholders and the Ministry of how well the Ministry is doing in providing key service to clients.

Over the past year, the Ministry has developed and refined its Service Standards based on broad-based staff consultation, a comprehensive review of best practices in other jurisdictions and analysis of the latest Citizen's First findings. This work delayed the initial implementation of the Service Standards. Since information for this performance measure is not yet available, results will be reported in the 2008/09 Annual Service Plan Report.

Objective 1.4: Individuals have access to a fair and timely reconsideration and appeal process

The Employment and Assistance reconsideration and appeal system provided unbiased, fair, timely and transparent decision-making for clients. Clients who disagreed with a ministry reconsideration decision had access to appeal to the independent Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal. In 2007/08, the Ministry collaborated with legal advocates to address issues of concern and improve the reconsideration process for clients.

Strategies

- Introduce new technologies and process improvements, including better informing clients of their rights to reconsideration, to streamline and improve the reconsideration process.

Performance Results

Performance Measure	2003/04 Baseline	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual
Per cent of reconsideration decisions that are made within 10 business days	82%	69%	76%	90%	81% NOT ACHIEVED

Data Source: Legislation and Legal Services Branch, Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.

Discussion of Results

This measure tracks the percentage of reconsideration decisions that were made within the 10-day statutory time limit as set out in the Employment and Assistance Regulation and Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Regulation. It illustrates the degree to which the Ministry is meeting its regulatory obligations in regard to the length of time it takes for a reconsideration decision to be completed. The baseline is the first year the performance measure was included in the Service Plan.

While the performance target was not achieved in 2007/08, the Ministry was successful in reducing the length of time to make reconsideration decisions, with the average being 8.3 days in 2007/08 compared to 9.8 days in 2006/07. Health-related decisions represented a large and growing proportion of reconsideration requests. These decisions were often complex and required additional medical evidence to be submitted and detailed examination of all case materials, which led to delays for some clients.

Ministry Response

In 2007/08, the Ministry introduced regulatory amendments to support the extension of timeframes for reconsideration decisions in some cases. This change allows clients the opportunity to provide additional information to support the request for reconsideration. This change, along with ongoing process and technological improvements, is expected to significantly improve performance on this measure in the future.

Goal 2: Provide low-income persons with disabilities with the best system of support in Canada

The Ministry continues to lead the development of Government's cross ministry Disability Strategy to provide for a flexible, comprehensive, and integrated system of support for all British Columbians with disabilities. The Disability Strategy is working to ensure that the \$4.3 billion the province invests annually in disability supports is effective in improving the social and economic life of persons with disabilities and allowing greater accessibility, opportunity

and inclusion in communities across British Columbia. The Assistant Deputy Minister responsible for the Disability Strategy was recently recognized with a regional Premier's Award for Innovation and Excellence in the category of Leadership.

Performance Results

Performance Measure	2005/06 Baseline	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual
Average time to process new Persons with Disabilities applications	8.9 weeks	8.9 weeks	7.6 weeks	7.5 weeks	2.1 weeks EXCEEDED

Data Source: Provincial Services Branch, Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.

Discussion of Results

This measure evaluates the Ministry's performance in providing a timely and efficient adjudication process for applications for the Persons with Disabilities designation. The speed of adjudication has been identified by disability stakeholder groups as a critical indicator of service quality for persons with disabilities. The baseline is the first year this performance measure was included in the Service Plan.

The Ministry has achieved significant success in providing timelier decisions in 2007/08, with decisions taking just over two weeks on average, exceeding the target of 7.5 weeks. This ongoing trend of more timely service reflects a significant improvement from the mid-1990's when the average adjudication time was 24 weeks. The reduction was achieved through various strategies, including increased staff resources and an improved triage process that identified and expedited cases that involved urgent medical situations or children with disabilities. These and other service and organizational enhancements undertaken within the Ministry's Provincial Services Branch were recognized by the Premier's Award for Innovation and Excellence in the category of Organizational Excellence.

