



TogetherBC

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



TOGETHERBC | 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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Message from the Minister

It is my pleasure to present the 2020 Annual Report on *TogetherBC*, British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy.

2020 was an unprecedented and incredibly challenging year. In January, and in the early days of the pandemic, no one could predict that a year and a half later we would still be grappling with a global health crisis.

While COVID-19 has affected all our lives, the biggest impacts have been felt by our most vulnerable populations and those living in poverty. Many seniors and single people were isolated, families struggled with child care and new working arrangements and people who rely on community social services were faced with new barriers.

Despite the uncertainty, I am proud of the swift action all levels of government took to help limit the impact of COVID-19. Throughout 2020 governments worked together to support people in their communities. They supported organizations to pivot their services to new delivery models to meet both existing and emerging needs. Of particular focus was ensuring key in-person services could remain open safely, such as child care, schools and community supports.

The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction kept all its community offices open so people accessing services could continue to receive supports.

We also implemented the \$300 per month temporary COVID-19 crisis supplement from April to December to support those in need. To protect our most vulnerable, governments worked together to move hundreds of people living in encampments in Vancouver and Victoria into safe, indoor accommodations.

In addition to reporting on the actions taken by the Province, communities and non-profit organizations to reduce poverty in 2020, this report includes progress on our legislated targets.

According to Statistics Canada data, in 2019 B.C. has met its targets by reducing the overall poverty rate by 29.4 per cent and the child poverty rate by 57.6 per cent from 2016. This means 81,000 fewer children were living in poverty.

While we are pleased our efforts resulted in this progress, we know that these numbers do not reflect the impact of COVID-19 and that it will take years to understand the pandemic's lasting impact. There is much more work to do, including reducing the depth of poverty, improving the lives of marginalized populations and fostering equity. And importantly, we are continuing to work on our commitments regarding reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.



NICHOLAS SIMONS

Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee Commentary

In this second annual report from the Province of British Columbia, readers will find comprehensive accounts of the real progress made in 2020 to reduce poverty in our communities.

There is a lot to digest and much to be pleased about: the report serves as a fulsome account of an all-of-government approach to poverty reduction.

LEGISLATED TARGETS

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.

CONTINUED PROGRESS AND TARGETS MET

In Canada, poverty lines are based on Statistics Canada's Market Basket Measure (MBM) of consumption needs, which is revised every 10 years based on current consumption patterns. The MBM was recently revised to a 2018 consumption base and so we report on estimated poverty rates using this MBM2018.¹

In B.C., the poverty rate among all persons in 2016 was 15.3 per cent. By 2019, that rate had dropped to 10.8 per cent. So, by 2019, the overall poverty rate had decreased 29 per cent from its 2016 level.

The child poverty rate in B.C., that of persons aged under 18, was 17 per cent in 2016. By 2019, the child poverty rate had dropped to 7.2 per cent. So, by 2019, the child poverty rate had decreased 58 per cent from its 2016 level.

¹ The change from the 2008 consumption base (MBM2008) to the 2018 consumption base (MBM2018) makes a difference to estimated poverty reductions. The first annual report cited reported a 26 per cent reduction in the poverty rate among all persons and a 43 per cent reduction in the child poverty rate over 2016 to 2018, using the MBM2008. In comparison, using the MBM2018, we see a 21 per cent reduction in the poverty rate among all persons and a 36 per cent reduction in the child poverty rate over 2016 to 2018. However, the two sets of estimates are close to each other.

These changes in poverty statistics were life-changing for hundreds of thousands of people. This represents 185,000 British Columbians moving out of poverty, including 81,000 children. We are very pleased to report that the Province of British Columbia met (and exceeded) its legislated targets of poverty reduction.

COMPARATIVE PROGRESS

The Government of Canada has undertaken substantial nationwide poverty reduction measures since 2015, especially through increasing benefits delivered through the Canada Child Benefit and the public pension system (mainly, Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement). To put B.C. progress in context, it is helpful to consider it in comparison to the reduction in poverty seen in Canada as a whole.

In 2016, the poverty rate among all persons in Canada (MBM2018) was 12.8 per cent and by 2019, that poverty rate had dropped to 10.1 per cent, a proportionate reduction of 21 per cent. Over the same period, the poverty rate among all persons in B.C. fell by 29 per cent. Similarly, over 2016 to 2019, the child poverty rate in Canada as a whole fell by 31 per cent. Over the same period, the child poverty rate in B.C. fell by 58 per cent. British Columbia has also benefitted from provincial policies to reduce poverty.

POLICY APPROACHES IN B.C.

Following, readers will find many and diverse efforts at the provincial policy level that address a broad range of poverty effects. Some highlights we think particularly noteworthy:

- » The continued commitment to the staged increases in minimum wage, with a significant increase mid-year, in spite of the other significant and unexpected financial draws.
- » The investments in social housing, particularly in the urban centres of Victoria and Vancouver, which must be sustained to address the housing crisis.
- » B.C.'s continued investments in child care that are helping move us toward the high quality universal system that families need.

While the government can and should feel very good about these and many other initiatives in this report, there is more to be done. After filling glaring gaps in social policies as the first order of business, the efforts of government can now shift from programmatic and necessarily responsive programs to a proactive and comprehensive poverty reduction strategy.

And, while last year we congratulated the Province on its adoption by legislation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People in November 2019, efforts at fulfilling its commitments continue to be challenging particularly relating to legislation drafting and the process of full engagement/consultation. By government's own account in its annual report, little visible progress has been made on the alignment of laws, and there are not yet clear public measures of progress, nor an accountability process. We know from all our work to get a poverty reduction strategy in place for B.C. how very important it is to set clear targets and timelines.

And then there was COVID-19. In our remarks last year, we were able to foreshadow the effects that the accelerating pandemic may have on poverty reduction efforts. We have learned so much from the responses to the pandemic, and we've seen how quickly and collaboratively everyone can move in the face of a crisis when everyone feels under the same threat.

Indeed, COVID-19 seemed, at first, like the great leveller of threat. But a year out, we know that is not the case, and that people living in poverty — and most particularly racialized and Indigenous people, and people living with disabilities — fared far worse in the pandemic, with more hospitalizations and deaths than other folks. We also know that single mothers of young children were particularly hard hit by reduced employment.

COVID-19 was not a leveller, and while the stress on all communities brought out the best (and quick actions), it also brought out the worst behaviour in some folks. The origins of the virus remain unknown but unfortunate racist framing surfaced an insidious but largely subterranean anti-Asian racism into daily life, elders were accosted on the street, and monuments defiled.

The Province responded with a number of anti-racism efforts and supported new programs, including supporting the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network and renewed support for the BC Multiculturalism Grants, with funds allocated to initiatives led by people of colour/racialized people. We believe the links between poverty and equity-seeking/racialized groups are proven and abundantly clear, and that poverty reduction needs to be through a lens of anti-racism and inclusion in order to be meaningful and to work.

One of the great lessons learned in the pandemic is that when there is political, community and collective will, there are ways (and means). Where previously it seemed next-to-impossible to change government policy or develop substantive new programs to help hard-pressed populations, everything seemed (at first) possible during the pandemic and our responses to it: communities mobilized, businesses pivoted and governments acted quickly and decisively.

The provincial government had a great starting platform. The *Poverty Reduction Strategy Act* advanced by this government had received the unanimous approval of the Legislature in late 2018.

B.C. now responded to the pandemic with a broad range of pandemic responses, some of which had a direct positive effect on people living in poverty. For example, where the government had previously stalled at a more significant increase in welfare rates than it had already provided, a \$300/month supplement was suddenly and automatically available in April and carried through all year.

At the same time, the B.C. government announced it would give every eligible British Columbian the COVID-19 Recovery Benefit. Single people were eligible to receive up to \$500 and families were able to receive up to \$1,000. B.C. is the only province in Canada that took this action. The addition of these programs, and other measures to help with the pandemic, including the removal of barriers that allowed for greater access to supports and programs, had great positive impacts on both program users and the staff who delivered them. All of this has made a real difference in morale.

We note that the former Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, the Honourable Shane Simpson, retired from politics and ended an important chapter in his political life. It was under his leadership that B.C. finally established a poverty reduction strategy, which is also the most ambitious strategy in a Canadian jurisdiction. We wholeheartedly thank Shane for his unflagging service to the people of B.C., and for the authenticity of his efforts and aspirations. The work was taken over mid-year by new Minister Nicholas Simons, and we look forward to working with him to continue efforts to eliminate poverty in B.C. We are also grateful to the excellent team of Ministry staff, who have been untiring and unfailing in their support to this Committee: thank you!

And, knowing now that an equity and justice lens must always be embraced, the provincial government can take the high road, here and now, to bring into effect meaningful programs and policies that really address depth of poverty in our communities. Rigorous attention to getting it right in Indigenous and racialized communities, by listening to and taking its lead from those communities, will be demanded.

Respectfully submitted,

POVERTY REDUCTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- » Catherine Ludgate (Chair)
- » Sarah Brownlee
- » Cheryl Casimer
- » Zahra Esmail
- » Murry Krause
- » Rosanna McGregor
- » Brad Mills
- » Adrienne Montani
- » Tabitha Naismith
- » Krishna Pendakur
- » Lissa Smith
- » Stephanie Smith
- » Caitlin Wright

POST SCRIPT (JULY 2021):

While we (settler society) may have avoided looking in the past, despite requests and evidence, we cannot now unsee what has just happened: the finding of three unmarked mass gravesites of approximately one thousand Indigenous children, attached to residential schools, two here in B.C., and the start of searches for others, with funding support from the provincial government.

The systematic elimination of Indigenous people and their nations, through government policy and actions, must be faced squarely and embraced. Before Reconciliation, Truth.

Introduction

2020 was a challenging year for British Columbians, and the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact people in profound and unprecedented ways. Pre-existing inequities have been exacerbated and vulnerable and marginalized populations have been disproportionately affected by the social and economic impacts of the pandemic.

Systemic racism has also been magnified and continues to permeate throughout communities. At the same time, B.C. has faced dual public health emergencies as the opioid crisis continues to take lives at a devastating rate due to a toxic illicit drug supply.

TogetherBC – B.C.'s first poverty reduction strategy – has helped guide the Province's efforts to ensure the COVID-19 response and economic recovery works for everyone. An unprecedented response from the provincial and federal governments helped mitigate the early impacts of the pandemic, particularly on the most vulnerable citizens.

The Province provided key pandemic income supports to British Columbians, including the B.C. Emergency Benefit for Workers, and temporary supplements to income and disability assistance clients and low-income seniors.

The Province also provided \$7.8 million in emergency funding for Aboriginal Friendship Centres, housed over 600 people who were living in encampments in Victoria and Vancouver, and allocated \$3 million to Food Banks BC to address immediate food security needs.

The Province has also continued to build on the key actions outlined in *TogetherBC* to address the root causes of poverty, including income inequality, housing instability and lack of child care.

The Province committed to increasing earnings exemptions for all income and disability assistance clients to maximize their earnings and increased the minimum wage from \$13.85 to \$14.60 on June 1, 2020.

The B.C. Child Opportunity Benefit, implemented in October 2020, provides families with up to \$1,600 per year for the first child, \$1,000 for the second child and \$800 for each additional child under the age of 18.

Hundreds of units of supportive, transition and community housing were also built with thousands more planned; and as of September 2020, more than 20,000 child care spaces had been funded through Childcare BC's space-creation initiatives.

Throughout 2020, the province continued to embrace *TogetherBC*'s guiding principles of social inclusion, reconciliation, opportunity and affordability. This work continued to be done together – through collaboration with community organizations, Indigenous communities, and all orders of government.

The 2020 Annual Report demonstrates that, even in difficult times, having a guiding strategy results in better outcomes for all British Columbians.

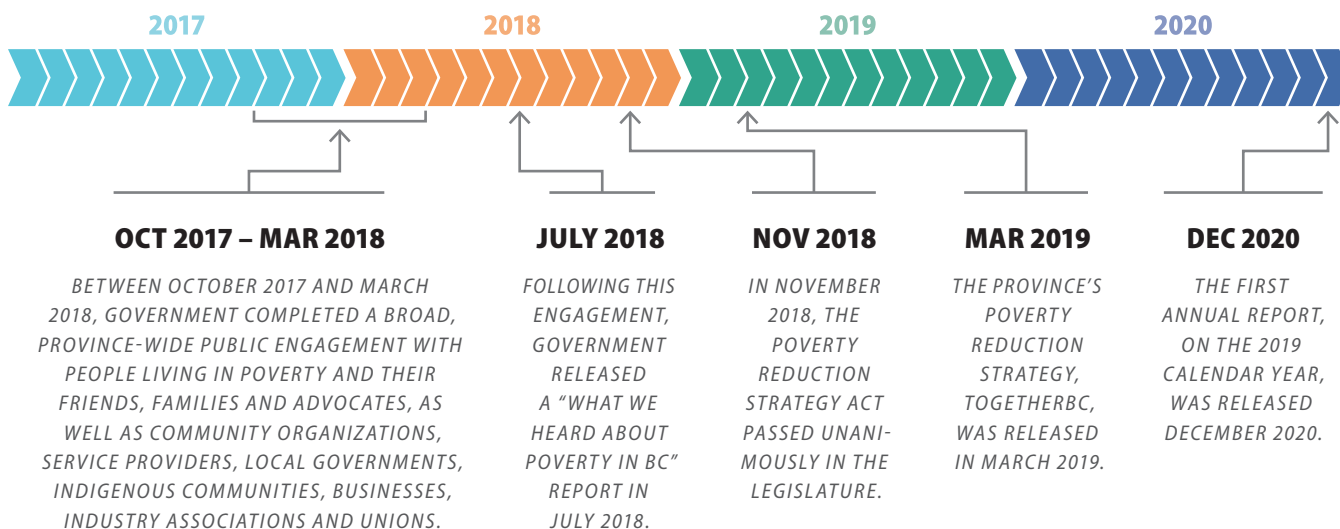
B.C.'s Poverty Reduction Framework

Before the development of *TogetherBC*, B.C. had one of the highest rates of poverty in Canada, with 15.3 per cent of the population living in poverty, many of them employed.

In 2016, there were 707,000 people living below the poverty line in B.C. – 141,000 of them children. At that time, British Columbia was the only province that had never developed a poverty reduction strategy.

In Fall 2017, the government began work on developing the province's first poverty reduction strategy.

TIMELINE OF POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND REPORTING



The *Poverty Reduction Strategy Act* (the Act), passed unanimously by the British Columbia legislature in November 2018, laid an important foundation for the strategy.

The Act outlines four guiding principles, six priority action areas, 13 key population groups, and requires a number of commitments for the strategy to uphold.

The Act also legislates two important poverty reduction targets for British Columbia.

B.C.'S LEGISLATED POVERTY REDUCTION FRAMEWORK

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

- » Reduce the overall poverty rate by 25 per cent by 2024; and
- » Reduce the child (under 18) poverty rate by 50 per cent by 2024.

REPORTING – ANNUAL REPORT MUST BE PRODUCED BY OCTOBER 1, OF EACH YEAR, AND MUST REPORT ON:

- » The actions taken to implement the strategy;
- » The effects of the strategy on poverty reduction; and
- » Progress made towards the targets.

SIX PRIORITY ACTION AREAS:

- » Housing; families, children and youth; education; employment; income supports and social supports.

FOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- » Affordability;
- » Opportunity;
- » Social Inclusion; and
- » Reconciliation.

MINISTER'S POVERTY REDUCTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MUST INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE FOLLOWING GROUPS, OF WHICH 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; and
- » Persons living in rural and remote communities.

STRATEGY MUST BE UPDATED AT LEAST EVERY 5 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; and
- » Persons of colour.

Measuring Our Progress

B.C.'S POVERTY REDUCTION TARGETS

TogetherBC aims to achieve two ambitious targets: reduce B.C.'s overall poverty rate by 25 per cent and the child poverty rate by 50 per cent by 2024.

These goals were set using the Market Basket Measure, Canada's Official Poverty Line. The Market Basket Measure (MBM) reflects the cost of a 'basket' of goods and services representing a modest, basic standard of living in Canada.

The MBM includes five components: costs for food, clothing, transportation, shelter and other expenses. The MBM is updated annually to reflect changes in the prices of the goods and services in the basket.

Statistics Canada periodically updates the basket to reflect changes in what is considered necessary for citizens to have a basic standard of living. Data on B.C.'s poverty rates take two years to become available from Statistics Canada.

When the Act was established in 2018 B.C. used 2016 as the baseline year for measuring the number of people living below the poverty line, as that was the most current data at the time. For this report on 2020, 2019 data is being used. The report also uses the new MBM 2018-base data, rather than the 2008-base data that was available in 2016.

PROGRESS ON POVERTY

POVERTY RATE TRENDS AND RANKINGS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

	ALL PERSONS	CHILDREN
2016	15.3%	17.0%
2018	12.1%	10.9%
2019	10.8%	7.2%
% Change 2016 – 2019	-29.4% ↓	-57.6% ↓

According to the 2019 MBM statistics, B.C. has now met both targets. Between 2016 and 2019, 185,000 fewer people were living in poverty, including 81,000 fewer children. The overall poverty rate dropped from 15.3 per cent in 2016 to 10.8 per cent in 2019 – a reduction of 29.4 per cent. Most notable, the child poverty rate went from 17 per cent in 2016 to 7.2 per cent in 2019 – a reduction of 57.6 per cent. Deep poverty – the percentage of people living below 75 per cent of the MBM threshold has also fallen, from 8.7 per cent in 2016 to 5 per cent in 2019 for all persons. For children under 18, deep poverty decreased from 8.1 per cent in 2016 to 2.6 per cent in 2019. However, these numbers do not reflect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic that began in March 2020.

The decline in poverty since 2016 is related to provincial investments and a strong economy: however, the largest contributor was the federal Canada Child Benefit. This progress has also been steady; between 2018 and 2019 the overall poverty rate dropped from 12.1 per cent to 10.8 per cent and the child poverty rate dropped from 10.9 per cent to 7.2 per cent.

Despite these successes, more work is needed to address poverty for specific populations experiencing higher rates of poverty, including Indigenous people and people with disabilities. More work is also needed to reduce the depth of poverty. The average person living in poverty has an income that only meets 67.7 per cent of the MBM threshold; we anticipate that through *TogetherBC* this will improve to 75 per cent by 2024.

