

Annual Report for 2022-23

Ministry of Social Services

Letters of Transmittal



The Honourable
Gene Makowsky
Minister of Social Services

Office of the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan

I respectfully submit the Annual Report for the Ministry of Social Services for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gene Makowsky".

Gene Makowsky
Minister of Social Services



Kimberly Kratzig
Deputy Minister of
Social Services

The Honourable Gene Makowsky
Minister of Social Services

Dear Minister:

I have the honour of submitting the Annual Report of the Ministry of Social Services for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "K. Kratzig".

Kimberly Kratzig
Deputy Minister of Social Services

Ministry Overview

This annual report for the Ministry of Social Services presents the organization's results for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023. It provides results of publicly committed strategies, key actions and performance measures identified in the [Ministry of Social Services Plan for 2022-23](#). It also reflects progress toward commitments from the Government Direction for 2022-23, Saskatchewan's Growth Plan, Throne Speeches and the ministry's mandate.

Our Vision

Saskatchewan people have a better quality of life.

Our Mission

We deliver programs and services that help people in need achieve a better quality of life.

Our Mandate

The ministry helps children be safe from abuse and neglect, and individuals to meet their basic needs and participate in their community.

About the Ministry of Social Services

The Ministry of Social Services supports vulnerable people and families and those in need to build a better quality of life. The ministry delivers several programs and services in the areas of income support, child and family programs, affordable housing and support for people with disabilities. Approximately 1,800 staff working in 27 service centres and 30 day-use offices located in 49 communities across the province support vulnerable families to safely care for their children, support children in care, deliver day programs and residential care for people with physical and intellectual disabilities, and ensure financial support and affordable housing are accessible for people in need.

The 2022-23 budget for Social Services was \$1.386 billion, an increase of \$45.7 million or 3.4 per cent over 2021-22.

Associated Offices

Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC) provides a range of affordable housing programs and services across the province. SHC also plays a lead role in developing housing policies on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan and in managing affordable housing-related investments from the provincial, federal and municipal levels of government.

SHC owns a rental housing portfolio of around 18,000 units located in communities throughout the province. SHC owned units are targeted to households with low and moderate incomes, including families, seniors, persons with disabilities and persons facing housing barriers such as addictions or mental health challenges. In addition, over 4,450 units are owned and operated by non-profit groups and co-operatives.

For more information on SHC, see the [2022 Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Annual Report](#).

The Office of Disability Issues

The Office of Disability Issues (ODI) provides a focal point for leadership and coordination on disability policy across provincial ministries, the disability community and the public. It aims to make Saskatchewan a more inclusive province for people with disabilities by working with different levels of government, as well as with the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA), school divisions and the private sector to remove barriers and create opportunities for people with disabilities. ODI leads the Saskatchewan Disability Strategy, which sets the vision for creating a more inclusive, responsive, innovative and accessible province where people with disabilities can live their lives in the way they choose. ODI is also a project sponsor for Bill 103, *The Accessible Saskatchewan Act*.

Partnerships and Operating Agreements

The Ministry of Social Services held more than 1,100 contracts with approximately 240 Indigenous and community-based organizations and third-party service providers across the province in 2022-23. This amounts to an investment of over \$425 million and provides a range of services, including support services for individuals and families, group homes for people with intellectual disabilities, and crisis intervention services available 24 hours a day.

SHC partners with 244 housing authorities to manage the social housing portfolio and rental housing programs. Additionally, more than 165 non-profit groups, co-operatives, Indigenous housing providers, and private landlords own and operate SHC-supported units.

The Ministry of Social Services has agreements with 19 First Nations agencies to support children in care living on reserve. The ministry partners with three of these agencies to provide child protection services in some off-reserve communities.