Ministry Response

The Ministry will continue to focus on providing timely decisions on new applications for Persons with Disabilities designation in the future. In response to the Ministry's significant success in providing timelier decisions in 2007/08, more ambitious future-year targets have been established for this measure.

Objective 2.1: Persons with disabilities who seek employment or volunteer opportunities are supported through the revised Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities

Delivered throughout the province by community-based service providers, the Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities provides a range of specialized employment programs to help persons with disabilities realize their goals of part-time and full-time paid employment, self-employment, voluntary employment and greater community involvement. Participation is voluntary and is available to ministry clients and members of the general public with disabilities.

Investments in Employment Services for Persons with Disabilities:

Since 2001, the Ministry has invested \$135 million in specialized employment services for British Columbians with disabilities.

Strategies

- Implement and monitor the revised Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities.

Performance Results

Performance Measure	2002/03 Baseline	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Target	2006/07 Actual
Percentage of persons receiving disability assistance with income from working or a volunteer supplement	13.6%	15.7%	19.5%	21.3%	21.1% SUBSTANTIALLY ACHIEVED

Data Source: Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch, Ministry of Employment of Income Assistance.

Discussion of Results

This measure tracks the Ministry's success in assisting disability assistance clients to realize their goals of employment or volunteering. Employment and volunteering increase community participation, self-reliance and employability among persons with disabilities and, as a result, reduce levels of social isolation. The baseline reflects the Ministry's caseload in March 2003.

Since 2002/03, the percentage of Persons with Disabilities clients with income from working or a volunteer supplement has increased by 7.5 percentage points or 55 per cent. Improvements in this measure were driven



largely by a strong labour market and ministry policies and practices that support disability assistance clients' capacities to work or volunteer such as individualized employment programming and the community volunteer supplement.

The Ministry substantially achieved its 2007/08 target for this measure. The shortfall can be attributed to the increasing number of Persons with Disabilities clients who are leaving disability assistance for employment. It was also affected by the transfer of 2,000 Community Living BC clients to the Ministry's disability assistance caseload. These individuals tend to have lower levels of participation in employment when compared to the disability assistance caseload in general.

Objective 2.2: Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities continues to remove barriers to employment for persons with disabilities through partnerships with business and industry throughout the province

The Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities, with representation from the business community and public, private and education/training sectors, is designed to engage employers in finding concrete solutions to increase the employment, employability and independence of persons with disabilities in British Columbia. In 2007/08, the Minister's Council also worked with the Ministry and employment program service providers in communities across the province to fully engage persons with disabilities in the unique opportunities emerging from the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, including access to world class sporting and arts events, as well as emerging direct and indirect employment opportunities.

Strategies

- Improve linkages among persons with disabilities and the business community, businesses and community-based job placement agencies and service providers.
- Support the Minister's Council's *10 by 10 Challenge* to increase employment for persons with disabilities in communities across the province by 10 per cent by 2010.
- Expand opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate and volunteer in the 2010 events through the Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities and WorkAble Solutions website.
- Assist 2010 Legacies Now in developing sustainable, community-based initiatives focused on sport and recreation, arts, literacy, and volunteerism.

Objective 2.3: Develop and implement a comprehensive and integrated system of support and services for persons with disabilities

The Government has made the development of a comprehensive and integrated system of support and services for persons with disabilities a key priority. Through the Disability Strategy, the Ministry will provide new and simplified solutions to ensure that disability supports and services are more accessible and more responsive to those who they serve.

Strategies

- Lead, in collaboration with partner social development ministries, the alignment of eligibility criteria for government's disability supports and services.
- Simplify the Persons with Disabilities designation application and adjudication processes.
- Streamline processes for children with disabilities or special needs to ensure a smooth transition of services from children's programs to adult programs.
- Work to ensure that the Workable Solutions website continues to meet Web Accessibility Initiative standards.