A NOTE ON CORE POVERTY INDICATORS

The 2019 Annual Report included a range of indicators to show B.C.'s progress at reducing poverty, including areas such as food insecurity, homelessness and early childhood development. Due to COVID-19, data from several sources has been delayed. These delays, coupled with the fact that several of the indicators used in the 2019 Annual Report are only available every few years, meant that the 2020 Annual Report focuses more on stories of success and resilience during the pandemic and less on statistical data. In future reports, data will be included as it becomes available.

The Impacts of COVID-19 on Poverty Reduction

The pandemic has affected the lives of British Columbians in every way and has been particularly challenging for marginalized and vulnerable populations. Many of the key programs that British Columbians depend on were forced to suspend or drastically reduce services, or pivot to new delivery models. In the early days of the pandemic, persons with disabilities were challenged in accessing the services they rely on, food banks closed leaving low-income families and seniors in need of meals, and shelters needed to turn away people experiencing homelessness due to reduced capacity limits to meet physical distancing requirements. As the pandemic continued, these vital services developed innovative solutions to meet needs and implemented new delivery models to align with Provincial Health Officer orders, although challenges in delivering and accessing key services remained for many.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES & COMMUNITIES

As a result of colonial history, policies and practices, COVID-19 has impacted Indigenous peoples in unique, challenging and disproportionate ways.

Before the pandemic, Indigenous communities experienced lack of access to housing, healthcare and essential services. Indigenous individuals also face a higher prevalence of cardiovascular disease, arthritis, diabetes, obesity and asthma. COVID-19 magnified these existing health, racial and social inequities, placing people and communities at high risk of COVID-19 outbreaks.

Prior to the pandemic, Indigenous communities, particularly in rural and remote areas, faced critical infrastructure barriers, including transportation and technology (e.g., high internet costs, limited bandwidth and access to computers). When the pandemic began, these barriers were exacerbated and had serious negative impacts on people's ability to connect with family, friends, school, work, healthcare and other vital services. Elders, people with disabilities and people with mental health and substance use challenges were further impacted within Indigenous communities.

EMPLOYMENT

COVID-19 caused a significant disruption to the labour market immediately after it was declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020. Employment in B.C. dropped by 410,000 people between February and April, and although employment improved throughout the rest of the year, it would take until March 2021 to return to pre-pandemic levels.²

As a result, the improvements in the unemployment rate seen from 2016 to 2019 were reversed. After decreasing from 6 per cent in 2016 to 4.7 per cent in 2019, the unemployment rate increased to 9 per cent in 2020 — an increase of 90 per cent since 2019.

The pandemic impacted populations in the labour market differently. Youth (aged 15-24) experienced the largest decline in employment, down 36 per cent between February and April. In comparison, core age workers (aged 25-54) experienced a 13 per cent drop in employment and older workers (aged 55+) experienced an 11 per cent decline.

The biggest job losses were experienced in the accommodation and food services industry and in the wholesale and retail trade industry. These industries have high rates of part-time workers and lower wages, with jobs often held by women and immigrants. An increase in the minimum wage in June 2020 and temporary pandemic pay increases resulted in a modest increase in average hourly wages in 2020, although workers, employers and the economy as a whole struggled to find stability throughout the year.

WOMEN

The pandemic also impacted women to a greater extent than men. Women's employment dropped by 17 per cent compared to 14 per cent for men, with single mothers of young children experiencing some of the highest unemployment rates. In addition to higher unemployment, many women also experienced the increased burden of child care and home-schooling during school closures.

² Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0287-01 Labour force characteristics, monthly, seasonally adjusted and trend-cycle, last 5 months (x 1,000)

Gender-based violence was also a primary concern throughout the pandemic as women have become more isolated, with fewer opportunities to connect with their communities in times of need. Calls to Vancouver-based Battered Women's Support Services' crisis line more than doubled during the first month of the pandemic (from 50 to 110 in a given day).

POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON POVERTY

The effects of COVID-19 in B.C. will begin appearing in the poverty rate data released in 2022 and will take several years to fully comprehend. While the impact on the labour market was significant, provincial and federal pandemic support benefits helped offset the immediate negative financial impacts of the pandemic for many affected British Columbians. On the other hand, the cost of living — particularly the cost of food and shelter — was higher in 2020 when compared to 2019.

Over 1.1 million British Columbians applied for federal pandemic support benefits (Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB)) providing \$500 per week (for up to 28 weeks for CERB and 54 weeks for CRB). Additional benefits were provided to students, Indigenous communities, seniors and persons with disabilities. The Province provided two one-time benefits to support British Columbians through the pandemic: the B.C. Emergency Benefit for Workers and the BC Recovery Benefit. The Emergency Benefit for Workers provided a tax-free \$1,000 payment to B.C. residents whose ability to work was affected due to COVID-19, and the BC Recovery Benefit (starting in December 2020) provided a tax-free payment of up to \$1,000 for eligible families and single parents and up to \$500 for eligible individuals. In addition, the province provided a temporary supplement of \$300 per month (to singles and families in receipt of income or disability assistance or the provincial senior's supplement).

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE

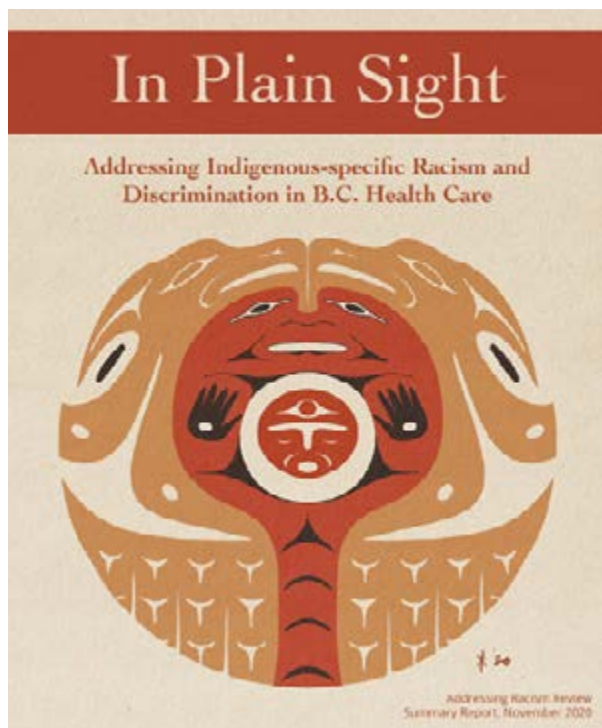
COVID-19 and the response measures increased social isolation and stress for many and made it harder for those without access to technology to obtain mental health care. Many Canadians have reported worse mental health outcomes compared to before the pandemic. British Columbians who were vulnerable or marginalized before the pandemic were at greater risk of mental health impacts during 2020.

Despite increased funding in 2020 to address the mental health impacts of the pandemic, an increasingly toxic drug supply in B.C. resulted in fatal and non-fatal overdoses reaching new heights. In 2020, 1,728 lives were lost because of illicit drugs, up 744 from 2019. An increase in the levels of fentanyl and carfentanil, plus the addition of new substances, have made the drug supply both more toxic and more resistant to standard treatments like naloxone.

RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

Racialized populations have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and have been overrepresented in COVID-19 cases. Incidents of hate speech and violence have increased towards religious and racial minorities with anti-Asian racism increasing disproportionately. Asian women, especially those living in urban centres, are most often the direct targets. In Vancouver alone, anti-Asian hate crimes increased almost 900 per cent in 2020 compared to the previous year.

Racism and discrimination towards Indigenous people within British Columbia's healthcare system was also highlighted by the report *In Plain Sight*³, released in November.



³ <https://bit.ly/2WZ8zms>

The report details widespread systemic racism against Indigenous people resulting in a range of negative impacts, harm and even death. The report found discrimination at point of care negatively affects access to health care, and less access to health care leads to poor outcomes. In the context of COVID-19, these findings show how racism and discrimination impact care, or create barriers to care, for those diagnosed with COVID-19. The Ministry of Health is committed to acting on the recommendations.

In June, the government announced a review of the 45-year-old *Police Act*. The government struck an all-party committee to engage with communities and experts on how the 45-year-old act can be modernized to reflect modern challenges and opportunities for delivering police services with a specific focus on systemic racism. Government also introduced new binding standards on police stops – or 'street checks' – to promote unbiased policing. Under the new standards, police are not permitted to make arbitrary stops or ones based on race.

Everyone deserves to be treated fairly by the police, and the government acknowledges that for many Black, Indigenous and other people of colour, that hasn't always been the case. Ensuring the police are held accountable to the highest standards for fair and unbiased conduct is crucial to maintaining public trust.

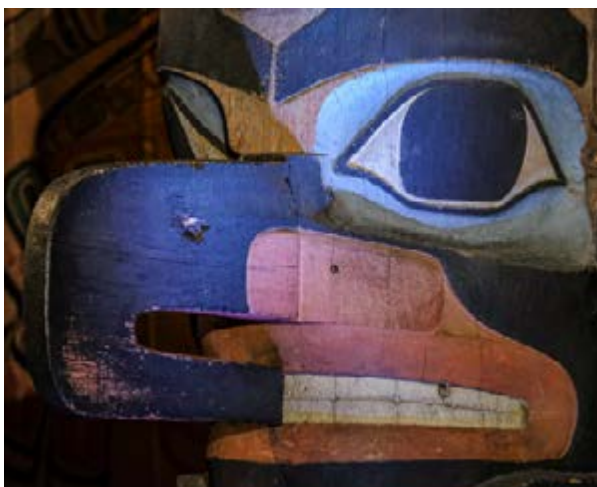
B.C.'s Commitment to Reconciliation and Equity

COMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation is an ongoing process and a shared responsibility for everyone. The unanimous passage of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* in November 2019 was a significant step forward in this journey.

True reconciliation will take time and ongoing commitment to work with Indigenous peoples as they move toward self-determination. Government – and every ministry – must remain focused on creating opportunities for Indigenous people to be full partners in our economy and providing a clear and sustainable path for everyone to work toward lasting reconciliation.

The *Poverty Reduction Strategy Act* also reflects these values, as it required the strategy to reflect a commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the United Nations Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Historic government policies that worked to eliminate Indigenous culture, language, economies, family structure and systems of governance have intergenerational effects on the health and the well-being of Indigenous people in B.C. Despite these inequities, Indigenous communities are reclaiming their cultures and rebuilding their strength.



2020 HIGHLIGHTS ON RECONCILIATION

ENGAGEMENT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ACT ACTION PLAN

Initial engagement with Indigenous partners was undertaken in 2020 to inform the development of the *Declaration Act* action plan in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples in B.C. Methods of engagement adhered to public health orders resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, and included one-on-one meetings, teleconferences, presentations and written submissions. Early engagement included over 75 Indigenous partners, including governments and organizations, 30 of whom submitted written submissions. Further consultation with Indigenous peoples and organizations on the draft action plan will take place before the plan is finalized. The draft action plan includes a range of actions that will contribute to poverty reduction amongst Indigenous people in B.C.

THE FIRST NATIONS CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CARE PROTOCOL

The First Nations Children and Youth in Care Protocol, signed in May 2020, was a significant milestone in government's work towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in B.C. The Protocol provides the basis to remove barriers and improve post-secondary opportunities and outcomes for First Nations' former children and youth in care who are at higher risk of homelessness and poverty.

COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

TogetherBC is committed to ensuring all British Columbians are treated equitably and have tailored supports specific to their needs. Poverty is related to the inequities experienced by different social, cultural and economic groups. These inequities impact people's lives in every way, including their physical, mental and social well-being. Addressing these complex, interrelated challenges requires a comprehensive and multi-layered approach. Gender-Based Analysis Plus, or GBA+, is an analytical tool that considers people's multiple intersecting identity factors, such as gender, race, age and socio-economic status. Using a GBA+ lens means considering how poverty is experienced differently by each of these groups.

As a result of using GBA+, the Act commits government to consider 13 different population groups when developing and updating the poverty reduction strategy. Many of these groups are more likely to live in poverty or be at risk of poverty because of the inequities they face.

Equity is especially important when analyzing the impacts of COVID-19 on different groups. Without responsive income and social supports, vulnerable populations who have been impacted by the pandemic are at an increased risk of poverty or deeper poverty if they are currently living below the poverty line.



2020 HIGHLIGHTS ON EQUITY

ANTI-RACISM RESTART & RECOVERY

Government invested \$1.9 million through StrongerBC: B.C.'s Economic Recovery Plan in 2020 for anti-racism initiatives to address issues of social and racial inequality highlighted during the pandemic. Funding was used to expand the new Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network and the Multiculturalism Grants Program and to begin work on an anti-racism education campaign and an institutional change initiative aimed at addressing systemic and institutional racism which is a key contributor to poverty.



COMMUNITY STORY – ONEWORLD YOUTH CREW

In response to a pandemic-related spike in racist graffiti in Penticton, South Okanagan Immigrant and Community Services' (SOICS) OneWorld Youth Crew decided to take matters into their own hands.

The youth advocates initially started their work, named Project Vandal, by cleaning up graffiti in the community. This eventually grew to include an online reporting tool that enables community members to anonymously report locations in need of graffiti cleanup, and the creation of a mural celebrating diversity.

The group brings together immigrant, Indigenous and Canadian-born youth, with a focus on building inclusion and diversity as they develop leadership skills. "The OneWorld Youth Crew is a demonstration of the ideal of 'Nothing about us, without us,'" said Cherry Fernandez, executive director, SOICS. "They identified the increase in racial-based graffiti and took the initiative to contribute to a solution."

With help from SOICS, the crew also created two powerful videos that bring together BIPOC friends, neighbours and community members from around the Okanagan. While acknowledging racist incidents in the community, their aim is to unite people in celebrating diversity and creating a culture of inclusion.

SOICS is part of the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network, which offers a province-wide approach in identifying and challenging racism. Throughout 2020, racist incidents and hate crimes saw a dramatic increase across B.C., targeting racialized populations who are often lower income and disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

"Our network is so critical," said Fernandez. "People have reached out, thanking us for the work we are doing. Racism is something they have experienced."

That, in turn, helps SOICS to better understand what is going on in their region and to identify where they can further their impact – which benefits everyone.

PAID LEAVE FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Up to five days of paid leave will be available for employees impacted by domestic or sexual violence, or parents of a child or dependant impacted by this kind of violence, thanks to amendments to the *Employment Standards Act*.

With up to five days of paid leave from work per year, employees will be able to attend to their needs, or the needs of dependent children or adults, without the worry of losing income from missing work.

Employees will have paid leave, allowing them to attend medical, counselling or other appointments, look for a new home or school for their children and rebuild their lives.

These amendments build on improvements made to the *Employment Standards Act* in 2019 that provided up to 10 days of unpaid, job-protected leave from work for those impacted by domestic or sexual violence.

Six Priority Action Areas

HOUSING

Housing is frequently cited as the most pressing issue for people living in poverty. High housing costs limit people's opportunities and force people to cut back on food, turn down the heat and live more isolated lives. Poor housing quality has an impact on people's mental and physical health.

Due to COVID-19, many people experiencing homelessness were not able to continue unconventional arrangements such as couch surfing, and new rules and restrictions in shelters created added barriers. In turn, they sought shelter in many new locations, including outdoors in rural and urban areas. This created a renewed sense of urgency to address homelessness, especially in Vancouver and Victoria and pushed government to quickly develop creative solutions to housing people.



2020 HIGHLIGHTS ON HOUSING

FREEZING RENTS & HALTING EVICTIONS

To support people in existing housing and prevent the spread of COVID-19, the province halted evictions from March to August and froze rents until January 2022. To ensure renters have a reasonable timeframe to pay back any rent they owed from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Province put in place a repayment framework for landlords and tenants. This protected incomes and prevented people from experiencing homelessness.

COVID-19 HOTEL LEASES AND ACQUISITIONS TO RELOCATE PEOPLE LIVING IN ENCAMPMENTS

Government worked with regional health authorities, local governments and experienced non-profit shelter and housing providers to develop community-based response plans to COVID-19. This included identifying hotels, motels and community centres for temporary accommodation sites and emergency response centres. These sites served a number of purposes, including assisting vulnerable people with a safe place to self-isolate, assisting existing shelters by helping to ensure people had adequate physical distancing, and assisting hospitals by freeing up acute care beds.

In addition to leasing these sites, the Province also acquired six hotels to provide temporary supportive housing during the pandemic.

In Spring 2020, the Province helped move over 600 people living in unsafe, dense encampments at Oppenheimer Park in Vancouver, and along Pandora Avenue and in Topaz Park in Victoria into safe spaces. The Province led a coordinated plan to support people to move out of the encampments and into temporary accommodations to reduce homelessness and help prevent the spread of COVID-19.



COMMUNITY STORY – SUPPORTIVE HOUSING IN VERNON

“My life has changed completely,” said Stefanie, a resident of My Place, a 56-unit supportive housing building in Vernon that offers safe, secure housing for those experiencing homelessness.

“I was homeless for close to five years – I’ve done a complete turnaround,” she said. “I found self-worth, which I never saw in myself before. I feel positive about my future. I am grateful for everyone who showed me they cared.”

My Place is located next to a seniors’ residence operated by Vernon and District Community Land Trust non-profit society.

“People were apprehensive at first, but now everyone is delighted,” said Cindy Masters, executive director of the society. “I think that’s because this beautiful building has people, life and excitement around it. My Place residents are friendly and care about the neighbourhood, and the crime rate has gone down. And, most important for us, residents of our building and theirs are becoming friends.”

Positive impacts are felt not only by residents but neighbours as well. A survey showed 70 per cent of respondents noticed an improvement in the neighbourhood in the first year and 98 per cent of local businesses would support more supportive housing in the community.

Shelley Kiefiuk, site manager for MyPlace, believes the project has been a success due to community outreach and education.

“Many people don’t know about supportive housing,” said Kiefiuk. “We have open, honest conversations about what supportive housing is, what it looks like, what the intent is. What we hear back from the community is that we need more of this kind of housing. The key is good communication.”

FAMILIES, CHILDREN & YOUTH

Children who grow up in poverty are more likely to live in poverty as adults. Supporting families, children and youth is a critical part of lifting people up and breaking the cycle of poverty.

COVID-19 presented new challenges for families as some parents began to work from home at the same time schools and child care centres closed. Supports for families, such as emergency funding for child care providers, was one of the ways families were supported throughout the pandemic.