Legislation relevant to the ministry includes:

The Adoption Act, 1998

The Advocate for Children and Youth Act

The Child and Family Services Act

The Child Care Act, 2014

The Social Services Administration Act

The Donation of Food Act, 1995

The Emergency Protection for Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Act

The Executive Government Administration Act

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

The Health Information Protection Act

The Human Resources, Labour and Employment Act

The Intercountry Adoption (Hague Convention) Implementation Act

The Rehabilitation Act

The Residential Services Act

The Saskatchewan Assistance Act

The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Act

The Saskatchewan Income Plan Act

The Social Workers Act

Progress on Goal 1: Clients are safe, supported and participating in their community.

We are focused on making our supports and services more accessible and effective to keep our clients safe and to meet their basic needs. In many instances, we fund and partner with service providers across the province to provide a wide range of services and support. With this support, clients are empowered to work towards achieving their goals so that they can build better lives for themselves and participate in their communities.

Strategy:

1.1 Families are supported to safely care for their children.

Key Actions:

- Expand intensive residential and supportive living for high-needs families.
 - Supportive Family Living Programs (SFLP) help high-risk families to remain safely together or to reunify while receiving parenting guidance and supervision in residential settings. Indigenous organizations (Central Urban Métis Federation (1993) Inc., Foxvalley Counselling Services Inc.) and other community-based organizations (Meadow Lake Outreach Ministries, Quint Development Corporation, EGADZ, Street Workers Advocacy Project, YWCA Prince Albert) provide these services 24 hours per day.
 - Between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2023, 497 at-risk families received services through the 12 SFLPs. These programs provide 127 family spaces throughout Saskatchewan.
 - The Ministry awarded a Negotiated Request for Proposal in Lloydminster for the development of a 13th SFLP that is anticipated to be operational in the 2023-2024 fiscal year.
- Invest in prevention programs so more children can remain with their families.
 - In November 2021, the Prenatal Outreach Resource Team (PORT) began providing services in Saskatoon to high-risk pregnant mothers to reduce health complications in mothers and their infants and to prevent apprehensions at birth. The ministry and Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) expanded this service to Prince Albert in 2022 and to Regina in February 2023.
 - Along with the SHA, Indigenous service providers and other community partners, the ministry is developing a “Shared Protocol” to best support at-risk mothers, with the goal of keeping families together.
 - The ministry has contracts with approximately 40 community-based organizations that provide family support across the province. This includes Foxvalley Counselling Services (Regina), Central Urban Metis Federation Inc. (CUMFI; Saskatoon), Kindred Spirits (Prince Albert) and Positively Parenting (Meadow Lake).
 - Clear Health Solutions provides intensive in-home supports to children and

youth with complex medical needs. The ministry contracts with Clear Health Solutions to provide services that help families to safely care for their children. Between June 2019 and March 2022, this support enabled 361 children to stay in their family home.

- Expand supports for extended family caregivers.
 - The extended family support worker initiative is available across the province connecting extended family caregivers to community-based supports, in-home services and learning opportunities that strengthen caregiver skills, confidence and knowledge.
 - The ministry offers training and support groups to extended family caregivers across the province. These voluntary sessions provide information and encourage discussion on topics such as appropriate discipline, finding supports and resources and changing family dynamics.
- Improve access to respite across the province for persons caring for individuals with intellectual disabilities.
 - The Summer Respite Program provides rest, recharge, and relief for caregivers. The ministry continues to survey respite camp attendees as well as their caregivers. The survey is used to inform and advise the summer respite program administration of any improvements that can be made to the process and/or the outcomes of the program.
 - The ministry has two respite summer camps – Camp Thunderbird (Candle Lake) and Camp Buffalo (Buffalo Pound Provincial Park). The individuals attending these camps benefit from a variety of summer programs (i.e., boating, fishing, swimming, etc.) and have the opportunity to make connections with new staff and other individuals from around the province.
 - The ministry continues to evaluate the Family Respite Program. This program provides a monthly benefit payment to families with children with intellectual disabilities, up to the age of 18. These children must meet the mandate of Community Living Service Delivery (CLSD) and have been accepted for CLSD services. Family Respite Program benefit payments can be used to purchase supports that work best for families. This may include in-home and out-of-home supports, or centre-based supports.