Goal 3: Support integrated service delivery through cross ministry services that provide disadvantaged British Columbians with supports that are responsive to their unique needs

The Ministry plays an important role in the collaborative effort of ministries, other levels of government and community organizations to successfully integrate income support, housing, health, education and employment services for disadvantaged British Columbians.

Objective 3.1: Provide homeless British Columbians with community-based support services in collaboration with the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions

As a member of the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions, the Ministry is a partner in developing a comprehensive approach to addressing homelessness in British Columbia. Outreach programs continued to be expanded in urban and rural communities across the province to connect homeless individuals and those at risk of homelessness with income assistance and safe shelter, often on the same day.

Strategies

- Explore alternative approaches to dual diagnosis clients with the Solicitor General, BC Housing, and the Ministry of Health.
- Continue to support the development and implementation of recommendations from the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions.
- Expand the Vancouver Downtown East Side's Housing Integrated Task Team model, targeting unscrupulous landlords, to other communities across the province.
- Expand outreach programs in communities across the province to assist potential clients that are homeless, in medical care or in correctional facilities.
- Continue to develop and implement an Inter-ministry Strategy for Mentally Disordered Offenders.
- Continue to support the Vancouver Agreement until March 2008.

Objective 3.2: Support the development of common systems and information sharing among social sector ministries to improve service delivery and enhance client outcomes

Ministry clients often require the services and supports provided by other ministries, including Health, Children and Family Development, and Education. New inter-ministry data sharing processes that respect the confidential nature of personal information and comply with information and privacy legislation are critical for developing effectively integrated programs and ensuring that clients receive better service from government.

Strategies

- Work with the Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services and the Ministry of Children and Family Development on a case management system that will facilitate an integrated and citizen-centred approach to service delivery.
- Complete Data-matching project with the Ministry of Health to assess client use of the medical system.
- Partner with the Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addiction to evaluate client outcomes associated with the Drug Treatment Court of Vancouver.
- Assess the impact of pre-release programs on income assistance dependency in support of an inter-ministry strategy for mentally-disordered offenders.
- Monitor information and systems to ensure proper safeguards and appropriate usage of personal information as well as strict adherence to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Objective 3.3: Improve the employment and literacy supports available to Aboriginal people through collaboration with Aboriginal organizations and other Ministry stakeholders, ministries and governments

In support of the B.C. Government's New Relationship with Aboriginal people and the goals identified in the Transformative Change Accord, the Ministry continued to liaise with Aboriginal organizations to identify social, education and economic opportunities for Aboriginal citizens.

Strategies

- Work with Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement holders to provide Aboriginal persons with targeted employment programming.
- Complete the mapping of personal supports programs and services delivered or funded by the provincial, federal and First Nations governments and Aboriginal organizations to determine options for integration.
- Work with Aboriginal community on the development and implementation of the Aboriginal Self-Identifier Project.



Objective 3.4: Link clients with the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts' ActNow BC initiative which addresses the risk factors of physical inactivity, tobacco use, obesity, poor nutrition and alcohol use during pregnancy

The Ministry played an important role in supporting ActNow BC, a comprehensive health promotion program designed to support individuals and communities in protecting and improving their wellness. Ministry clients were provided with supports that promote good nutrition and a physically active lifestyle, including natal nutritional supplements and camp fees for children.

Strategies

- Provide natal nutritional supplements, Christmas supplements, camp and recreation fees, and Healthy Kids optical and dental coverage for children in low and moderate-income families.
- Increase awareness of the Healthy Kids and other health-promotion programs to encourage financial independence for low and moderate-income families.

Healthy Kids:

In 2007/08, the Healthy Kids program provided dental services to 61,787 children and optical services to 9,887 children for total program expenditures of almost \$19 million.



Objective 3.5: Contribute to government's effort to maximize the physical intellectual, social and emotional potential of the province's children

Providing children with the opportunities to succeed requires the involvement of families, communities and all levels of government. In 2007/08, the Ministry continued to provide specialized supplementary assistance to assist with the health, dental and educational needs of children and invested in targeted programs to support children in low-income families.

