

March 4, 2025

BACKGROUND

Making communities stronger, safer

Everyone in B.C. deserves a safe community to call home and timely access to justice. Budget 2025 invests \$325 million in new funding over three years to provide housing options for people living outdoors and resolve encampments, to address public safety concerns about robbery, shoplifting and other property crimes, to provide more resources to law enforcement to fight crime, and to build capacity in the legal system to ensure timely access to justice and to continue to support other public safety programs.

Closing encampments and supporting those most vulnerable

Budget 2025 provides an additional \$90 million over three years to expand the Homeless Encampment Action Response Team (HEART) and Homeless Encampment Action Response Temporary Housing (HEARTH) programs into new communities.

These programs work with local governments and First Nations, non-profit organizations and health-care providers to connect people living outdoors and in encampments with better access to support services, shelter and housing options so they can move inside and encampments can close.

Since 2023, BC Housing has partnered with 10 municipalities to open 15 HEARTH sites throughout the province, for a total of 611 temporary supportive homes or shelter beds. This includes sites in Abbotsford, Campbell River, Chilliwack, Duncan, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Prince George, Vancouver and Victoria.

Keeping communities safe

Budget 2025 provides \$235 million in new investments to keep people and communities safe through justice and public safety programs.

New funding of \$24 million will help improve timely access to justice, including increased capacity at the B.C. Supreme Court and enhanced security at the Vancouver Provincial Court at 222 Main St. in Vancouver. It will also continue the expansion of virtual bail, improving access to justice and community safety.

Budget 2025 also provides \$15 million over three years in new funding to support assistance for victims, immediate family members and witnesses, as well as \$24 million for the BC Coroners Service, electronic supervision under BC Corrections and increased fire inspections.

Providing resources for law enforcement and training more officers

Additional funding of \$67 million over three years will go toward community safety programs, including a new Community Safety and Targeted Enforcement Program pilot that will target robbery, shoplifting and other property crimes, providing police with tools to tackle street disorder and support safer downtowns and commercial areas in communities throughout B.C.

The Province is continuing to invest in the Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative program and the Special Investigation and Targeted Enforcement Program. These programs help provide co-ordinated response teams made up of police, prosecutors and probation officers to respond to repeat, violent offenders.

Budget 2025 provides new funding for the Justice Institute of B.C. that will expand police academy training capacity from 192 to 288 officers per year.

Additional funding of \$104 million over three years will go toward policing programs, including the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program, and for negotiated wage increases for provincial RCMP detachments. It will also support the National Body Worn Camera Program initiated in 2024 to improve transparency and accountability.

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