2020 HIGHLIGHTS ON FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND YOUTH

EMERGENCY FUNDING FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Child care is key to supporting low-income families and ensuring caregivers, particularly women, can participate in the workforce. From April to August, government provided \$320 million in temporary emergency funding for licensed child care centres that continued to operate (even with reduced enrollment), as well as to licensed child care centres that chose to temporarily close during the pandemic so that they could re-open when ready. The Province also provided funding for Universal Child Care Prototype Sites. B.C. was the only jurisdiction in Canada to support child care in this way.



COMMUNITY STORY – CHILD CARE IN KAMLOOPS

“There would have been a lot of families without any other options,” said Traci Anderson, executive director, BGC Kamloops, of continuing to offer child care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

After the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, BGC Kamloops quickly pivoted to an essential care model, opening up spots to families in the community who needed child care.

“We have lots of service industry parents. For some of them, they didn’t have a choice; they couldn’t take time off work – and they needed a safe place for their children to go,” said Anderson.

Although they were only able to keep one of their four facilities open during the height of the pandemic, BGC Kamloops also kept working to help those parents.

In addition to their regular programs, BGC Kamloops welcomed school-aged children of front-line workers and supported them with their online classes. They also continued their PowerStart breakfast program – but instead of picking children up and driving them to school for breakfast, they delivered those meals and created a food bank for youth.

Anderson credits the Province’s temporary emergency funding, for child care centres who were open to support essential service workers, and the Child Care Health and Safety Grant 2021, created to offset additional costs associated with operating safely during the pandemic, as being instrumental in keeping their doors open – and their stress down.

“We were able to survive the pandemic,” said Anderson. “We could focus on the families.”

While she sees further changes ahead as children and youth deal with continued mental health impacts of the pandemic, BGC Kamloops will pivot as needed to keep focusing on the needs of the families they serve.

EMERGENCY RELIEF SUPPORT FUNDING FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH WITH SUPPORT NEEDS

As the pandemic limited access to in-person school and community-based services, government supported children and youth with support needs (CYSN) and their families by establishing a \$2.7-million short-term Emergency Relief Support Fund. This emergency funding supported approximately 3,000 families who had been waiting for support services. Funding could be used in a flexible manner to help alleviate some of their caregiving demands and support family well-being. Supports could include, but were not limited to, meal preparation and grocery shopping assistance, home-maker supports, caregiver relief, counseling services. This short-term Emergency Relief Support Fund was available from April to September. Eligible families received \$225 per month, depending on their needs.

COVID-19 AMENDMENTS TO AGREEMENTS WITH YOUNG ADULTS PROGRAM

Young adults who have aged out of government care are at an increased risk of experiencing homelessness and living in poverty. In response to COVID-19, the Ministry of Children and Family Development implemented a suite of emergency measures for young adults, including:

- » Allowing young adults to stay in their current homes through 2022, to keep them safe;
- » Permitting young adults who were enrolled in post-secondary, vocational, life-skills or rehabilitative programs interrupted by COVID-19 to continue receiving support up until September 30, 2021; and
- » Expanding access and lowering barriers to rehabilitative and mental wellness services to meet their needs during COVID-19.



COMMUNITY STORY – RISE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

What does a backache have to do with attending a parent and tot playgroup? According to social determinants of health, plenty – and the team at RISE Community Health Centre in Vancouver’s Renfrew-Collingwood neighbourhood agree.

Social determinants of health are the everyday factors that contribute to illness and include income, education, employment, housing, disability and more. By looking at social determinants of health, alongside physical ailments, RISE aims to create a more holistic approach to health care.

“Since my family and I began receiving services from RISE, we have been treated with the utmost care,” said Angela, a client at RISE. “Our nurse practitioner, Sonja, was attentive with my children. Sonja has been thorough with providing care for my partner’s injured hip, and she reached out to a social worker from RISE that listened and took action.”

RISE staff includes doctors and nurse practitioners as well as counsellors, social workers, dietitians and physiotherapists. RISE also connects clients with Community Health Workers who help navigate issues related to the health care system, housing, income assistance, employment services, mental health services and more.

“People might have acute medical needs, but they often have other needs as well: mental health, trauma, poverty, social isolation, language barriers, facing racism or discrimination,” said Sandra Bodenhamer, director, RISE Community Health Centre. “At RISE, this is acknowledged and discussed up front.”

Being connected to the Collingwood Neighbourhood House, the first partnership of its kind in Canada, makes it easy for parents like Angela to attend healthcare appointments right after a parent and tot group – because both are equally important for staying healthy.

COMMUNITY STORY – FOOD SECURITY IN SOUTH VANCOUVER

At the beginning of the pandemic, staff at the South Vancouver and Marpole Neighbourhood Houses realized there was a gap in food security programs in the South Vancouver area.

“In the early days of COVID, there was a lot of fear,” said Zahra Esmail, executive director, South Vancouver Neighbourhood House and Marpole Neighbourhood House. “Community centres had shut down; food distribution centres had shut down.”

Staff at the two neighbourhood houses were still providing support via phone calls but needed to find a way to ensure people didn’t go hungry. That meant creating a new program – with the help of the United Way of Greater Vancouver – and mobilizing volunteers to safely pack and deliver food.

The priority of the program is to provide nutritious food in their food boxes. Given South Vancouver’s high percentage of newcomers and racialized groups, it’s also important that the food boxes are culturally appropriate and can accommodate different family sizes and dietary needs.

The organizations also want to create dignified food access and are working to remove barriers and stigma to accessing food.

“We use food as a vehicle. It’s a way to create relationships and increase visibility for marginalized people,” said Esmail. “Everyone has a right to food.”

By focusing on those relationships, staff at the neighbourhood houses know if a family hasn’t been in for longer than usual and will do check-in calls. In a year of challenging news, staff know there’s nothing better than hearing a family say they no longer need the help.

EDUCATION

Education plays a pivotal role in breaking the cycle of poverty. Ensuring students graduate from high school greatly increases their prospects for employment and empowers students to pursue further education. However, due to high costs of post-secondary education, further education remains unattainable for many. Throughout the pandemic, educators, school districts and institutions had to learn how to deliver schooling programs in a safe and effective way to minimize disruptions to learning.



2020 HIGHLIGHTS ON EDUCATION

BC ACCESS GRANT PROGRAM

The new, needs-based B.C. Access Grant introduced in March targeted 40,000 low-and middle-income students. Post-secondary students eligible for the grant receive \$4,000 per year for two years, which complements the Canada Student Grant for Full-time Students. Government’s annual investment in the grant is approximately \$41 million.

MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS STRATEGY

People with mental health conditions are more likely to live in poverty, and the experience of poverty itself can lead to or exacerbate poor mental health. In September, the government released the Mental Health in Schools (MHIS) Strategy which provides a vision and pathway for mental health promotion in the B.C. K-12 education system, taking a system-wide approach to mental health promotion. This strategy embeds positive mental health and wellness programs and services for students in all areas including school culture, leadership, curriculum and learning environments through the three core elements of compassionate systems leadership, capacity building and mental health in the classroom.

The strategy represents government's commitment to implementing the priority actions identified in *A Pathway to Hope*⁴ for the improved wellness of children, youth and young adults.

TUITION-FREE ADULT BASIC EDUCATION (ABE) AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING (ELL)

The ABE and ELL programs are designed to improve learners' skills to bridge into post-secondary education and/or employment. In 2019/20, as many as 20,000 students benefitted from government's investment to support tuition-free access to ABE and ELL programs. Government invested \$24 million in 2019/20 and 2020/21.

COMMUNITY STORY – KERRI'S STORY – TUITION-FREE ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

Kerri is an Indigenous student who enrolled in the Vancouver Island University (VIU) Aboriginal University Bridging Program. The program supports Indigenous students to bridge the gap between post-secondary education and their educational goals.

Since she can remember, Kerri has always wanted to be a nurse, but the timing didn't work out until recently. As a young mother of two children, she says balancing school and family life was initially a challenge.

Kerri took Adult Basic Education courses for more than a year. "I haven't done any school since I graduated in 2006, so re-introducing myself to the classroom through the Aboriginal University Bridging Program has set me up with a strong foundation for nursing."

Happily, Kerri was recently accepted into the highly competitive VIU Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. "Look at what I've accomplished. For those who are wondering if they should return to school, I say, 'Why not?' You have so much to gain."

4. <https://bit.ly/39atCod>

EMPLOYMENT

When British Columbians have stable employment, with fair wages and good working conditions, research shows that families can be lifted out of poverty.

Employment was significantly impacted for thousands of families throughout the province during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many people remain unemployed and women have been the ones most affected – so much so that the term "she-cession" was coined to describe the impacts to employment felt by women across the country.



2020 HIGHLIGHTS ON EMPLOYMENT

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY SKILLS TRAINING & EDUCATION FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Government provided \$15 million to support Indigenous communities' economic recovery through the Indigenous Skills Training Development Fund (ISTDF). The new programming supported unemployed and employed people working in sectors hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and with the greatest opportunities for sustainable employment, such as hospitality, tourism, technology, transportation, natural resources and healthcare.

The programming reached Indigenous participants across the province, in over 113 Indigenous communities and urban centres and through online and/or socially distanced in-person instruction. Programs served more than 1,700 Indigenous participants.

WORK EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES GRANTS

As part of StrongerBC, Work Experience Opportunity Grants were made available for eligible organizations to provide 12-week work experience opportunities for vulnerable individuals impacted by COVID-19 to help them transition back to the labour force.

The amount of the grant was \$5,000 per participant (\$3,600 minimum stipend, \$1,400 for administration and supports) to a maximum of \$50,000 per organization. The stipend for work experience participants has been exempted as income for income assistance and disability assistance recipients.

WORKBC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

WorkBC Employment Services are available to unemployed or precariously employed B.C. residents. It supports the key priorities of *TogetherBC* by helping to break the cycle of poverty. In 2020/21, services were provided to over 82,000 people, including personalized case management services to more than 14,700 clients with disabilities, 7,300 Indigenous clients, and 19,000 immigrant clients.

COMMUNITY STORY – RUTH’S STORY – WORKBC PENTICTON

Ruth was a stay-at-home mom homeschooling her girls. She had not worked in 12 years. Following a recent separation, she was living with family, had no income, and was looking for a home. “I had nothing coming in and did not know where to go, and what to do. Family told me that I could go to WorkBC and maybe they could help. They would know where to connect me to the community and help me develop a resume.”

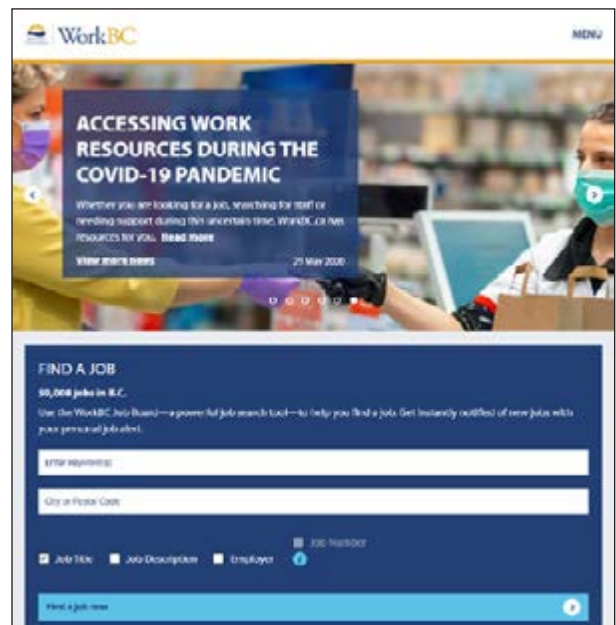
Through WorkBC, Ruth was able to access counselling, social support services and attend a career discovery workshop. The workshop helped Ruth to identify transferable skills that she could use in a number of roles, but she did not know how to build her resume. WorkBC worked with Ruth to fill in a resume and give her the confidence needed to apply to jobs.

Ruth was able to upgrade her First Aid with St. John Ambulance and completed Computer Skills with Power Concepts Computer Training. “My confidence grew as I did more training and education. I even decided to upgrade my Biology 12 on my own.”

Ruth also attended an Indigenous Training Session, Haahuupa Session - Indigenous Cultural Awareness. “I really liked it because we live in an environment where the Indigenous culture is so strong, and around us. I was so happy to hear and learn and share with our kids and community. I am passionate about helping children and young women, and really could relate to the message and community building that was expressed.”

During an informational interview for Education Assistant Training, Ruth was told she already had the skills required for this role and was encouraged to apply. “I was offered a full-time job as an Education Assistant. It is exactly what I am looking for! Just talking to the schools for the informational interviews was the reason why I had the opportunity to apply.”

“I am super grateful for WorkBC. I have found low-income housing, I got social assistance right away, and I have a really good resume. My confidence built throughout my time with WorkBC and I am excited to move forward with my career!”



COMMUNITY STORY – ESPERANZA’S STORY – WORKBC MAPLE RIDGE

Esperanza arrived in Canada in 2013 with her husband and two children. She has an educational background and 10-year employment history in accounting.

Since arriving in Canada, Esperanza has struggled to find suitable employment matching her skills, education and experience.

Aside from a temporary accounts clerk role Esperanza had been working as a production worker, but due to COVID-19, her shifts were significantly reduced.

Esperanza started with increasing her English language level and then decided to connect with WorkBC Maple Ridge as she was eager to apply for jobs to maintain a stable household income to support her family.

She participated in several WorkBC services, including one-to-one support with changing her resume and cover letter to effectively market herself for accounting-related positions, and during this time she gained essential job searching skills.

She also worked with an Employment Placement Specialist (EPS) for additional targeted resumes and cover letters, and a handful of interview preparation sessions and mock interviews. The EPS also directly marketed her to the business community offering wage subsidy incentives.

Within just over two months of receiving marketing support Esperanza was offered a job as an accounting clerk utilizing the WorkBC Wage Subsidy incentive. Esperanza’s employer has implemented strategies to accommodate Esperanza’s learning as a new employee.

INCOME SUPPORTS

Income supports were a crucial element of supporting British Columbians during the COVID-19 pandemic. Government acted quickly to ensure that those who faced sudden unemployment would not fall through the cracks.

In addition to pandemic-related supports, government continued to implement the long-term goal of raising the minimum wage in 2020 and implemented the Child Opportunity Benefit, a key commitment in *TogetherBC*.

2020 HIGHLIGHTS ON INCOME SUPPORTS

COVID-19 CRISIS SUPPLEMENT

For everyone on income assistance or disability assistance who was not eligible for the emergency federal support programs, including the CERB, the Province provided an automatic \$300-monthly COVID-19 Crisis Supplement from April to December.

This supplement was also provided to low-income seniors who receive the B.C. Senior’s Supplement.

TEMPORARY PANDEMIC PAY

As part of a cost-shared program with the federal government, a range of health, social service and corrections workers providing in-person frontline support during the pandemic received temporary pandemic pay.

An estimated 250,000 front-line workers were eligible to receive a lump-sum payment of about \$4 per hour for a 16-week period for recognized workplaces and roles from March to July.

B.C. CHILD OPPORTUNITY BENEFIT

Families with children face higher costs that can make it harder to make ends meet. To address this, the B.C. Child Opportunity Benefit launched in October and is expected to support 290,000 families.

Families with one child receive up to \$1,600 per year, those with two children receive up to \$2,600, and those with three children receive up to \$3,400. The benefit will support children under the age of 18 years.



COMMUNITY STORY – TABITHA’S STORY

Tabitha understands the impact of growing up in poverty. Raised by a single mother and now a single mother herself and unable to work due to a disability, she wants her two daughters to have opportunities she didn't.

“How do we break that generational poverty?” is a question she asks not only in terms of her own life but as she advocates for others.

One of the things Tabitha finds is making a difference is the B.C. Child Opportunity Benefit. The benefit, which replaced the B.C. Early Childhood Tax Benefit effective October 1, 2020, provides a tax-free monthly payment to families with children under the age of 18.

“It has been a blessing,” said Tabitha.

The extra money means that she can buy her daughters healthy food, especially important for helping to manage one of the girl's health issues. It has also helped her offset the costs of extra-curricular activities like Sparks and Girl Guides.

Programs like these create opportunities for her daughters to experience things they wouldn't otherwise have access to and are vital to their development.

“I grew up thinking where's my next meal coming from,” said Tabitha. “I refuse to have my children growing up in poverty.”

Breaking generational poverty takes time, and Tabitha admits there are still struggles. But the B.C. Child Opportunity Benefit and other initiatives, such as subsidized housing, are helping her give her daughters the life they deserve.

SOCIAL SUPPORTS

British Columbians living in poverty often experience social isolation and a feeling of exclusion from their communities. Discrimination, stigmatization and social barriers can impact a person's ability to access housing, employment and other essential services.

Social supports include a range of initiatives, programs and services that contribute to reducing poverty in communities and increasing a sense of community belonging.

Despite the challenges of supporting British Columbians during COVID-19, many social supports were implemented or adapted to help ensure British Columbia is a safe and welcoming place for everyone.



2020 HIGHLIGHTS ON SOCIAL SUPPORTS

COVID-19 RELIEF FUNDING FOR BC ASSOCIATION OF ABORIGINAL FRIENDSHIP CENTRES (BCAAFC)

Government provided \$7.8 million in COVID-19 relief funding to the BCAAFC to help friendship centres meet the increased demand for services to assist Indigenous people living in urban areas both in-person and online.

The grant helped to provide supports like meals and hampers, care packages for seniors and education kits for children. It also helped to keep staff and clients safe with new handwashing stations, sanitization and personal protective equipment.

CONNECTING BRITISH COLUMBIA

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the critical need to expand internet access to underserved households and locations in rural and remote areas of B.C.

In April, the \$50-million Connecting British Columbia Program was expanded to include a Rapid Response funding stream to help internet service providers with immediate network equipment upgrades to rapidly improve capacity and internet speeds by June.

In September, the Program received a \$90-million, one-time grant as part of StrongerBC: B.C.'s Economic Recovery Plan, to expand cellular access on highways and improve speed and performance of internet access in rural and Indigenous communities.

COVID-19 EMERGENCY COMMUNITY GAMING GRANT FOR FOOD BANKS BC

To support vulnerable British Columbians during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Province provided a \$3-million emergency grant from the Community Gaming Grants program to Food Banks BC in March.

Food Banks BC distributed the funds among food banks provincewide to support the immediate need to buy and distribute food, pay employees and cover other costs essential to the delivery of their food programs. The grant helped to remove barriers to allow for drive-through and delivery opportunities, larger hampers, and increased home delivery capability.