Strong Start:

The Ministry provided funding for bus passes for three months to 700 families with preschool-aged children to attend their local StrongStart BC early learning centres — an investment of \$150,000.

Strategies

Provide a suite of supplementary assistance, including a School Start-Up Supplement, and higher rates of support to clients with children.

Goal 4: Provide employment programming that is flexible in meeting individual client needs to achieve sustainable employment

Employment is the key to improving short- and long-term outcomes for many clients. The BC Employment Program, Community Assistance Program, Bridging Employment Program and Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities are designed to ensure there is a high degree of flexibility available to tailor services to meet the needs of individual clients.

Performance Results

Performance Measure	2006/07 Baseline	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual
Percentage of BC Employment Program clients who achieve \$560 or 70 hours per month	23%	N/A	23%	25%	30% EXCEEDED

Data Source: Employment Programs Management Branch, Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.

Discussion of Results

Assisting clients to find employment and achieve independence is a critical aspect of the Ministry's work. This measure gauges the success of the Ministry's commitment to assisting those clients who are able and Expected to Work to achieve independence through employment. The baseline is the year in which the BC Employment Program was introduced.

The Ministry exceeded its target for this measure in 2007/08. This strong performance can be attributed to the continued strength of the provincial labour market, ministry policies and programs that encourage employable clients to find employment and the introduction of new performance and outcome focused employment programming.



Objective 4.1: Job ready clients will be assisted to reach independence as quickly as possible

Expected to Work clients are supported to achieve financial independence through the BC Employment Program, which is delivered by three prime contractors in nine service delivery bundles across the province, with 82 sub-contractors, forming an extensive service delivery network with in-depth knowledge of community labour markets. The BC Employment Program offers flexible and individualized employment programming to meet the unique needs of clients through three main components: Client Intake; Directed Work Search; and Individualized Services and Supports such as life-skills coaching, short-term certificate training and employment services.

Back-to-School Starter Kits:

In 2007/08, the Ministry provided funding for 1,500 Adult Basic Education Back-to-School Starter Kits for income assistance clients who are committed to upgrading their education. The Ministry encourages employable clients to upgrade their education in the evening or part-time.

Strategies

- Monitor client outcomes relating to the new BC Employment Program.

Objective 4.2: Invest in clients with barriers to help them progress towards sustainable employment

The Ministry recognizes that some clients face significant barriers and are less ready to engage in employment for a variety of reasons. In 2007/08, the Ministry offered a variety of specialized life skills programming to assist these clients in enhancing their quality of life and participation in their communities, including the Community Assistance Program and the Bridging Employment Program.

Strategies

- Monitor the revised Community Assistance Program.

Life Skills Programming:

In 2007/08, 6,000 multi-barriered clients were assisted by the Community Assistance Program, which offers personal counseling, life-skills programming and connections to external community services. Another 600 clients were assisted through the Bridging Employment Program, which provides training, counseling and supports to women who have experienced violence or abuse.

Report on Resources

Resource Summary Table

	Estimated	Actual	Variance
Operating Expenses (\$000)			
Employment Programs	97,867	91,833	(6,034)
Temporary Assistance	358,180	355,356	(2,824)
Disability Assistance	732,884	723,766	(9,118)
Supplementary Assistance	263,809	278,580	14,771
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	2,070	1,665	(405)
Executive and Support Services	24,718	25,786	1,068
Total	1,479,528	1,476,986	(2,542)
Full-time Equivalents (FTEs)			
Employment Programs	302	280	(22)
Temporary Assistance	514	484	(30)
Disability Assistance	592	578	(14)
Supplementary Assistance	312	298	(14)
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	14	12	(2)
Executive and Support Services	239	224	(15)
Total	1,973	1,876	(97)
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)			
Executive and Support Services	17,595	3,869	(13,726)
Total	17,595	3,869	(13,726)

Employment Programs: The under-expenditure of \$6.0 million or 6.2 per cent reflects a lower than forecast enrolment in the BC Employment Program and Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities. The Ministry's redesign of these programs was undertaken in anticipation of this trend and the new revised programs are expected to expand the service offering available to the Ministry's more barriered clients.