Strategy:

1.2 Children and youth in care are supported to be successful.

Key Actions:

- Launch a youth engagement strategy.
 - In collaboration with the Youth Advisory Teams created in 2021, the ministry is continuing to implement a comprehensive engagement initiative.
 - The ministry has worked with three community-based organizations to help support the teams: Prince Albert Outreach, EGADZ in Saskatoon and John Howard Society in Regina.
 - The Saskatoon Youth Engagement Team was instrumental in developing EGADZ's Operation Runaway risk assessment tool and the Missing Youth Saskatchewan application that is shaping how the ministry and provincial police forces manage incidences involving youth absent from care and missing youth. Operation Runaway focuses on listening and collaborating with youth to develop plans and deliver supports and services that better meet their needs.

- EGADZ and the ministry have begun to extend the Operation Runaway initiative by partnering with community-based organizations across the province to:
 - Expand the Youth Risk Assessment (for missing youth)
 - Develop safe housing options for hard-to-serve children and youth
 - Roll out the Missing Youth Saskatchewan application in other communities in 2023.
- All three Youth Advisory Teams have identified challenges youth and young adults face in obtaining the identification necessary to rent apartments, open bank accounts, get a job or get a drivers' license. In response to the need identified by the teams, the ministry partnered with SGI in Regina to reduce the barriers some young people face around obtaining identification.
- Expand supports for foster parents.
 - In 2022, the ministry in partnership with the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association fully implemented PRIDE Levels of Pay. A fundamental component of PRIDE Levels of Pay is mandatory education and training for foster families and ongoing annual support towards professional development to respond to the needs of children with complex medical, behavioural, emotional, developmental and psychosocial needs.
 - The ministry also supports the free virtual training offered several times a year by the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association (SFFA) to its members by recommending this training for foster families and staff. Also, in partnership with the SFFA, the ministry has committed to providing a book title each year to foster families to build their resource library.
 - The ministry has worked with and supported foster families to be in compliance with the water safety policy.
 - A First Nations PRIDE manager leads a PRIDE First Nations supervisor and four consultants that are contracted to work with ministry-served First Nations and 19 First Nations Child and Family Services Agencies. Their core work centers around providing Train the Trainer opportunities to support agency staff in delivering preservice and PRIDE training and in completing the mutual family assessment process and approvals, with the goal of increasing the number of foster homes in First Nation communities.
- Strengthen services and supports for children and youth in community-based care.
 - In 2022-23 the ministry launched group home partnership meetings in all service areas. Back 2 Basics and mandatory training on the *Residential Services Manual* was provided with significant uptake. This partnership approach has resulted in greater transparency between the organizations to ensure a high quality of care for children. Together a best practices indicator guide was developed with the goal of improving the care experience for children and youth in the group homes. Further efficiencies were gained through enhanced communication and collaboration that helps prevent placement breakdowns.
 - The ministry developed a checklist of required training for group home staff based on the expectations outlined within various ministry manuals. This checklist of required training is shared, discussed and verified with community-based organizations prior to children being placed in the home. This checklist is being utilized with all new group home developments.
 - In January 2022 a new provincial group home Operational Oversight Unit was created and is working to provide additional support and oversight. This team