EMERGENCY SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES GRANT PROGRAM

The Ending Violence Association of BC (EVA BC) received funding to administer a multi-year, \$10-million grant program to support the delivery of coordinated emergency sexual assault response services in regions throughout B.C.

This grant program supports organizations in delivering community-based emergency sexual assault response services that are trauma informed and culturally appropriate. There are 10 programs delivered by Indigenous organizations for Indigenous survivors and 13 programs that serve all survivors of sexual assault.

AFTER SCHOOL SPORTS AND ARTS INITIATIVE (ASSAI)

ASSAI is a free program that helps children facing barriers to sport and arts participation (financial, geographical, cultural, or transportation). Kids can gain physical, socio-emotional and cognitive skills, as well as a sense of belonging to their school and community. Each year, nearly 10,000 students participate in ASSAI including:

- » 150 schools in 22 school districts; and
- » Over 50 rural, urban and remote communities.



COMMUNITY STORY – AFTER SCHOOL SPORTS AND ART INITIATIVE

“I feel excited when I’m doing the art program.”

“It makes me feel kind.”

“I feel amazed when I enter art and dance.”

“I feel epic when I play games.”

This is how elementary school kids describe the After School Sports and Arts Initiative (ASSAI). ASSAI is a program that supports after school sport, physical activity and arts for Kindergarten to Grade 8 students in selected school districts around B.C. Children with disabilities often face accessibility barriers, and ASSAI programs are designed specifically to reduce barriers to participation, such as accessibility, financial, social, cultural and other factors.

“After School programs give our students and families a sense of value,” said Justin DeVries, principal, Summit Elementary in Kamloops. “Students are so grateful to be able to participate in them – especially when most of the world was closed off this year. I got to watch so many students follow their interests and passions this year through these programs! This is what learning is all about.”

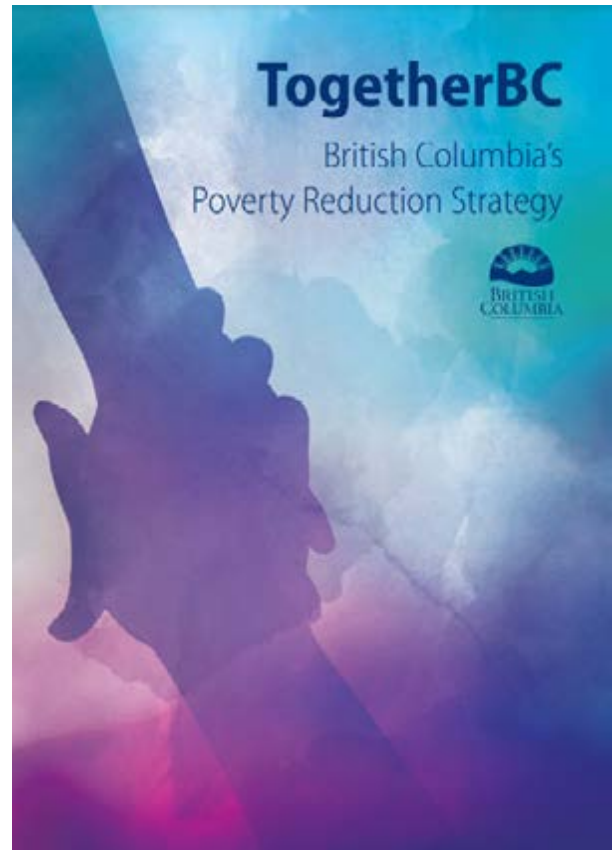
With offerings that include anything from drumming, painting and storytelling to snowshoeing, baseball and karate or even mindfulness and yoga, children experience a combination of familiar favourites and new activities. It’s not only students who enjoy the program; teachers also find it to be beneficial. One of the teachers at Tillicum Community School in Victoria said this: “Even with the COVID protocols, the students were very excited to be a part of community programs. It helped to have a sense of normalcy during these strange times.”

Through social connections, positive reinforcement and more, the program contributed to the resiliency that helped these children get through the pandemic – a skill that will help them throughout their lives.

“When I wake up, I’m so excited.”

Next Steps

The government will continue to be focused on addressing the impacts of COVID-19 and supporting British Columbians through recovery.



Through *TogetherBC*, the government will continue to reduce the depth and breadth of poverty in B.C. As the global battle against COVID-19 continues, government will continue to look for ways to help British Columbians and build new tools to help people move from poverty into more stable, secure lives.

The Province has also begun to think about the next iteration of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, as the Act requires an update by 2024. This means renewed public engagement with British Columbians to understand how needs have changed, which priorities are most important, and how government can continue to support people across the province.

Appendix A: Minister's Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee

BACKGROUND

The Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee was formed with the release of TogetherBC in March 2019. The Committee follows the work of the Minister's Poverty Reduction Advisory Forum, which was in place from 2017-2019 to help guide the government in the creation of the *Poverty Reduction Strategy Act*⁵ and *TogetherBC*⁶.

MEMBERSHIP

The Committee was appointed on March 18, 2019. It advises government on policy developments related to poverty reduction and prevention, as legislated in the *Poverty Reduction Strategy Act*.

The 13-member committee includes advocates, stakeholders and people with lived experience with poverty. Committee members are:

- » Catherine Ludgate (Chair)
- » Sarah Brownlee
- » Cheryl Casimer
- » Zahra Esmail
- » Murry Krause
- » Rosanna McGregor
- » Brad Mills
- » Adrienne Montani
- » Tabitha Naismith
- » Krishna Pendakur
- » Lissa Smith
- » Stephanie Smith
- » Caitlin Wright

⁵ <https://bit.ly/3nuGiPa>

⁶ <https://www.gov.bc.ca/togetherbc>

PURPOSE

As required by the *Poverty Reduction Strategy Act* ("the Act"), the Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee (the Committee) is an independent committee appointed by the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction.

Section 10 of the Act establishes the duties of the Committee, which include:

- (a) Advising the minister on matters related to poverty reduction and prevention and assess the progress of government actions taken to meet the legislated targets;
- (b) Advising the minister on consultations undertaken to develop and update the strategy; and
- (c) Providing independent commentary on the actions taken in the previous calendar year. This commentary is included in the annual report.

The Act also addresses the composition of the Committee. It requires that at least half the committee must be women, and that it must include representatives from nine key groups. Members are appointed for one, two, or three-year terms, to a maximum of six years.

Appendix B: Market Basket Measure Rate Tables

TABLE 1 – UPDATED MBM IMPACT ON THE POVERTY REDUCTION TARGETS

(2019 MBM Released in March 2021)

INCIDENCE OF POVERTY	2016 BASELINE (%)	2024 TARGET (%)	2019 ACTUAL (%)	% REDUCTION	% OF TARGET ACHIEVED
All persons	15.3	11.5	10.8	29.4	117.6
Persons under 18 years	17.0	8.5	7.2	57.6	115.2

TABLE 2 – POVERTY RATE TRENDS IN B.C., 2016-2019

PERSONS IN LOW INCOME	MARKET BASKET MEASURE, 2018 BASE (PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS IN LOW INCOME)			
	2016	2017	2018	2019
All persons	15.3	13.6	12.1	10.8
Persons under 18 years	17.0	13.0	10.9	7.2
Persons 18 to 64 years	16.6	15.0	13.8	13.3
Persons 65 years and over	8.9	9.2	7.7	5.9

TABLE 3 – DEEP POVERTY IN B.C., 2016-2019

	DEEP POVERTY RATE FOR ALL PERSONS IN BC (%)			
	2016	2017	2018	2019
2018-base	8.7	6.9	5.7	5.0

SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA, CANADA INCOME SURVEY 2019

	DEEP POVERTY RATE FOR CHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS IN BC (%)			
	2016	2017	2018	2019 [‡]
2018-base	8.1	5.0	3.4	2.6

[‡] Due to higher sampling error, estimates of deep poverty rates for children in B.C. for 2019 should be used with caution.

SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA, CANADA INCOME SURVEY 2019

TABLE 4 – POVERTY RATE TRENDS IN CANADA, 2016-2019

MARKET BASKET MEASURE, 2018 BASE (PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS IN LOW INCOME)				
PERSONS IN LOW INCOME	2016	2017	2018	2019
All persons	12.8	11.7	11.0	10.1
Persons under 18 years	14.0	11.6	10.8	9.7
Persons 18 to 64 years	14.0	13.2	12.5	11.6
Persons 65 years and over	7.0	6.0	5.6	5.4

TABLE 5 – POVERTY RATE TRENDS AND RANKINGS, BY PROVINCE (FOR ALL PERSONS)

ALL PERSONS	INCIDENCE (%)				RANKING (HIGHER IS BETTER)		
	2016	2018	2019	% CHANGE 2016-2019	2016	2018	2019
Canada	12.8	11.0	10.1	-21.1% ↓
BC	15.3	12.1	10.8	-29.4% ↓	2	2	6
NL	12.4	11.2	10.7	-13.7% ↓	5	5	7
PEI	11.8	11.9	10.9	-7.6% ↓	7	3	4
NS	16.2	13.3	12.1	-25.3% ↓	1	1	2
NB	13.6	10.0	9.4	-30.9% ↓	3	8	8
QC	10.9	9.7	8.7	-20.2% ↓	9	9	9
ON	13.6	11.6	10.9	-19.9% ↓	3	4	4
MB	12.3	10.9	11.4	-7.3% ↓	6	7	3
SK	11.5	11.2	12.4	7.8% ↑	8	5	1
AB	10.8	9.4	8.2	-24.1% ↓	10	10	10

TABLE 6 – POVERTY RATE TRENDS AND RANKINGS, BY PROVINCE (FOR CHILDREN)

CHILDREN	INCIDENCE (%)				RANKING (HIGHER IS BETTER)		
	2016	2018	2019	% CHANGE 2016-2019	2016	2018	2019
Canada	14.0	10.8	9.7	-30.7% ↓
BC	17.0	10.9	7.2	-57.6% ↓	2	7	9
NL	13.4	11.2	14.6	9.0% ↑	7	6	1
PEI	14.9	9.8	13.7	-8.1% ↓	6	8	3
NS	19.1	14.8	11.7	-38.7% ↓	1	1	7
NB	16.5	11.5	12.4	-24.8% ↓	3	5	5
QC	10.7	7.6	6.2	-42.1% ↓	10	10	10
ON	15.4	12.5	12.1	-21.4% ↓	5	3	6
MB	15.6	13.1	14.4	-7.7% ↓	4	2	2
SK	12.4	11.6	12.6	1.6% ↑	8	4	4
AB	11.4	9.2	7.2	-36.8% ↓	9	9	9

Appendix C: Inventory of Government Initiatives on Poverty Reduction

MINISTRY OF ADVANCED EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
B.C. Employer Training Grant	Helps British Columbians access skills training while encouraging employer involvement in training their employees. In 2020/21, the B.C. Employer Training Grant approved funding to over 1,343 employers to support skills training for over 12,446 people.	Ongoing
Community Workforce Response Grant (CWRG) program	Provides flexible and timely responses to emerging and urgent labour and skills needs in communities throughout the province. In 2020/21, 86 CWRG projects were approved to provide skills training and employment supports to people in more than 60 communities. Government invested \$12 million in 2020/21. Funding for these grants comes from the federal-provincial Workforce Development Agreement.	Ongoing
	\$5 million was also provided for a new Youth Community Partnership grant program, which provided funding for community-service projects that engaged youth. 70 applicants received grants of up to \$10,000 per youth for projects running up to 16 weeks. The youth then received a training stipend of up to \$2,000 per four-week period (to a maximum of \$8,000) for work between June and October 31, 2020. In 2020/21, funding for these grants came from the federal-provincial Workforce Development and Labour Market Development agreements.	Completed in 2020
	Government also invested \$20 million in targeted short-term skills training as part of StrongerBC: B.C.'s Economic Recovery Plan. The Skills Training for Economic Recovery initiative was delivered under the CWRG through 78 projects to help almost 2,500 people gain job-related skills, re-attach to the labour market, and prepare for current and emerging job opportunities.	Completed in 2020
Proposed Tripartite Indigenous Skills Training & Employment Committee	The Province, First Nations Leadership Council and the federal government are working together to establish a tripartite Indigenous Skills Training and Employment Committee to provide strategic direction, better coordinate programming and funding, support Indigenous capacity and self-government, and address the needs of Indigenous peoples related to skills training and employment.	Ongoing
Aboriginal Community-Based Training Partnerships (ABCTP) Program	The ACBTP provides funding for post-secondary education and training for Indigenous individuals and communities and creates pathways into further post-secondary education or skills training and employment. In 2020/21, there were 32 ACBTP projects serving 1,412 Indigenous people and 54 Indigenous communities. Government invested \$12 million in 2020/21.	Ongoing

Indigenous Skills Training Development Fund (ISTDF)	The ISTDF provides funding to Indigenous communities to increase access to skills training and employment for Indigenous people, and acquire the skills needed for emerging labour market opportunities. In 2020/21, the ISTDF supported 95 Indigenous communities through 60 projects. Government invested \$12 million in 2020/21.	Ongoing
Indigenous Community Skills Training and Education for Economic Recovery	Government provided \$15 million to support Indigenous communities' economic recovery through the Indigenous Skills Training Development Fund (ISTDF). The new programming supported unemployed and employed people working in sectors hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and with the greatest opportunities for sustainable employment, such as hospitality, tourism, technology, transportation, natural resources, and healthcare. The programming reached Indigenous participants in over 113 Indigenous communities and urban centers, and through online and/or socially distanced in-person instruction. Programs served more than 1,700 Indigenous participants.	Completed in 2020/21
Skills Training for Employment (STE)	<p>STE provides skills training, education, and related employment supports—including counselling, mentoring, childcare, transportation, disability supports, work experience, wage subsidies, and equipment—to participants. Participants include unemployed or precariously employed members of the following vulnerable and underrepresented populations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young adults • Young adults at risk • Older workers 55+ • Survivors of violence and/or abuse • Individuals facing multiple barriers to employment, which may include persons with disabilities, refugees, and persons experiencing homelessness, addiction or mental health issues. <p>Funding for STE comes from the Canada-B.C. Workforce Development Agreement. In 2020/21, \$35 million went to support 98 STE programs to support over 5,600 British Columbians.</p>	Ongoing
Industrial Training Authority pre-apprenticeship training for women & other under-represented groups	In 2020/21, pre-apprenticeship programs were in place to help over 700 women, Indigenous learners, persons with disabilities, youth and other equity-seeking groups access opportunities for pre-apprenticeship training, apprenticeship services and employment. Government invested \$10 million in this program in 2020/21 through funding provided under the Canada-B.C. Workforce Development Agreement.	Ongoing
Here2Talk	The Province launched a 24/7 mental-health counselling and referral service for post-secondary students April 16, 2020. The service is accessible through the web, phone and chat. It complements other supports on campus and in the community, and is available for all 555,000 post-secondary students registered in B.C. The service was expedited and launched earlier than planned due to COVID-19.	Started in 2020

Good Jobs Guide	The new Good Jobs Guide helps students, workers and employers in B.C., using data from the 2019 Labour Market Outlook, to provide a practical resource with examples of real careers and clear pathways for individuals to upgrade their skills or train for new opportunities.	Started in 2020
Tuition-free Adult Basic Education and English Language Learning Programs	The Adult Basic Education and English Language Learning Programs are designed to improve learners' skills to bridge into post-secondary education and/or employment. In 2019/20, as many as 20,000 students benefitted from the Government's investment to support tuition-free access to ABE and ELL programs. Government invested \$24 million in 2019/20 and 2020/21.	Ongoing
Student Emergency Assistance Fund	Government made a \$6.5 million (\$3.5 million in March 2020 and \$3 million in March 2021) investment to supplement existing student emergency financial assistance, a significant boost to the existing supports. The funding supports domestic B.C. students who experience an unexpected financial emergency that affects their ability to finish their studies and handle expenses.	Ongoing
B.C. Access Grant Program	A new, needs-based B.C. Access Grant targets 40,000 low-and middle-income students. Post-secondary students eligible for the grant receive \$4,000 per year, which complements the Canada Student Grant for Full-time Students. Government's annual investment in the grant is approximately \$41 million.	Started in 2020
Provincial Tuition Waiver Program (PTWP)	This program waives tuition fees for B.C. students who are former youth in care between 19 and up to their 27 th birthday who are attending a B.C. public post-secondary institution, Native Education College and 10 union trades training providers. The provincial program was launched in 2017, and since then 1,565 former youth in care students have been supported on PTWP, resulting in a total of \$9.9 million in tuition waived.	Ongoing
People at Risk of or Experiencing Homelessness (PEERS)	Approximately 615 British Columbians began receiving training and employment supports through 12 peer-based employment projects. Peers use their community experience to contribute to their communities while building new skills and training. Government invested \$4.8 million in 2020/21 through the Canada-B.C. Workforce Development Agreement.	Started in 2020
First Nations Children and Youth in Care Protocol	The First Nations Children and Youth in Care Protocol, signed in May 2020, was a significant milestone in Government's work towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in B.C. The protocol provides the basis to remove barriers and improve post-secondary opportunities and outcomes for First Nations children and youth who were formerly in care.	Started in 2020
Eastside Movement for Business and Economic Renewal Society (EMBERS)	Up to 40 peers residing in the Downtown Eastside, supported over six months, received skills training and employment programs through EMBERS. Peers were encouraged and supported to leverage their community experience to empower them to find employment opportunities that resonate with who they are. This funding was provided through the Canada-B.C. Workforce Development Agreement.	Completed in 2020

Sector Labour Market Partnerships (SLMP) program	Provides project-based funding to support sectors, regions and populations in collecting current labour market information, developing evidence-based solutions and evaluating existing approaches to support the development and testing of innovative, inclusive workforce development strategies. Government invested \$6.8 million in 2020/21. Specific initiatives that support Together BC include projects that support Indigenous economic development and the early childhood education sector.	Ongoing
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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FISHERIES		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
B.C. and Yukon partner to increase food security in the northern Canada	The Province partnered with the Yukon government to develop a joint strategy to increase food security in the North. The two governments partnered with the agricultural sector, as well as academic and community leaders to develop and share expertise specific to growing in northern latitude. The governments also committed to supporting a larger role for Indigenous people in northern agriculture and food production by working with Indigenous communities.	Started in 2020
B.C. Indigenous Agriculture Development Program	The program supports the planning of farming projects in Indigenous communities and supports Indigenous entrepreneurs develop and plan agricultural businesses. The Program leads to economic activity, local employment and contributing to the province's food production and food security. In 2020, the program supported 13 communities and entrepreneurs, through \$80,125 in funding.	Ongoing