Supplementary Assistance: The over-expenditure of \$14.8 million or 5.6 per cent is the result of investing in new complementary supports and services.

Annual Service Plan Report Appendices

Appendix A: Services Map



<p>MEIA Regions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 - Vancouver Island 2 - Vancouver Coastal 3 - Fraser 4 - Interior 5 - North 	<p>Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● EIA & PLMS Services EIA Services 	<p>* PLMS Services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevention & Loss Management Services (loss management initiatives, fraud investigations, prevention strategies) 	<p>Call Centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kamloops and Prince George 	
<p>Additional Services</p> <p>Delivered Through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Government Agent + Trusted Third Party 		<p>* EIA Services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment Programs Temporary Assistance Disability Assistance Supplementary Assistance 	<p>After Hours Office:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vancouver 	
			<p>Regional Offices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victoria, Nanaimo, Vancouver Kamloops, Kelowna, Surrey, and Prince George 	
				<p>Prepared by: MEIA - SPRB Jun 4, 2008</p>

Appendix B: Ministry Contact Information

To find the local Ministry office that provides services for a particular community, go to:
www.eia.gov.bc.ca/contacts/index.htm.

Service BC can also refer callers to the appropriate Ministry office and transfer callers free of charge. Hours of operation for Service BC are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. — Monday through Friday, excluding statutory holidays.

In Victoria call: 250 387-6121

In Vancouver call: 604 660-2421

Elsewhere in B.C. call: 1 800 663-7867

Outside British Columbia call: 1 604 660-2421

E-mail address: EnquiryBC@gov.bc.ca

Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD)

In Vancouver call: 604 775-0303

Elsewhere in B.C. call: 1 800 661-8773

Regional Service Delivery Offices

Region 1, Vancouver Island

100 — Vancouver Island Regional Office Victoria

East Wing - 4th Floor – 908 Pandora Avenue

PO Box 9956 Stn Prov Govt

Victoria BC V8V 3P3

Telephone: 250 387-9606

Facsimile: 250 387-9566

E-mail: OFF100@gov.bc.ca

100 — Vancouver Island Regional Office Nanaimo

2nd Floor - 6475 Metral Drive

Nanaimo BC V9T 2L9

Telephone: 250 390-6254

Facsimile: 250 390-6260

E-mail: OFF199@gov.bc.ca

Region 2, Vancouver Coastal

200 — Vancouver Coastal Regional Office
910 - 360 West Georgia Street
Vancouver BC V6B 6B2
Telephone: 604 660-3224
Facsimile: 604 660-2503
E-mail: OFF200@gov.bc.ca

Region 3, Fraser

300 — Fraser Regional Office
1800 - 13450 102nd Avenue
Surrey BC V3T 5X3
Telephone: 604 586-2992
Facsimile: 604 586-2681
E-mail: OFF300@gov.bc.ca

Region 4, Interior

400 — Kelowna Interior Regional Office
301 - 1726 Dolphin Avenue
Kelowna BC V1Y 9R9
Telephone: 250 717-2040
Facsimile: 250 717-2038
E-mail: OFF400@gov.bc.ca

400 — Kamloops Interior Regional Office
300 - 619 Victoria Street
Kamloops BC V2C 6W7
Telephone: 250 828-4600
Facsimile: 250 828-4614
E-mail: OFF400@gov.bc.ca

Region 5, North

500 — North Regional Office
404 - 299 Victoria Street
Prince George BC V2L 5B8
Telephone: 250 565-6220
Facsimile: 250 565-6366
E-mail: OFF500@gov.bc.ca

Appendix C: Additional Information

The following supplemental information can be found at www.eia.gov.bc.ca/publicat/REPORTS/annrpts.htm:

- Service Code and Organizational Values;
- Service Standards; and
- Performance Measures Methodologies.