- of four collaborates with group home leadership and staff to proactively address any program needs including training, skill development, capacity building, adapting programs and operational policies, addressing any environmental needs and general program support.
- The First Nations PRIDE team is leading the program *Awasisak Awi Pekiwehwak - The Children Are Coming Home*. This program was announced at a pipe ceremony in March 2022, and focuses on connecting Indigenous children in short-term community-based homes to family-based care. This program aims to reduce the number of Indigenous children living in group care by building relationships between children and their extended families, home communities, elders and Chief and Councils. This is done by engaging communities and children through celebration, ceremonies, and cultural practices. To support this work, First Nations consultants bridge relationships and work with the ministry when an extended family caregiver is identified.
 - The ministry has established new outreach positions in some community-based homes. These group home staff help families connect with services to promote and support successful reunification so that children may reside safely with services at home or with extended family caregivers.
- Collaborate with Indigenous partners on implementation of *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*.
 - In 2022-23, the ministry continued to develop working protocols with Chief Red Bear Children’s Lodge (CRBCL; Cowessess First Nation). The ministry is working in collaboration with CRBCL in transitional planning.
 - The work to renew the child welfare system is continuing with First Nations and Métis partners, so Indigenous children and families are supported by their communities, within their own customs and traditions.
 - There have been 10 formal notices provided by First Nations Bands since January 1, 2020, pursuant to Section 20 of the federal Indigenous child welfare legislation known as *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis children, youth and families*.
 - Section 20 (1) is a notice of intent of the Indigenous Governing Bodies (IGBs) to exercise jurisdiction. To date, the ministry has received seven notices.
 - Section 20 (2) is a notice requesting a Coordination Agreement Process be undertaken. To date, the ministry has received three notices.
 - The ministry has developed a change management plan to provide information to various provincial authorities and organizations to assist in understanding the role of the IGBs and their independence in exercising jurisdiction regarding child and family services on and off reserve.

Performance Measure Results:

Children receiving child protection services who are safe with services at home.

Target: In 2022-23, 54.5 per cent of children receiving child protection services are safe with services at home.

- As of March 31, 2023, 57.6 per cent of children receiving child protection services are safe with services at home.

Children in out-of-home care placed with extended family.

Target: From 2021-22 through 2024-25, 60 per cent of children in out-of-home care will be placed with family.

- As of March 31, 2023, 58.9 per cent of children in out-of-home care were placed with extended family.

First year foster family retention rate.

Target: In 2022-23, the ministry will have a 95 per cent annual first year foster family retention rate.

- In 2022-23, the ministry had an overall first-year foster family retention rate of 93.5 per cent (43 out of 46 foster homes recruited in 2021-2022 were still open one year later).

Approval of new foster families created by recruitment.

Target: In 2022-23, 57 new foster families created by recruitment will be approved per year.

- In 2022-23, 33 new foster families created by recruitment were approved.

Strategy:

1.3 People with disabilities have an improved quality of life through community-based services.

Key Actions:

- Increase access to community-based day program services to support clients.
 - The ministry continues to support a shift from a centre-based model to a more community-based day programming approach, which provides opportunities for individuals with disabilities to participate in their communities. The ministry recognizes the challenges agencies face because of increasing transportation costs required to facilitate more community programming.
- Develop new accessibility legislation aimed at removing and preventing accessibility barriers.
 - On November 15, 2022, Bill 103 for *The Accessible Saskatchewan Act* was introduced in the Legislative Assembly.

Performance Measure Results:**Community-based participation in day programming activities by Community Living Service Delivery (CLSD) clients with intellectual disabilities.**

Target: By March 31, 2025, 70 per cent of CLSD clients with intellectual disabilities will participate in community-based day programming activities.

- In 2022-2023, 62 per cent of CLSD clients with intellectual disabilities participated in community-based day programming activities.

Strategy:

1.4 Affordable housing is available and accessible for Saskatchewan citizens in need.

Key Actions:

- Implement, deliver and monitor National Housing Strategy (NHS) goals, programs and services, including Saskatchewan Priorities, Canada Community Housing Initiative and Saskatchewan Housing Benefit.
 - In 2019, the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC) signed the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) – Saskatchewan Bilateral Agreement under the 2017 National Housing Strategy. The 10-year agreement

invests up to \$585 million to protect, renew and expand social and community housing, support Saskatchewan's priorities related to affordability assistance and ensure access for those in greatest housing need. Saskatchewan uses funding provided under the NHS to maintain, improve, renew and expand community housing.