MINISTRY OF ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR HOUSING		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Branch		
Anti-Racism Restart and Recovery	The ministry received \$1.9 million through Stronger BC for anti-racism initiatives to address issues of social and racial inequality highlighted during the pandemic. Funding was used to expand the new Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network and the Multiculturalism Grants Program and to begin work on a 2021 anti-racism public education campaign and an institutional change initiative aimed at addressing systemic and institutional racism.	Started in 2020

Multiculturalism Grants Program	The ministry significantly redesigned this program in fall 2020 to prioritize grants for community-based projects aimed at reducing anti-Indigenous, anti-Black and anti-Asian racism, as well as supporting resilience and recovery initiatives for Indigenous, Black and other racialized communities that were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. \$300,000 was distributed to 76 community-based projects in spring 2020 under the original program criteria, while an application intake was launched in fall 2020 to distribute more than 190 grants in 2021 under the new criteria.	Ongoing
Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network	In early 2020, the ministry launched the new Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network. This new \$540,000 program connects more than 40 communities across the province through a hub and spoke network to address interpersonal and systemic racism and hate, which both contribute to poverty. Additional Anti-Racism Restart and Recovery funding of \$127,000 was invested to expand the program to more than 50 communities in fall 2020 in response to a significant surge in incidents of racism and hate during the pandemic.	Started in 2020
Justice Services Branch		
BC Family Maintenance Agency (BCFMA)	The BCFMA, a new crown corporation responsible for the Family Maintenance Enforcement Program (FMEP), monitors and enforces over 37,000 maintenance orders and agreements, providing service to approximately 70,000 parents and over 50,000 children. In 2020/21, over \$214 million was paid through FMEP.	Ongoing
British Columbia Civil Resolution Tribunal (CRT)	The CRT is an administrative tribunal and is part of the public justice system. During 2020, the CRT extended statutory deadlines and waived fees for those struggling financially due to the pandemic.	Ongoing
First Nations Justice Strategy and a Métis Justice Strategy for British Columbia	BC First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC) and the Province endorsed and signed a new First Nations Justice Strategy. The strategy will provide a two-path approach to transform the existing criminal justice system and build the path toward restoring First Nations' laws and justice systems among other actions. The Strategy was endorsed March 6, 2020 by the Province, BCFNJC and First Nations Leadership Council. BCFNJC and the Province have developed plan to implement the strategy. The Province made a similar commitment to work in partnership with the Métis Nation BC (MNBC) to develop a Métis Justice Strategy, recognizing that First Nations and Métis people have different cultures, priorities and histories with the Province. Throughout 2020 the Province and MNBC consulted on a draft Metis Justice Strategy.	Ongoing
BCFNJC and Province Open New Indigenous Justice Centres	As part of the First Nations Justice Strategy, Indigenous justice centres opened in Merritt, Prince George and Prince Rupert. These centres provide important legal services for all Indigenous people. Each centre offers unique supports tailored to the local Indigenous community. The Province is working with BCFNJC to determine locations for centres	Ongoing

Family Justice Report Service	All report writers were trained in using virtual technology to facilitate completion of court ordered reports under Section 211 of the Family Law Act, allowing families living in rural and remote communities to have their reports completed during the pandemic.	Ongoing
Early Resolution and Expedited Court Process to Change or Suspend Child or Spousal Support Due to COVID-19	This project supports families in making changes to existing child or spousal support orders or agreements due to a change in their financial circumstances as a result of COVID-19. Under a Practice Direction the Provincial Court offers an expedited court process for those who go to Family Justice Services Division (FJSD) to resolve their disputes. FJSD offers assessment, referrals (including referrals to legal advice), mediation and facilitation to help families reach agreement on changes to support orders or agreements.	Started in 2020
Justice Access Centres	Justice Access Centres (JACs) help people find early and affordable solutions by providing self-help and information services; dispute resolution and mediation options; limited legal advice; access to community resources and agencies; and courses, presentations and publications. The fifth JAC opened in January 2021 in the new Abbotsford Courthouse (other LACs located in Nanaimo, Surrey, Vancouver, and Victoria). In 2020/21 JACs provided almost 14,500 services. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in-person JAC services were suspended but pivoted to a virtual format (telephone and videoconferencing) to provide continuity of service for citizens.	Ongoing
Provincially Funded Law Foundation Legal Clinics	In 2020, five provincially funded legal clinics opened. The Province funds seven legal clinics, administered by the Law Foundation, including a housing law, disability law, and immigration and refugee law clinic (all located in Vancouver), as well as four poverty law clinics (in Kamloops, Kelowna, Prince George, and Surrey). The legal clinic model is achieved by adding a lawyer and support staff to existing Law Foundation advocacy programs and cost \$250,000 yearly to operate. The clinics provide free legal information, advice, and representation to low-income individuals in locations where a need for poverty law and specialized services are identified.	Ongoing
Office of Housing and Construction Standards		
Affordable housing through BC Housing	New affordable housing for families, seniors, and/or people with disabilities was announced in Creston, Vancouver, Port Alberni, Kamloops, Powell River, Nanaimo and Valemount. The Province, through BC Housing, also partnered with the Vancouver Resource Society to purchase four senior housing facilities in Surrey, Kelowna and Nanaimo, preserving a total of 475 residential suites at affordable rental rates. Through the HousingHub, the Building BC funds and other provincial investments, more than 26,000 new homes are complete, under construction or in development for people with a range of incomes throughout the province.	Ongoing

Supporting renters and landlords during pandemic	To support people and prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Province halted evictions from March to August 2020, and froze rents until January 2022, among other actions that supported health and safety of landlords and tenants. The Residential Tenancy Branch implemented several additional actions, including adjourning and rescheduling hearings in situations where people needed more time to prepare and extending timelines for filing applications for dispute resolution. To ensure renters have a reasonable timeframe to pay back any rent they owed from the COVID-19 emergency, the Province put in place a repayment framework for landlords and tenants.	Complete
Agreement brings better access to northern B.C.'s Indigenous peoples	The Province and the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) collaborated on a unique partnership to provide temporary housing near medical facilities for those who are travelling from remote communities. The agreement will reserve temporary housing in existing BC Housing buildings that are close to medical centres in Prince George and Fort St. John for FNHA clients who need to attend medical appointments. Additional locations may be added in the future. All clients in these units will have access to FNHA's Medical Transportation program, which assists in moving people to and from their community.	Started in 2020
BC Rent Bank	<p>In March 2019, the Province granted \$10 million to the Vancity Community Foundation to develop a sustainable province-wide rent bank system.</p> <p>In 2020, Rent banks in BC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisted 3,146 people who sought rent bank assistance • Issued 149 loans • Issued 79 housing grants, helping 536 people remain housed • Assisted 2,512 people with supplementary services (i.e. mediation, legal advocacy, food, counselling, financial literacy) <p>In total, 87% of people who contacted a rent bank received assistance in the form of either a loan, grant, or supplementary service.</p>	Ongoing
Homelessness Community Action Grants	<p>In 2019, the Province invested \$6 million to support strong, sustainable planning for local groups and organizations working on the front lines in BC communities through the Homelessness Community Action Grant program. Municipalities and community organizations can apply for up to \$50,000 in funding for initiatives designed to prevent homelessness and better respond to the needs of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. In 2020, 48 grants totaling \$1,522,667 were distributed.</p> <p>In addition, SPARC BC used interest earnings on the fund to purchase 10,000 smartphones which were distributed to homeless and other vulnerable people which allowed them to connect to services during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	Ongoing

BC Homeless Count	The second provincial point-in-time (PiT) homeless count was started in 2020 but had to be suspended due to COVID-19. Eight counts were completed in 2020 and the remaining eight were conducted in April and May 2021.	Ongoing
Preventing and Reducing Homelessness Integrated Data Project	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 Phase 1, linking data from BC Housing, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction and the Ministry of Health will be released in 2021.	Ongoing

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
Temporary emergency funding for child care providers	Between April 1 and August 31, 2020, MCFD provided nearly \$320 million in temporary emergency funding for licensed child care centres that continued to operate (even with reduced enrollment), and to licensed child care centres that chose to temporarily close during the pandemic so that they could re-open when ready. B.C. was the only jurisdiction in Canada to support child care in this way.	Completed in 2020
Health and safety grants to licensed child care centres	One-time grant funding was made available to open, licensed child care centres to offset the additional costs of operating safely during the pandemic (e.g., costs of cleaning supplies, extra staff hours for cleaning, and backfilling for sick leave). More than \$35 million in funding was provided to successful applicants in December 2020.	Ongoing
Child Care Resource and Referral Centre matching service for essential service workers	To support essential service workers during the pandemic, the Province launched a program to match essential service workers with child care spaces.	Completed in 2020
Child Care Rapid Renovation Fund	A total of \$6 million was available to school boards, post-secondary institutions and health authorities to quickly create more licensed child care spaces. The funding supports ready-to-go renovations at public facilities.	Started in 2020
Amendment to the Child Care Subsidy Regulation	Amended the Child Care Subsidy Regulation to enable the continued payment of the Affordable Child Care Benefit to families who would have otherwise become ineligible for funding as a result of losing employment and/or, if their child was temporarily absent from child care due to COVID-19.	Completed in 2020

<p>COVID-19 Early Childhood Educator Certificate Extension</p>	<p>To support early childhood educators and early childhood educator assistants during the pandemic, the Province amended the Child Care Licensing Regulation to extend the expiry dates on some certificates that were due to expire between May 2020 and December 2020 – ensuring that child care spaces would not be closed due to expiring certification.</p> <p>Approximately 4,000 Early Childhood Educators and Early Childhood Educator Assistants were given an extra year to complete the requirements necessary to renew their certification.</p>	<p>Completed in 2020</p>
<p>Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Educators (EASE) at Home</p>	<p>To help parents and caregivers manage their children’s worries and anxieties during the pandemic, adapted EASE to create “EASE at Home” – launched on the Ministry of Education “Keep Learning BC” web portal. EASE at Home was also distributed to all school districts, including the First Nations Schools Association.</p>	<p>Completed in 2020</p>
<p>Supported increase to instalment of the Canada Child Benefit</p>	<p>In May 2020, families already receiving the Canada Child Benefit got a one-time \$300 boost per child. MCFD ensured that this increase was passed on to caregivers through the May maintenance rate payment. This \$300 boost gave parents tax-free money to help provide for their children during the pandemic.</p>	<p>Completed in 2020</p>
<p>Supporting contracted service providers during COVID-19</p>	<p>Worked with contracted service providers to ensure the continuity of services during the pandemic, ensuring that contracts were extended and renewed without interruption.</p> <p>Supported flexible approaches to the provision of essential services, including providing incremental funding to contracted service providers who were experiencing increased costs due to staff shortages, increased overtime and/or increased demand as a result of COVID-19 (March through to May 31, 2020).</p>	<p>Completed in 2020</p>
<p>Emergency Relief Support Fund for children and youth with support needs</p>	<p>As the pandemic limited access to in-person school and community-based services, government supported children and youth with support needs (CYSN) and their families by establishing a \$2.7 million short-term Emergency Relief Support Fund for children and youth with support needs and families deemed eligible for CYSN Family Support Services.</p> <p>This emergency funding supported approximately 3,000 families who had been waiting for support services. Funding could be used in a flexible manner to help alleviate some of their caregiving demands and support family well-being. Supports could include but were not limited to meal preparation and grocery shopping assistance, homemaker supports, caregiver relief, counseling services.</p> <p>This short-term Emergency Relief Fund for children and youth with support needs was available over two phases: from April 1 to June 30, 2020 and from July 1 to September 31, 2020. Eligible families received \$225 per month, depending on their needs.</p>	<p>Completed in 2020</p>

<p>Children and Youth with Support Needs Direct Funded / At Home Program Respite Funds - Flexible Use</p>	<p>Until March 31, 2022, families that receive MCFD Children and Youth with Support Needs Direct Funded / At Home Program respite funds can use this funding in a flexible manner and are not required to provide a record of respite expenses. For example, funds can be used for groceries, homemaker supports, on-line programs for children who are eligible, counseling services and other options that support family functioning and alleviate stress.</p> <p>This change has made it easier for families to get the supports they need, reduced the administrative burden for families through automatic renewals (providing families with the assurance that respite funding will continue) and streamlined the approval process.</p>	<p>Started in 2020</p>
<p>Temporary Suspension of Maintenance Payments for those with Special Needs Agreements and Voluntary Care Agreements</p>	<p>To provide temporary relief to parents, who may have been struggling with income, housing or other financial insecurities related to the pandemic, MCFD removed the requirement for families with children in care on a special needs agreement or a voluntary care agreement to make monthly maintenance payments between April 2020 to August 31, 2020.</p>	<p>Completed in 2020</p>
<p>COVID-19 Amendments to Agreements with Young Adults (AYA) program</p>	<p>In response to COVID-19, MCFD implemented a suite of emergency measures for young adults, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing them to stay in their current placements through the development of Temporary Housing/Support Agreements to March 2022. • Permitting young adults currently participating in the AYA Program whose post-secondary, vocational, life-skills or rehabilitative program was interrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic to continue receiving monthly AYA support up until September 30, 2021. • Amending low-barrier life-skills criteria and developing mental health/rehabilitative amendments to the existing AYA policy, to further support young adults through increasing access to the AYA program and greater flexibility to participate in rehabilitative and mental wellness services to meet their needs during COVID-19. <p>Temporary Housing/Support Agreements will allow youth to stay in place until March 2022 to align with B.C.'s Provincial Health Officer orders and prevent further escalation of youth homelessness.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Supporting service delivery during COVID-19</p>	<p>MCFD offices remained open, with measures in place to ensure the safety of staff, children, youth, families and community partners. Partnered with Delegated Aboriginal Agencies (DAAs) and began meeting on a regular basis to ensure that information is shared between DAAs and the ministry.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Childcare BC New Spaces Fund</p>	<p>In July 2020, the Province reached a child care milestone of funding nearly 16,800 new licensed spaces through its Childcare BC plan. By September 2020, the total funded spaces grew to more than 20,000 across Childcare BC's space-creation initiatives. This is the fastest space creation in B.C.'s history.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Wage enhancement for early childhood educators</p>	<p>Through the Province's wage enhancement program, eligible early childhood educators began receiving a \$1 per hour raise in September 2019 which increased to \$2 per hour in April 2020.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

MINISTRY OF CITIZENS' SERVICES		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
Housing and Homelessness	<p>Real Property Division transferred land in the Village of Queen Charlotte, Haida Gwaii at no cost to BC Housing, to support the Rapid Response to Homelessness initiative. A new, permanent supportive housing building with 19 units, including two accessible units, is available to people experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>Real Property Division transferred an approximately 240-acre parcel of land in Coquitlam to BC Housing, and is in the process of transferring an adjacent parcel. The site is being used to provide healing services and will be used to open safe and affordable housing. The Province, through BC Housing, and the Kwikwetlem First Nation are working in partnership to launch the master planning phase for the site's redevelopment.</p>	Ongoing
Strategic Acquisitions	To support programs with at-risk leases, Real Property Division has acquired buildings for critical program delivery in North Vancouver, Prince George, and Kelowna for Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction programming that delivers services to some of the most vulnerable people in the Province.	Ongoing
Connecting British Columbia	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the critical need to expand internet access to underserved households and locations in rural and remote areas of British Columbia:</p> <p>In April 2020, the \$50 million Connecting British Columbia program was expanded to include a Rapid Response funding stream to help internet service providers with immediate network equipment upgrades to rapidly improve capacity and internet speeds by June 2020.</p> <p>In September 2020, the program received a \$90-million, one-time grant as part of StrongerBC: B.C.'s Economic Recovery Plan to expand cellular access on highways and improve speed and performance of internet access in rural and Indigenous communities.</p>	Ongoing
Customer Service in Many Languages	A toll-free multilingual phone service through Service BC is improving accessibility for British Columbians. For speakers of Hausa, Cebuano or one of 140 other languages, real-time access to information in their mother tongue is now just a phone call away.	Ongoing

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
Framework for Enhanced Student Learning (FESL)	<p>During the 2019/20 school year, government successfully piloted the FESL in nine school districts. FESL provides a set of guiding principles for a system-wide commitment to improve student success and equity of outcomes for Indigenous students, children and youth in-care, and students with disabilities and diverse abilities.</p> <p>On July 6, 2020, the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Policy and the Enhancing Student Learning Reporting Order took effect that require boards of education to set, create and maintain a strategic plan, annually report on student outcomes and put systems in place to continuously improve the educational outcomes for all students and improve equity for Indigenous students, children and youth in care, and students with disabilities or diverse abilities.</p>	Ongoing
The BC Tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA)	Promotes systemic shifts and collective efforts that will support improved educational outcomes of all First Nation students in B.C., regardless of where they live or are enrolled in school. In 2020/21, 7,135 Indigenous learners living on-reserve were supported by \$3.8 million in transportation funding through BCTEA to access B.C. public schools.	Ongoing
Equity in Action Project	Provides equitable opportunities for Indigenous students to attend safe learning environments free from discrimination and racism. Fifteen additional school districts joined the project in 2020/2021 for a total of 46 school districts participating, representing 87 per cent of the Indigenous students in the province.	Ongoing
CommunityLINK	Provides funding to school districts for programs and services focused on vulnerable students. Annually, about 25 per cent of CommunityLINK funding is spent on food programs. Government invested \$54.3 million in the 2020/21 school year.	Ongoing
Amendments to the School Act	<p>As part of the Childcare BC Plan, government identified school property as a potential location for increasing the number of child care spaces. The Ministry of Education enacted enabling legislation in the School Act to support school boards to operate before and after school care directly, should they become licensed to do so, or to work in partnership with child care providers operating on school grounds.</p> <p>Boards are required to have a child care policy in place that addresses reconciliation and inclusive education commitments, while prioritizing available space on their properties for child care, when not being used for K-12 instruction. Boards must update their policies related to child care and must notify the Ministry of Education when there is a change to child care on board property.</p>	Started in 2020

First Nations and Youth in Care Protocol	The 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.	Started in 2020
A Pathway to Hope	The Province boosted funds for school-based wellness programs and supports by \$2 million, topping up the \$8.8-million investment over three years that was announced September 2019. This means that for the 2020/21 school year, school districts and independent school authorities received a total of \$3.75 million to promote mental wellness and provide additional supports for students, families and educators.	Ongoing
Increased COVID-19 funding relief in Budget 2020	Budget 2020 ensured B.C.'s education system had the highest school district operating and capital funding ever to support students. An additional \$288 million committed in combined one-time provincial and federal COVID-19 relief funding in 2020 kept B.C.'s K-12 schools safe during the pandemic for students and staff. These funds have now been allocated to both public and independent schools as well as funds for First Nations Education Steering Committee (\$8.2 million) and rapid response teams(\$900K) to aid schools in managing outbreaks.	Started in 2020
Mental Health in Schools Strategy	In September 2020, the Ministry of Education released the Mental Health in Schools (MHIS) Strategy which provides a vision and pathway for mental health in the B.C. K-12 education system, taking a system-wide approach to mental health promotion. This strategy embeds positive mental health and wellness programs and services for students in all areas including school culture, leadership, curriculum and learning environments through the three core elements of Compassionate Systems Leadership, Capacity Building and Mental Health in the Classroom. It represents the Ministry's commitment to implementing the priority actions identified in A Pathway to Hope for the improved wellness of children, youth and young adults.	Ongoing
Equity of Opportunity Supplement	The 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 \$23 million for the 2020/21 school year.	Started in 2020
Technology loans gave more children the opportunity to learn at home	More than 23,000 computers and devices were loaned out by school districts in every part of the province, so students could access the internet and continue their education while in-class learning was suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic.	Started in 2020
WE Well-being	The free, virtual WE Well-being program was launched as part of the new WE Schools @home program. The program is aimed at providing supports to families and youth who are experiencing anxiety and social isolation.	Ongoing

Education leaders helped students stay fed during pandemic	More than 16,000 families benefitted from 75,000 healthy meals and food boxes through CommunityLINK (Learning Includes Nutrition and Knowledge) and the B.C. School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program even while in-class instruction was suspended. In 2019/20, the Ministry of Education provided \$54.3 million to school districts through CommunityLINK, of which 25 per cent (\$13.3 million) was used for school food supports; the Ministry of Health provided \$4.5 million through the B.C. School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional program.	Ongoing
B.C.'s Gay-Straight or Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) meeting virtually	Students from the LGBTQ2S+ community, who were feeling vulnerable and disconnected from their peers and schools during the pandemic had more virtual opportunities to connect with each other via B.C.'s Gay-Straight or Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) virtual meet-ups. In 2020/21, the ministry provided \$350,000 to school district SOGI (sexual orientation and gender identity) supports, including GSAs, through a contracted delivery partner.	Started in 2020

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BRITISH COLUMBIA		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
COVID-19 Orders under the Emergency Program Act (EPA)	<p>Under the authority of the EPA and the Provincial State of Emergency declared on March 18, 2020, EMBC worked with ministries on more than 40 Ministerial Orders and seven Orders-In-Council to respond to the public safety impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and to reinforce public health orders issued by the Provincial Health Officer.</p> <p>Several orders were issued to assist vulnerable populations in the areas of housing, homelessness and homeless encampments, access to justice, employment and assistance, price gouging, among others. Actions included targeted consultations with independent officers of the Legislature such as the Human Rights Commissioner, the Ombudsperson and the Information and Privacy Commissioner, as well as organizations such as the First Nations Leadership Council, B.C. Civil Liberties Association, Ending Violence Association of B.C., and representatives of BIPOC organizations, among others.</p>	Started in 2020
COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream (CVRIS) – Adaptation, Resilience and Disaster Mitigation (ARDM)	CVRIS-ARDM is part of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP). EMBC sought applications under the ARDM stream for local and First Nation government projects in 2020. Persons living in poverty are often more vulnerable and susceptible to the negative consequences of emergency events. First Nations communities are particularly exposed to the impacts of natural disasters in many parts of B.C.	Started in 2020
Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF)	Support is provided to local authorities and First Nations through CEPF. CEPF funded 384 projects in 2020 totaling \$30.8 million.	Ongoing

Supporting Vulnerable Populations Displaced by Disasters	In 2020, government provided supports through the Emergency Support Services (ESS) program to vulnerable populations displaced by apartment fires. Funding was also provided through the Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) program for flooding, including significant flooding in January 2020 on B.C.'s south coast.	Ongoing
Modernizing B.C.'s Emergency Management Legislation	In 2020, government continued to engage with stakeholders including local and First Nation communities to help modernize B.C.'s emergency management legislation. The new legislation will reflect the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, a United Nations initiative that pays special attention to factors such as inequality and poverty.	Ongoing

MINISTRY OF ENERGY, MINES AND LOW CARBON INNOVATION		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
CleanBC Better Homes program	Offers rebates for high-efficiency natural gas furnaces and water heaters for low-income families. Up to 1,660 households will receive incentives for using high-efficiency heating equipment through 2020. Government invested \$1.3 million during 2019 and 2020. Offers energy coaching and high-value rebates for heat pumps in Indigenous communities, with \$2.3 million in incentives budgeted from 2020 to 2022.	Ongoing

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
Deposit/Refund Program	Government's deposit/refund system for beverage containers has been supporting low income and vulnerable populations for many years. These populations often gain a significant source of income from the collection and return of beverage containers to depots or retailers. The minimum refundable deposit of 5 cents for non-alcoholic beverage containers was increased to 10 cents in 2020 – effectively doubling the income associated with the collection of discarded beverage containers.	Ongoing
BC Parks Youth Employment	BC Parks and the Conservation Officer Service (COS) created opportunities to 25 youth in BC Parks and 17 in the COS in summer 2020.	Started in 2020
Love Food Hate Waste (LFHW)	Since joining LFHW Canada in 2018, B.C. has developed the only provincial partnership model in the country and has contributed \$150,000 to the program. Twenty-nine local governments (representing about 90% of the B.C. population) that have joined the provincial partnership model over the past three years. This program can save households up to \$1,400 per year through providing guidance and education on how to reduce food waste.	Ongoing

Energy Self-Sufficient Affordable Housing Development	Kanaka Bar Indian Band received \$390,000 from the CleanBC Communities Fund towards an energy self-sufficient affordable housing project powered by solar and wind technology to support the development of 20 affordable housing units in Lower Kanaka. The Crossing Place project aims to demonstrate a replicable, sustainable, resilient development where the foundations of clean air, water, food, shelter and energy meet to address public concern around climate change.	Started in 2020
Community Solar Gardens	The Lower Nicola Indian Band's Community Solar Gardens project received \$730,000 from the CleanBC Communities Fund to install solar photovoltaic panels on key First Nation community and residential buildings, including the arena, firehall, health building, community centre, waterworks buildings, and social housing rental buildings. This project will lower energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions, create a more resilient and self-sufficient energy future for the First Nation and further the path to reconciliation.	Started in 2020

MINISTRY OF FINANCE		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
B.C. child opportunity Benefit	The B.C. Child Opportunity Benefit was announced and enacted in Budget 2019. The program launched in October 2020 and is expected to support 290,000 families with children under the age of 19. The total estimated investment is \$380 million per year once the Benefit is fully implemented.	Ongoing
Fully eliminated MSP premiums	Medical Service Plan (MSP) premiums were cut in half in January 2019, removing a monthly financial burden for people in low-paying jobs who were not supported by premium assistance. MSP premiums were fully eliminated on Jan. 1, 2020. Eliminating MSP premiums has saved individuals up to \$900 a year and families as much as \$1,800 a year.	Completed in 2020
Temporary Pandemic Pay	As part of a cost-shared program with the federal government, a range of health, social service and corrections workers providing frontline support during the pandemic received a temporary pandemic pay. About 223,000 front-line workers received a lump-sum payment of about \$4 per hour for a 16-week period for recognized workplaces and roles between March and July 2020.	Completed in 2020
B.C. Emergency Benefit for Workers	British Columbians whose ability to work was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and received the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) were also able to apply for the BCEBW, a one-time, tax-free payment of \$1,000 for eligible British Columbians. The program also allowed for individuals who lost employment due to COVID-1 (during March 1, 2020 to March 14, 2020) to be eligible for the benefit. About 643,000 people received the benefit.	Completed in 2020

Climate Action Tax Credit – one-time enhanced payment	A one-time enhanced payment was made as part of the July 2020 payment as part of COVID-19 relief. The amount of the enhancement is up to \$174.50 per adult and \$51.25 per child. This is more than double the annual climate action tax credit amount for the July 2019 to June 2020 period. The payments were automatically deposited to individuals who filed their tax returns. An estimated 86% of families received this payment.	Completed in 2020
Climate Action Tax Credit Enhancement	This tax credit was enhanced on July 1, 2020 to help offset the impact of carbon taxes paid by low- and moderate-income individuals or families. The enhancement provided an increase of up to \$19.50 per year for an adult and \$5.50 per year for a child. Approximately 1.3 million individuals or households receive the benefit. The total estimated investment in 2020/21 is \$302 million.	Ongoing
GBA+ Training across the public service	Gender Equity Office delivers Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) training across the provincial public service to ensure an intersectional lens is applied to policy development. This was funded out of GEO's base budget.	Ongoing
Paid leave for victims of sexual abuse or domestic violence	Gender Equity Office held joint consultations with Labour to amend the Employment Standards Act to include paid leave for victims of sexual abuse or domestic violence. Amendments have since received royal assent.	Completed in 2020

MINISTRY OF FORESTS, LANDS, NATURAL RESOURCE OPERATIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program	\$100 million through the Stronger BC economic recovery initiative was allocated to projects to support economic recovery from COVID 19 impacts. Administered in partnership with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the Ministry of Tourism Arts and Culture, and the Ministry of Children and Family Development. FLNRORD was responsible for the \$20-million Rural Economic Recovery stream and the \$20-million Unique Heritage Infrastructure Stream. Consideration was given to projects in part based on their contribution towards immediately creating new employment or re-employing laid-off workers in applicant communities.	Started in 2020 (one-time grant funding)
Community Transition Teams	These cross-government teams are formed to assist rural communities and workers undergoing significant economic dislocation, such as the loss of a major employer. In 2019/20, full response community transition teams were established in Mackenzie, Fort St. James, Fort St. John, Quesnel, 100 Mile House/Clinton, Clearwater/Vavenby, and Merritt, with partial response teams to support industry closures on Haida Gwaii, in Kelowna and in Isle Pierre. An active team remains in Mackenzie, while the other teams have transitioned to monitoring and long-term economic development and diversification by FLNRORD's Regional Economic Operations branch.	Ongoing

Forest Employment Program (FEP)	The is a three-year \$15 million program, created in 2019 to provide short-term employment opportunities for contractors and workers in the Interior who have been affected by indefinite and permanent closures in the forest sector. In 2020/21, as part of the Province's COVID-19 economic recovery plan, FEP was expanded with an additional \$12 million to assist workers and contractors affected by the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the first two years FEP has funded over 200 projects and created over 500 employment opportunities	Ongoing – To be completed in 2021/22
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MINISTRY OF HEALTH		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
Partnership with Métis Nation BC	Since 2016/17, the Ministry of Health has provided \$200,000 in annual funding to Métis Nation BC to support the improved health and wellness of all Métis peoples in BC. In 2020, the Ministry of Health provided additional funding of \$80,000 specific to COVID-19 response.	Ongoing
Foundry	<p>Foundry centres bring existing core health and social services together in a single location where young people ages 12 to 24 can access the care they need, both in the community and online. Each integrated centre offers primary care, mental health and substance use services, social services (e.g. employment, educational, financial services), and youth and family peer supports. There are currently 11 Foundry centres open across the province, and eight more in development. From April-December 2020, a total of 13,684 unique youth accessed Foundry.</p> <p>Through the support of COVID-19 response funding, the province supported an accelerated launch of Foundry Virtual in April 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The initial suite of services offered, via MS Teams, were walk in counselling and peer support. From April 2020 to January 2021, Foundry Virtual provided supports to 1,029 unique youth through 2,499 visits. A further increase in demand is anticipated with the recent launch of the dedicated mobile app. 	Ongoing
Health Career Access Program	As part of StrongerBC: B.C.'s Economic Recovery Plan, the Health Career Access Program (HCAP) is a work-integrated learning program designed to increase the supply of health care assistants in BC and provide opportunities for British Columbians without prior healthcare education or experience to access high demand careers the health sector. This program will enable the recruitment of 3,000 entry level health care workers in long-term care homes, assisted living facilities, and health authority owned and operated home health services across the province.	Ongoing

<p>Increasing access to prescribed safer supply (i.e., pharmaceutical alternatives to toxic illicit drugs)</p>	<p>In September 2020 the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions announced it was developing policy to offer prescribed safer supply medications. Pharmaceutical alternatives to toxic illicit street drugs such as hydromorphone tablets, fentanyl patches, and other alternative medications may reduce the risk of overdose/drug poisoning and connect clients with health and social support services. Access to safer opioid supply enables improvements in other social and structural factors such as accessing housing, saving money, and affording food.</p> <p>On March 26, 2020, the Ministry of Health (MoH) and BC Centre on Substance Use (BCCSU) released the <i>Interim Clinical Guidance for Risk Mitigation in the Context of Dual Public Health Emergencies</i> to support individuals at risk of substance use-related harms exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic by improving access to prescribed pharmaceutical alternatives to illicit drugs.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Funding support for seniors</p>	<p>In 2019/20 the Ministry of Health provided \$55.4 million to the United Way of the Lower Mainland to support seniors’ supports for community service agencies throughout British Columbia. The United Way is using this funding to support three programs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Better at Home – to expand its Better at Home, which provides seniors with access to simple, non-medical home support services to help them stay independent in their own homes and connected to their communities for as long as possible. There are now 81 Better at Home programs, serving over 260 communities in BC. 2. To support its Integrated Community-Based Programs for Older Adults with Higher Needs – to expand 3 streams of demonstration programs for seniors at risk of isolation and frailty. 3. To support its Safe Seniors, Strong Communities (SSSC) –to develop the program in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This province-wide service matches community-based seniors whose regular support network has been disrupted by the pandemic, or whose need for support has increased as they self-isolate, with local volunteers to provide non-medical services. Services offered include grocery and pharmacy deliveries, and wellness visits. 	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>BC School Fruit & Vegetable Nutritional Program & Fresh to You Fundraiser</p>	<p>During in-class suspension in March and April 2020, due to COVID-19, the produce and milk from the School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program was redirected to charitable food organizations and school meal programs in support of vulnerable families.</p> <p>The related Fresh to You Fundraiser, that provides cost-neutral bundles of root vegetables and apples, was adapted to reach more remote communities and vulnerable families. For every bundle sold, a “caring bundle” was provided to a family in need. For communities that previously could not participate in the fundraiser due to the high cost of delivery in remote areas, additional funding was provided to remove this barrier. Over 60 Kg of produce was distributed in the fall 2020 fundraiser.</p>	<p>Completed in 2020</p>

<p>BC surpassed United Nations AIDS target</p>	<p>BC has surpassed a UN AIDS target and has seen a greater than 90 per cent decrease in people living with and dying from AIDS. In 2020, new HIV diagnoses reached the lowest annual level of 142 cases, down by approximately 85 per cent from the peak in 1987, when over 929 cases were diagnosed in B.C.</p> <p>In addition, a new walk-in clinic on Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside is now open to support people living with HIV, opioid addictions, mental health and other health issues, including hepatitis C. The clinic is named Hope to Health Research and Innovation.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Rural, Remote, First Nations and Indigenous COVID-19 Response Framework (the Framework)</p>	<p>In April 2020 the Framework was announced to improve health-care services and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including: improved medical transportation options to larger centres; options for people looking to self-isolate in their home communities and community cohort center to support safe isolation near larger centres with more medical services; new and faster COVID-19 testing technology; culturally safe contact tracing; access to Virtual Doctor of the Day; increased mental-health supports in communities.</p> <p>The Framework is intended to address the persistent social and health inequities that Indigenous communities and people experience. 55 ambulances and 5 air resources were added as part of the framework. Up to approximately \$48.2 million in 2020/21 was allocated to support virtual emergency physician services, virtual care teams in regional health authorities and the Provincial Health Services Authority and isolation/ community supports being managed through the First Nations Health Authority.</p>	<p>Started in 2020</p>
<p>Family Caregivers of B.C.</p>	<p>As part of B.C.’s emergency COVID-19 response plan, the Province doubled funding in 2020 for Family Caregivers of British Columbia to \$1 million, helping support both caregivers and seniors. This funding allowed Family Caregivers of B.C. to enhance services during the COVID-19 pandemic, so caregivers could get the increased support they needed to help seniors remain at home, such as expanded toll-free support line hours, emotional supports and health-care navigation.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Provincial Food Security Framework</p>	<p>The Ministry of Health and SDPR are co-chairing a cross-government food security steering committee that was convened to lead the development of a coordinated provincial approach to food security. This work will help guide food security planning for sustained action to achieve long term outcomes; provide a mechanism for the Province to respond effectively in future emergencies; and support population groups at higher risk for food insecurity.</p>	<p>Started in 2020</p>

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
COVID-19 relief funding for BC's Aboriginal Friendship Centres	One-time COVID-19 relief funding of \$7.8 million was provided in 2020/21 to the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) to help friendship centres meet the increased demand for services to assist Indigenous people living in urban areas both in-person and online. The grant helps to provide supports like meals and hampers, care packages for seniors and education kits for children. It also helps to keep staff and clients safe with new handwashing stations sanitization and personal protective equipment.	Started in 2020
Unified Aboriginal Youth Collective (UAYC)	In 2020, the Province provided support for the UAYC to build capacity for Indigenous youth organizations to engage with government and with their youth constituency, as well as mentorship, leadership skills and succession planning within youth organizations. Current members of the UAYC include: BC Assembly of First Nations, BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres – Provincial Aboriginal Youth Council, First Nations Youth Council of BC, Métis Youth British Columbia. The UAYC continues to meet virtually to unify the diverse groups of Indigenous youth in British Columbia to establish a common voice.	Ongoing
Engagement on the development of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act action plan	Initial engagement with Indigenous partners was undertaken to inform the development of the <i>Declaration Act</i> action plan in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples in B.C. Methods of engagement adhered to public health orders resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, and included one-on-one meetings, teleconferences, presentations, and written submissions. Early engagement began in summer 2020 and concluded in early 2021 when preparation of the consultation draft action plan began. Early engagement included over 75 Indigenous partners, including governments and organizations, 30 of whom submitted written submissions. Further consultation with Indigenous peoples on the draft action plan will take place before the action plan is finalized. The draft action plan includes a range of actions that will contribute to poverty reduction amongst Indigenous peoples in B.C.	Ongoing

MINISTRY OF LABOUR		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act (TFWPA)	Following the establishment of the recruiter licensing regime in 2019, the TFW employer registry requirement came into force in 2020, along with prohibited practices such as distributing false information about employment opportunities, threatening deportation without legal cause or charging fees to TFWs.	Completed in 2020

<p>Amendments to the Employment Standards Act</p>	<p>In response to the COVID-19 public health emergency changes were made to the <i>Employment Standards Act</i> (Act) to better support workers and employers both during the COVID-19 public health emergency and in the long term. These changes include: unpaid, job-protected COVID-19-related leave for workers unable to work for reasons relating to COVID-19; and, up to three days' unpaid, job-protected leave for personal illness or injury each year, a permanent change to the Act that brought B.C. in alignment with the rest of Canada.</p> <p>Changes were also made to the Employment Standards Regulation (ESR) in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency. These changes include extension of the term for a temporary layoff to 16 weeks (previously 13) in any period of 20 consecutive weeks if the COVID-19 emergency is a cause of all or part of the layoff. A further extension was made to the temporary layoff period to 24 weeks, in any period of 28 consecutive weeks ending on or before August 30, 2020. The ESR was amended to allow the Employment Standards Branch (ESB) to "streamline" the approval process for temporary layoff variance requests for when the 24-week "COVID-19 emergency lay-off" period ends.</p>	<p>Completed in 2020</p>
<p>Changes to Workers Compensation Act</p>	<p>Changes to the <i>Worker Compensation Act</i> following three expert reviews will advance worker safety. The changes include: raising the maximum annual salary amount on which workers' compensation benefits are based; authorizing WorkSafeBC to provide preventative medical treatment before a claim is decided; giving powers to the court to issue WorkSafeBC search and seizure warrants that are appropriate for investigating workplace safety infractions; and giving people a voice in serious workplace prosecutions and trials by using victim impact statements.</p> <p>The 90-day waiting period has been removed for bringing a regulation into effect that creates a presumption of work-relatedness for infections caused by communicable viral pathogens, including COVID-19.</p>	<p>Completed in 2020</p>
<p>Amendments to Domestic and Sexual Violence Leave</p>	<p>New legislation was introduced to modify the 2019 amendments to the <i>Employment Standards Act</i> by replacing 10 days of unpaid leave for employees impacted by domestic or sexual violence, or parents of a child or dependents impacted by this kind of violence, with five paid days leave and five unpaid days leave. This is in addition to the existing entitlement to 15 weeks unpaid leave.</p>	<p>Completed in 2020</p>
<p>Minimum wage increase</p>	<p>On June 1, 2020, the general hourly minimum wage increased to \$14.60. The minimum wage rates for liquor servers, resident caretakers and live-in camp leaders also increased.</p> <p>These increases for low-wage workers are the third of four planned increases scheduled to take place on June 1 of each year since 2018. The increases are the result of recommendations from the independent Fair Wages Commission, established in 2017 to advise government on an approach to raising provincial minimum wages.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

MINISTRY OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
#Heretotalk	Early in the pandemic, government accelerated the launch of #heretotalk to ensure post-secondary students in B.C. had immediate access to mental health supports during an unprecedented time of worry and uncertainty about the future. This dedicated service provides 24/7 access to virtual counselling and referral for post-secondary students.	Ongoing
24/7 Addiction Medicine Clinician Support Line	The 24-hour/7-day-a-week Addiction Medicine Clinician Support Line was launched on June 16, 2020, by the BC Centre on Substance Use (BCCSU). The support line is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to provide rapid response for time-sensitive clinical substance-use inquiries. Addiction medicine experts provide telephone consultation to physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses and pharmacists who are involved in addiction and substance-use care, treatment and recovery in British Columbia.	Started in 2020
Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)	People living with severe mental health challenges in British Columbia were provided with increased access to 24/7 community-based supports and services through six new Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams in the Comox Valley, Cowichan Valley, Kelowna, Maple Ridge, Vancouver and Victoria.	Ongoing
Bed-Based Expansion Grants	The Province invested \$13.5 million over three years to improve access to quality and evidence-informed treatment and recovery services by increasing the number of publicly funded beds for people struggling with substance use challenges. The grant funding is being directed through the Canadian Mental Health Association – BC Division, and has ultimately resulted in the addition of more than 100 new publicly funded beds across 14 organizations.	Ongoing
Community Action Teams	In 2020, the Ministry of Health provided \$2.75 Million to Community Action Initiative to administer grants for 36 Community Action Teams located in priority communities across British Columbia. Originally established in 2018, Community Action Teams spearhead local coordination and communication to mount a robust response to the needs of those most at risk of overdose in their communities.	Ongoing
Life-saving overdose prevention, treatment and supports	Overdose prevention services including inhalation services and inhalation supplies, expanded access to integrated interdisciplinary outreach teams, and expanded access to nursing care were supported as part of \$10.5 million to respond to the overdose crisis. Expanding overdose prevention services and connecting people to treatment and supports is an integral part of A Pathway to Hope, B.C.'s roadmap for making mental health and addictions care better for people in British Columbia.	Ongoing
Lifeguard Mobile Application	On May 20, 2020, the Provincial Health Services Authority launched the Lifeguard mobile application which is intended to reduce the risk of fatal overdose for individuals using alone and who have access to a cell phone with WIFI and/or data.	Completed in 2020

Mental health services to respond to the pandemic	The Province spent \$5 million to expand existing mental health services and launch new virtual programs to help British Columbians cope with the pandemic. The funding, announced in March 2020, will also increase access to support for Indigenous communities and people living in remote and rural parts of the province and expand free online counselling services like BounceBackBC and Foundry Virtual.	Ongoing
Mental health supports for workers in long-term care and continuing care	<p>The Province invested \$985,000 in the creation of new targeted mental health resources to address the increased stress, fear and anxiety facing workers and leaders in long-term care. A partnership with CMHA-BC and SafeCare BC resulted in a dynamic website, www.careforcaregivers.ca that hosts weekly webinars, and a peer support service, Care to Speak. Targeted marketing campaigns throughout the year profile the services. The new initiatives are guided by an Advisory Committee, which includes union and employer representatives.</p> <p>The existing Mobile Response Team worked within its existing funding to target outreach to long-term care centres. Psychological supports are being offered to individuals and teams across the province.</p>	Ongoing
Moms Stop the Harm for the provision of family support services	Funding was provided to Moms Stop the Harm through the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions' Community Crisis Innovation Fund to support families affected by a loved one's substance use and families grieving the loss of a loved one due to illicit drug toxicity. In addition, funding will be used for capacity building, stigma reduction activities.	Ongoing
Pilot projects for safer supply	<p>In July 2020, the federal and provincial government announced \$2 million for a pilot project within Island Health to provide pharmaceutical-grade medication as an alternative to the toxic illegal drug supply for people in Cowichan Valley who have not responded to other forms of treatment for opioid use disorder.</p> <p>To address inequities in access to treatment and substance use services for opioid use disorder and decrease deaths from substance use, Registered nurses (RNs) and Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs) have been enabled to prescribe opioid agonist therapy (OAT) via a Provincial Public Health order. The Ministry of Health and Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions (MMHA) are working in partnership with the British Columbia Centre on Substance Use (BCCSU) and health authorities to support the educational preparation and experience of RNs/ RPNs to facilitate testing, diagnosing, prescribing of controlled drugs, and referring to primary or specialist care for individuals with a substance use condition or disorder.</p>	Started in 2020
Risk Mitigation in the Context of Dual Public Health Emergencies	To reduce the spread of COVID-19, the BC Centre for Substance Use (BCCSU) with the support of the Province, issued the interim clinical guidance document: Risk Mitigation in the Context of Dual Public Health Emergencies on March 26, 2020. The guidance supports people who are at risk of COVID-19 infection, people who have a confirmed infection or a suspected case pending diagnosis and people who have a history of substance use, including opioids, stimulants, alcohol, benzodiazepines or tobacco.	Completed in 2020

<p>Provincial Peer Network (the Network)</p>	<p>As part of <i>A Pathway to Hope: A roadmap for making mental health and addictions care better for people in British Columbia</i>, the Province has provided over \$2.5 million since 2018 to support the development of organizations representing people with lived and living experience of drug use through the Network.</p> <p>In 2020, The funding supported 12 drug user groups across the province: two in the Island Health region, two in Vancouver Coastal Health, three in Northern Health, two in Fraser and two in the Interior. The goal of the Network is to strengthen collaboration and information sharing between peer-led organizations through regional and provincial training and the development of a network structure, to ensure that the provincial overdose emergency response is effective in saving lives and connecting people to harm reduction, treatment and recovery.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Rural, Remote, and Indigenous Overdose grants</p>	<p>\$1.3 million for one-time grants was provided to community groups, service providers and Indigenous-led organizations to support rural, remote and Indigenous communities in responding to the overdose crisis. This funding flowed to communities on April 2021.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Substance use teams keep people connected to services, treatment</p>	<p>People who use substances in B.C. were given greater access to ongoing support and health care services with new and expanded substance use teams to help people stay connected to health care services and treatment. The services are tailored to the needs in each community and are comprised of a range of professionals working together, including nurses, counsellors, social workers and peers to provide individualized, person-centered care.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Suicide prevention programs support Indigenous youth and post-secondary students</p>	<p>To support the wellness of Indigenous youth, who are disproportionately impacted by suicide, the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) received \$800,000. An additional \$200,000 supports Métis Nation BC to promote youth wellness. Another \$1.3 million will support the Canadian Mental Health Association – BC Division (CMHA-BC) to expand and enhance suicide prevention programs available, including a series of grants administered to post-secondary institutions.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Traverse</p>	<p>Announced in 2020, Traverse, a new treatment centre in Chilliwack, is now providing specialized support for youth in the Fraser Health region who are living with substance-use challenges. The 20-bed centre is the first of its kind in the region that exclusively supports young people ages 13 to 18 years old who require an extended stay in a treatment facility to address their substance-use challenges.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Treatment and Supportive Recovery COVID-19 Support Grant</p>	<p>The Province invested \$2.5 million to support operators of existing bed-based treatment and recovery services that were challenged by COVID-19. The funding supported maintenance of quality of care and ensured continued availability of services.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Westminster House Society	The Province renewed its commitment to Westminster House Society, a long-term residential recovery centre based in New Westminster tailored specifically for women with addictions. The society received \$45,000 to fund crucial services for its wellness program to continue supporting women and girls living with addictions challenges on their pathway to healing and hope.	Completed in 2020
Youth treatment beds doubled	More youth had access to treatment in their communities, thanks to an investment that doubled the number of treatment beds for youth struggling with addictions in B.C. Young people aged 12 to 24 and their families benefitted from 123 new beds for youth substance-use treatment and withdrawal-management beds. The \$36-million investment through 2022/23 will be focused on areas of greatest need. These new youth beds are part of the full continuum of care government is building for young people and will be connected to culturally safe, youth-specific services in the community.	Ongoing

MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
Community Gaming Grants	<p>Community Gaming Grants provide approximately \$140 million each year to support nearly 5,000 not-for-profit organizations that deliver services to people throughout British Columbia. Nearly 1,500 not-for-profit organizations in the human and social services sector receive approximately \$65 million annually in Community Gaming Grants to programs delivered in communities throughout B.C. Organizations in this sector include food banks, shelters, domestic violence services, counselling services, hospices and many others serving low-income and vulnerable populations.</p> <p>In 2020 the Province made changes to the program to make it easier for non-profit organizations to adapt and continue to provide vital services to British Columbians during the pandemic. Applications for the human and social services sector opened two months earlier to respond to the increased demand this sector was facing. Financial eligibility requirements were relaxed to not penalize organizations experiencing interruptions to their programming or those receiving emergency government assistance. Capital projects or acquisitions needed to modify how programs and services are delivered, or due to increased demand during the COVID-19 pandemic, were given additional weight during the selection process, and the matching funds requirement was reduced from 50 per cent to 20 per cent.</p>	Ongoing

Launch and implement BC's Strategic Plan for Public Library Service	The plan is a guiding vision to support B.C.'s public library service, with the goal of enhancing the capacity of libraries to deliver services people rely on. The plan aims to enable learners of all ages to reach their full potential by helping them to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to excel in a prosperous and sustainable economy. The actions outlined in the plan are informed by cross-government initiatives, including TogetherBC People in all types of socio-economic circumstances rely on library services for the opportunity to apply for jobs, access government information and develop or improve literacy skills to participate more fully in all that communities offer. In March 2020, \$3 million was given directly to libraries to increase province-wide access to digital library collections, enhance internet connectivity and support technology upgrades. (see an example of public library technology grant details below).	Started in 2020
Public Library Technology Grants (targeted, one-time)	B.C.'s 71 public libraries received \$1.2 million to enhance digital and connectivity services. This is being achieved through expansion of external Wi-Fi capabilities; offering community digital literacy training; enhancing virtual library programs; and purchasing lendable technology, such as scanners, tablets, microphones and cameras for people to use and borrow for free. These programs and services ensure people have access to technology that can help them apply for jobs, access government programs, and learn new skills. This is particularly important for people without stable connectivity or limited digital literacy skills.	Started in 2020
BC Settlement and Integration Services	The BC Settlement and Integration Services Program assists vulnerable foreign workers by providing information on workplace rights and offering supports in the event of workplace safety/employment standards violations. Over 20,000 clients are served per year, and \$5.9 million is provided annually.	Ongoing
Career Paths for Skilled Immigrants	The Career Paths for Skilled Immigrants helps newcomers obtain employment in their field. The program has approximately 1,600 clients per year. Seventy per cent of clients obtain employment in their field upon program completion. Approximately \$5.8 million in provincial funding is provided annually, supplemented by \$2 million from the federal government.	Ongoing

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SOLICITOR GENERAL		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
Community Supports Initiative	Eligible individuals leaving correctional centres or reporting to community corrections' offices are being referred to the John Howard Society of the Pacific Region Community Support Initiatives program for outreach supports and rental subsidies. This program is in response to COVID-19 and is funded by BC Housing.	Started in 2020

Victim Service and Violence Against Women Programs	<p>Budget 2018 increased annual funding by \$5 million starting in 2018/19, which was further increased by an additional \$3 million in 2020/21, for a total increase of \$8 million annually, to better meet the ongoing demand for programs and services such as counselling, court support programs, outreach and crisis support for women and children who experience domestic violence, sexual assault and other crimes. In 2020, the ministry provided over \$40 million to support over 400 victim service and violence against women programs across the province.</p> <p>In 2020, 49,349 new clients were supported/served across the ministry's 160+ contracted police- and community-based victim service programs.</p>	Ongoing
Emergency Sexual Assault Services Grant Program	<p>In March 2020, the ministry provided \$10 million for a multi-year grant program to support the delivery of coordinated emergency sexual assault response services throughout B.C., in partnership with the Ending Violence Association of BC (EVA BC), the Ministry of Finance - Gender Equity Office, Ministry of Health, the Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women (MACIW) and Reciprocal Consulting. This grant program supports organizations in delivering community-based emergency sexual assault response services that are trauma-informed and culturally appropriate. There are 10 programs delivered by Indigenous organizations for Indigenous survivors and 13 programs that serve all survivors of sexual assault.</p>	Started in 2020
Civil Forfeiture Crime Prevention and Remediation Program	<p>Individuals experiencing gender-based violence, Indigenous communities healing from intergenerational traumas, and communities and families dealing with gun and gang violence benefitted from \$11.8 million in grants to support community-based crime prevention and remediation initiatives. In total, 267 projects – led by community not-for-profits, school districts and others – received a one-time grant through the Civil Forfeiture Crime Prevention and Remediation Grant Program in March 2020.</p> <p>The program provides one-time funding to support community-based projects using the proceeds from the civil forfeiture process. The Civil Forfeiture Office works to remove the profits from unlawful activity by taking away the proceeds and assets used in crime and reinvesting them in community safety and crime prevention.</p>	Ongoing
ICBC Enhanced Care	<p>ICBC Enhanced Care was announced in February 2020 for an implementation date of May 1, 2021. The legislation passed in August 2020, and regulations were passed in early 2021. ICBC Enhanced Care provides better vehicle insurance coverage at a lower price and eliminates the need for costly legal representation in most cases.</p>	Ongoing
ICBC Income Supports	<p>ICBC provided a vehicle insurance rebate to drivers based on the net claims savings during the COVID-19 pandemic. From April 1 to September 30, 2020, ICBC realized net claims savings of \$600 million which was returned to customers.</p>	Rebates were issued by ICBC in March/April 2021

Gambling Supports BC	<p>The highest risk demographics include low-income households (who spend a higher proportion of disposable income on gambling), youth (18-24), and Indigenous, Asian and Southern Asian demographics. Problem gamblers are over-represented in bankruptcy proceedings and debt counselling services.</p> <p>The Responsible and Problem Gambling Program provides public education, early intervention, support and treatment to prevent or treat the negative impacts of gambling products with multicultural and multilingual services.</p> <p>The Narrative Therapy Initiative is a community-based “train the trainer” program specifically designed for Indigenous communities and service providers working in those communities. It is intended to enhance the existing skills and knowledge of Indigenous participants in the helping field.</p> <p>In 2020, a Balance Film was produced about historical Indigenous practices on gaming and gambling and how they were used in socio-cultural practices, as well as an Indigenous Health Practices documentary. Ya’guudang was produced on Haida Gwaii.</p> <p>A community outreach service stream offers a triaged, supported referral to appropriate community supports. As a result of COVID-19, services were expanded in telephone and video counselling. Existing prevention supports continue to be provided online including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choices & Chances, a self-help website; • Podcast ‘Hold EM’; and • iMinds which is a web-based teaching module scaled for the Ministry of Education new teaching curriculum. 	Ongoing
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MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
COVID-19 Crisis Supplement	For everyone on income assistance or disability assistance who was not eligible for the emergency federal support programs, including the CERB, the Province provided an automatic \$300-monthly COVID-19 crisis supplement from April to December 2020. This supplement was also provided to low-income seniors who receive the B.C. Senior’s Supplement.	Started and Completed in 2020
Emergency supports for home share and support service providers	As part of the B.C. Government’s \$5 billion COVID-19 Action Plan, up to \$35.6 million was made available over three months from Community Living BC (CLBC) to support service providers to continue delivering residential services, including group homes, home sharing and supported independent living that about 9,500 adults with developmental disabilities count on.	Started in 2020

<p>Amendments to the Employment and Assistance Act and the Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act</p>	<p>Changes to the Employment and Assistance Act and the Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act and regulations took effect on Jan. 1, 2020. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ending the requirement for seniors to pursue Canada Pension Plan retirement benefits before the age of 65 • Expanding access to security deposits and introducing a pet damage deposit • Amending the definition of spouse • Eliminating the two-year independence rule • Improving the information and verification requirements for clients who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness • Increasing the crisis supplement for shelter • Expanding supports for recipients of hardship assistance • Streamlining the application process for clients returning to assistance • Establishing maximum repayments of debt for clients 	<p>Completed in 2020</p>
<p>Federal Employment Insurance Benefits Exemptions</p>	<p>For people in B.C. receiving income assistance or disability assistance, the Province temporarily exempted federal employment insurance benefits, including the \$2,000 Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and the Canada Recovery Benefit. These payments were fully exempted for people receiving income assistance and disability assistance in B.C. without any reductions to their monthly assistance payments.</p> <p>The ministry also exempted the Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB), the one-time OAS/GIS COVID-19 relief payments for seniors, and the one-time payments for individuals eligible for the federal Disability Tax Credit (DTC).</p>	<p>Started in 2020</p>
<p>Grants awarded to promote inclusion</p>	<p>In May 2020, as part of the Province’s ongoing commitment to increasing accessibility and improving community inclusion, government announced funding for community-based accessibility projects. Out of 72 applicants, 14 were selected to receive grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$40,000, depending on the size and scope of the project.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>WorkBC Community and Employer Partnerships (CEP)</p>	<p>The CEP investment target for 2020/21 was \$15 million. Over the 2020/21 fiscal year, CEP experienced a significant increase in application volume and as a result, surpassed the investment target. As of March 31, 2021, over \$25 million had been committed to fund 141 projects throughout the province including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 112 training and work experience projects • 23 labour market studies • 6 research projects <p>During 2020/21 CEP prioritized 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.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Work Experience Opportunities Grants	As part of Stronger BC, Work Experience Opportunity Grants (WEOG) were made available through an application process for eligible organizations to provide 12-week work experience opportunities for vulnerable individuals impacted by COVID-19. The amount of the grant was \$5,000 per participant (\$3,600 minimum stipend, \$1,400 for administration and supports) to a maximum of \$50,000 per organization. The stipend for work experience participants has been exempted as income for income and disability assistance.	Started in 2020
UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program	In September 2019, the Province provided \$5 million to UBCM for the Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program. In 2020, 34 projects involving 63 local government totaling \$1.7 million were funded through the first intake. The second intake of the program was opened in December 2020.	Ongoing

MINISTRY OF TOURISM, ARTS, CULTURE AND SPORT		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
BC Arts Council (BCAC) Funding: First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) Indigenous Arts Scholarship	BCAC worked with FPCC to develop their inaugural \$200,000 scholarship fund for Indigenous students to pursue traditional mentorships and post-secondary education. The first intake was in early 2020 and has continued into 2021.	Started in 2020
BCAC Funding: First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) Indigenous Arts Program	Indigenous peoples face additional barriers to participate in the arts. In 2020, BCAC provided \$1.5 million (in addition to the above) to FPCC to support its Indigenous Arts Program, a continuation of a 25-year partnership to directly support Indigenous artists, communities and cultural practices. Indigenous Arts and Culture is a priority of the BCAC strategic plan. In addition, FPCC raised its maximum awards for individual Artists from \$5000 to \$10,000, towards parity with the greater sector. In 2020/21 FPCC, in partnership with the BCAC, provided over 125 grants.	Ongoing
Repatriation of First Nations ancestral remains and cultural objects	First Nations communities and organizations received grants to support repatriation planning, build capacity to take on repatriation projects and encourage collaboration with cultural organizations. Government provided \$500,000 to the BC Museums Association to provide a range of grants to support communities at different stages of the repatriation process. These grants follow the Province's \$2-million investment over three years to the Royal BC Museum for repatriation activities.	Started in 2020
KidSport	One in three Canadian kids are kept out of organized sport because of the costs, especially kids from marginalized or remote communities. In 2019/20 the B.C. government invested \$400,000 into KidSport BC to increase participation for kids who have traditionally faced financial barriers to getting involved in sport and recreation, including underrepresented population groups such as girls and new Canadians. In B.C. this program reaches more than 7,000 kids each year.	Ongoing

<p>BCAC– COVID-19 Sector Support</p>	<p>The arts and culture sector was one of the hardest-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. The restrictions around mass gatherings impacted organizations as well as artists, most of whom work in the gig economy.</p> <p>The B.C. government provided \$35 million through StrongerBC: B.C.’s Economic Recovery Plan to support relief and recovery for artists and arts and culture organizations. BCAC provided two supplements throughout the year and launched the \$5.3-million Pivot Program to help organizations adapt their programs and practices in response to the pandemic.</p> <p>As part of Stronger BC, BCAC responded quickly with the following initiatives in 2020:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Launched \$3-million Arts and Culture Resilience Supplement as a quick response to help arts and culture organizations with the impact of COVID-19. 2. Provided \$15.7 million through the Expanded Arts and Culture Resilience Supplement to help give organizations certainty and flexibility as they budgeted for the year. 3. Launched a \$158,000 microgrant pilot program to support artists to continue to make art and develop their practice during the pandemic. 	<p>Started in 2020</p>
<p>After School Sports and Arts Initiative (ASSAI)</p>	<p>ASSAI is a free program that helps children facing barriers to sport and arts participation (financial, geographical, cultural, or transportation). Kids can gain physical, socio-emotional and cognitive skills, as well as a sense of belonging to their school and community. Each year, nearly 10,000 students participate in ASSAI including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150 schools in 22 school districts; and • Over 50 rural, urban and remote communities. <p>From April to June 2020, public health restrictions limited sport and arts activities, with vulnerable students disproportionately affected, including the sudden loss of free in- person programming with trusted adults and greater food insecurity. ASSAI school districts responded to the challenges brought forward by COVID-19. From April to June 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 73% of ASSAI school districts pivoted to online programming; • Over 3,300 ASSAI participants took part in online programming; and • Almost 4,000 kits were distributed to families with art supplies, sport equipment and healthy snacks. <p>In fall 2020, in-person ASSAI programs in 21 school districts re-opened, with strict health and safety protocols, to support the physical and mental health of vulnerable youth.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

<p>Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Council (I-SPARC)</p>	<p>To support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s recommendations 87-91, the Province provides \$1.4 million to I-SPARC. I-SPARC works through a number of initiatives to improve health outcomes of Indigenous people through sport and recreation opportunities. In the past eight years more than 135,000 Indigenous people have been reached through their programming.</p> <p>The Province also invested \$1.46 million to offset fees and travel costs for Indigenous athletes and coaches of Team BC for the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG). Due to the pandemic, the event was postponed, and the investment will be carried forward to the next NAIG.</p> <p>When the pandemic resulted in the suspension of sport, I-SPARC provided virtual programming such as FitNation. The Ministry also directed \$100,000 of the federal government’s COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund for Sport Organizations to I-SPARC to ensure it could keep operating.</p> <p>Also, each year, I-SPARC hosts the Premier’s Awards for Aboriginal Youth Excellence in Sport. These awards recognize Indigenous athletes under 25 years of age who have achieved excellence in performance sport, are highly regarded in their community for leadership qualities, and commitment to pursuing a higher education. The regional award recipients serve as nominees for the provincial awards.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
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BC HOUSING		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
Community Housing Fund	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. As of December 31, 2020, 6,121 units were in progress. Of these, 204 units were completed, and the remainder were underway.	Ongoing
Women’s Transition Housing Fund	This program will provide \$734 million over 10 years to build 1,500 new supportive homes for women and children fleeing violence, including transition houses, safe homes, second-stage and long-term housing. As of December 31, 2020, 699 units were in progress. Of these, 68 units were completed, and the remainder were underway.	Ongoing
Supportive Housing Fund	This program will provide \$1.2 billion over 10 years to build and operate 2,500 units of supportive housing for those who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. As of December 31, 2020, 1,894 units were in progress. Of these, 554 units were completed, and the remainder were underway.	Ongoing

Indigenous Housing Fund	This program will provide \$550 million over 10 years to build and operate 1,750 units of social housing for projects, both on and off Nation, in First Nations communities. As of December 31, 2020, 1,093 units were in progress. Of these, 378 units were under construction, and the remainder were underway.	Ongoing
Rapid Response to Homelessness initiative	As part of the Budget 2017 Update, the Province announced an investment of \$291 million to build 2,000 modular housing units for those who are experiencing homelessness. In addition, \$170 million will be invested over three years to operate the housing and provide support services. As of December 31, 2020, there were 1,995 units in progress. Of these, 1,894 units were completed, and the remainder were underway.	Ongoing
COVID-19 Hotel Leases and Acquisitions	<p>BC Housing worked closely with regional health authorities, municipalities and experienced non-profit shelter and housing providers in developing community-based response plans to the COVID-19 outbreak. This includes identifying hotels, motels and community centres for temporary accommodation sites and emergency response centres.</p> <p>These sites served many purposes, including assisting vulnerable people with a safe place to self-isolate, assisting existing shelters by spreading people out and assisting hospitals by freeing up acute care beds. The number of spaces secured in hotels, motels and community centres across the province fluctuate.</p> <p>In addition to leasing these sites, BC Housing has also acquired hotels. As of December 31, 2020, the Province, through BC Housing, has acquired 6 hotels under a \$5 billion COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery plan that aims to provide temporary supportive housing during the pandemic</p>	Ongoing
Navigation Centres	<p>Work is underway on Budget 2020's commitment to provide \$9 million over three years (\$1.5 million per centre per year) to create two new navigation centres with approximately 60 beds each. The sites will be in Vancouver and Nanaimo. Locations and non-profit operators are being finalized.</p> <p>BC Housing will provide annual operating funding for both locations to the selected operator plus one-time funding for building renovations and start-up costs. The navigation centre model responds to limitations or barriers of the existing shelter model, offering more capacity, and an environment with higher levels of support services.</p>	Ongoing
Temporary Rental Supplement (TRS)	The Temporary Rental Supplement (TRS) program gave tenants and landlords temporary support towards rent payments from April to August 2020 for low- and moderate-income renters who lost income as a result of COVID-19. Payments were made directly to the landlords of eligible households. The program helped 87,000 households make their rent payments.	Completed in 2020

Personal Protective Equipment, cleaning Supplies, food security	In response to the pandemic, BC Housing has distributed personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies to directly managed buildings and non-profit housing for staff and clients. BC Housing has also delivered meals to seniors, families and individuals living in social housing to address food insecurity for low-income households.	Ongoing
Relocated people from Oppenheimer, Pandora and Topaz encampments	In spring 2020, the Province helped move over 600 people living in unsafe, dense encampments at Oppenheimer Park, Pandora Avenue and Topaz Park into safe spaces. BC Housing led a coordinated plan to support people to move out of the encampments and into temporary accommodations. These accommodations were an interim solution to reduce homelessness and help prevent the spread of COVID-19.	Ongoing

BC HYDRO		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
BC Hydro Customer Crisis Fund Pilot Project	<p>The Customer Crisis Fund Pilot, a three-year pilot project launched in June 2018, offers support for BC Hydro residential customers who are facing disconnection of their electricity service, due to a temporary financial crisis. The pilot ends April 2021.</p> <p>During 2020, 5,656 grants totaling \$2.13 million were distributed to eligible customers experiencing temporary financial crisis. About 94 per cent of recipients indicated that they would have had to go without some necessities of living without support from the grant.</p>	Ongoing
BC Hydro Indigenous Communities Conservation Program (ICCP)	<p>The BC Hydro and FortisBC ICCP supports Indigenous communities looking to improve the energy efficiency and comfort in their community's homes. Through the two program streams, Indigenous communities can receive training, free energy-saving products and rebates to implement home energy upgrades for their community members. In 2020/21:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five communities installed energy-saving products and completed home assessments in 237 homes with support from ICCP Stream 1. • Nine communities completed energy efficiency upgrades/retrofits in 145 homes with support from ICCP Stream 2. 	Ongoing
Low-Income Conservation Programs	<p>BC Hydro, in partnership with FortisBC, has two offers for eligible low-income households – the Energy Conservation Assistance Program and Energy Saving Kits.</p> <p>In 2020/21, over 1,000 households went through the Energy Conservation Assistance Program and over 13,000 households received an energy saving kit. BC Hydro invested \$4 million in 2020/21 income-qualified conservation initiatives.</p>	Ongoing

Relief on BC Hydro Bills During COVID-19	<p>The COVID-19 Relief Fund for residential customers provided \$37.2 million in bill credits to over 128,000 residential customers who lost their jobs or were unable to work because of COVID-19. The program was offered April to June 2020.</p> <p>In response to COVID-19, BC Hydro suspended its collections practices starting March 2020. This included suspending application of the Late Payment Charge on overdue accounts until July 2020, allowing customers flexible, interest-free repayment periods and stopping disconnections of service for non-payment until September 2020. BC Hydro also adjusted eligibility criteria for the Customer Crisis Fund to support customers not eligible for the COVID-19 Relief Fund for Residential Customers.</p>	Started and completed 2020
BC Hydro Rates	<p>On April 1, 2020, BC Hydro rates were reduced by 1.01 per cent, following interim approval by the BC Utilities Commission of the Fiscal 2020/2021 Revenue Requirements Application, submitted in August 2019.</p> <p>BC Hydro rates were decreased a further 0.61 per cent in December 2020. In its decision on the Fiscal 2020/21 Revenue Requirements Application in December 2020, the BC Utilities Commission requested BC Hydro to amend its rate reduction to a net decrease of 1.62 per cent, effective retroactively to April 1, 2020.</p> <p>BC Hydro customers received a one-time bill credit early in 2021 as a result of the additional 0.61 per cent rate decrease.</p>	Started and completed in 2020/21

BC OIL & GAS COMMISSION		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
Indigenous Scholarships and Bursaries	New scholarships for Indigenous students were established at the British Columbia Institute of Technology, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, and the Kitimat Valley Institute. These donations totaled \$45,000 and were completed in March 2020.	Completed 2020
Active Minds children's summer camps	For the second year, the Commission sponsored the University of Northern British Columbia's Active Minds Summer Camps by creating bursaries for parents/children (in need) to cover the cost of the camp. Active Minds are educational camps hosted in four Northern B.C. locations that expose grade 6-12 kids to STEM (science, technology, engineering, math), career paths, and post-secondary. \$15,000 was delivered in February 2020.	Completed 2020
Winter Warmers Program	The Commission provided warm, high-quality winter boots to each family that ordered (was in need). This is especially important for northern B.C. children who require boots (which can be expensive) for travelling to school and being outdoors in winter. A total of \$11,500 was spent on the program in January and February 2020.	Completed 2020

BC PAVILION CORPORATION (PAVCO)		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
Vancouver Convention Centre	<p>Where and when appropriate the Convention Centre supports local social enterprises and charities that offer employment training and work experience for individuals living in the Downtown East side and other Vancouver neighbourhoods. Event materials are regularly donated to community groups.</p> <p>During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Vancouver Convention Centre has supported the Province's pandemic response by supporting a number of healthcare focused activations. In April 2020, the Alternate Care Site was established in the West Building to increase provincial hospital bed capacity and has remained on standby to be activated as needed by Vancouver Coastal Health. In the East building, the Provincial Health Services Authority and the BC Centre for Disease Control established a contact tracing call centre and lab test processing site, which have been operating since Fall 2020.</p> <p>On several occasions during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Convention Centre through its hospitality partner Centerplate made several donations of surplus food to local not-for-profit organizations to help those in need. Over 11,400 baked goods have been donated to the following charitable groups: Union Gospel Mission, A Better Life Foundation, WISH, and Atira Women's Resource Society.</p>	Ongoing
BC Place	<p>In early 2020, The Community Ticket Donation Program through BC Place supported a range of local organizations and not-for-profit societies by donating tickets to upcoming events at the stadium.</p> <p>On several occasions during the COVID-19 pandemic, when events at the stadium were paused, surplus food supplies that were on hand were donated to a number of local not-for-profit organizations to be shared with those in need. In 2020, a total of 11,250 pounds of food (equivalent to approximately 17,000 meals) were donated to support meal programs in local communities.</p>	Ongoing

DESTINATION BC		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
Indigenous Tourism British Columbia (ITBC)	<p>Prior to the pandemic, Indigenous tourism was fastest growing segment, creating economic opportunities for Indigenous communities.</p> <p>Destination BC contracts ITBC to support Indigenous tourism growth and development. ITBC's annual funding was increased from \$1 million to \$1.333 million in 2020. Part of ITBC's funding supports regional Indigenous Tourism Specialists, which among other responsibilities, assist in economic development opportunities throughout B.C.</p>	Ongoing
COVID-19 Pandemic Response	<p>In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic dealt a devastating blow to B.C.'s tourism industry. Workers and operators faced economic hardship.</p> <p>Destination BC continued to support B.C.'s tourism industry COVID-19 response and recovery through significant domestic marketing campaigns, providing access to resources and tools, training programs, and insights for small and medium sized enterprises in our industry. Destination BC is worked closely with the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport and with the tourism industry to ensure a quick recovery.</p>	Started in 2020

ROYAL BC MUSEUM		
Name of Program/ Initiative	Description	Status <i>(Started in 2020 / Ongoing / Completed)</i>
Accessible Admission	Offered free admission to the Royal BC Museum to self-identified Indigenous peoples.	Ongoing
Indigenous Consultation	Consulted with Indigenous communities across BC about the Museum's plans for modernization, including opportunities for training and jobs for local First Nations.	Ongoing
Increasing access for low-income British Columbians	Offering virtual access to low-income British Columbians through events and programs like Indigenous Peoples Day, Community Days, and BC Family Day, and the Greater Victoria Public Library pass program.	Ongoing
Improving Online Content	Added new content to Royal BC Museum online assets, accessible for free to anyone, anywhere in the province, with an internet connection.	Ongoing



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