- The ministry, through SHC, has met or exceeded most of its National Housing Strategy targets for 2022-23 and continues to make improvements to programs where targets are not being met. Programs delivered under the NHS do not represent the total level of programs delivered or housing supported through SHC.
- Improve access to housing and ensure consistent delivery of service to clients.
 - SHC is using funding provided through the NHS to protect, renew and expand social and community housing and support Saskatchewan's priorities related to housing repair, construction and affordability.
 - SHC continually evaluates its portfolio of housing units against local demand for social housing to improve program delivery and allow for funding to be used where it can be the most effective.
- Use innovative approaches and partnerships to integrate housing programs and supportive services.
 - SHC works with local housing authorities and other housing agencies responsible for delivering programs and maintaining operations of housing units. It delivers a range of tenant services and programs and provides management support of general operations, property, technical services and tenant and financial stewardship.
 - In addition to housing authorities and non-profit organizations, including Indigenous housing providers, the ministry, through SHC, partners with housing co-operatives, private landlords and others who own and manage housing for tenants with low and moderate incomes. SHC also works with municipalities, government ministries, and the federal government to integrate housing programs and services.

Performance Measure Results:

Number of households who have improved affordability by accessing the Saskatchewan Housing Benefit.

Target: In 2022-23, 2790 new households will have improved affordability by accessing the Saskatchewan Housing Benefit.

- As of March 31, 2023, a total of 1,773 households are currently receiving the benefit, up from 682 at the end 2021-22.
- In September 2022, the benefit was expanded to include two new streams: providing more financial support for people in vulnerable situations to access housing and live independently:
 - The Supportive Housing stream provides a flat-rate benefit to help individuals who live in SHC-approved housing and receive on-site support services from the housing provider or third-party service provider under agreement with the housing provider.
 - The Seeking Safety from Interpersonal Violence stream provides a flat-rate benefit to help individuals fleeing interpersonal violence to cover their rent and utility costs.

In accordance with the National Housing Strategy, repair 20 per cent of existing social housing units by 2028.

Target: in 2022-23, 290 social housing units will be repaired.

- Over the 10-year NHS Agreement, SHC will repair 20 per cent (3,290 units) of its existing social housing units by 2028. As of March 31, 2023, SHC has committed funding under the NHS to repair 436 existing social housing units, of which 415 are already completed or currently under construction. The repairs to these units include modernization and improvements to support larger households, improved energy efficiency and reduced energy costs for tenants.

Housing partnerships provide supportive services through innovative approaches.

Target: Increase the number of units where supportive services are in place.

- In April 2022, SHC entered partnerships with Indigenous organizations in Saskatoon and Regina by funding the delivery of two 12-month pilot projects. These Indigenous-led pilots, operated by the Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC) and Regina Treaty/Status Indian Services (RT/SIS), provide a 24/7 supportive shelter and housing space, including meals and on-site wrap-around support services to meet the cultural, mental health, addictions and supportive housing needs of clients.
- SHC also accepts proposals from third-party support service providers who are interested in using SHC properties to house their clients while providing support services.
- In 2022, SHC and Sanctum Care Group negotiated a lease agreement in Saskatoon for a 27-unit SHC-owned building. Units in the building provide rapid and safe rental housing to mothers, children and pregnant people experiencing homelessness. Supports and services will be provided onsite by Sanctum staff.
- This year, SHC also provided Phoenix Residential Society with a 24-unit building to provide improved access to supportive housing for Regina residents at risk of homelessness. Phoenix clients will rent units and Phoenix staff will be available 24/7 to provide onsite support.

Strategy:

1.5 Partner with Income Assistance clients and the community to support people as they work towards self-sufficiency to the best of their ability.

Key Actions:

- Provide clients with income support for their basic needs and connect them to services and supports to help them achieve their goals.
 - In 2022-23, Saskatchewan Income Support (SIS) monthly basic benefits increased by \$30 per adult and shelter benefits increased by up to \$25.
 - In 2022-23, the ministry increased the maximum monthly Seniors Income Plan (SIP) benefit from \$300 to \$330 a month for single pensioners. A two-pensioner household amount increased from \$530 to \$590 a month.
 - Income Assistance staff continue to use an approach with their clients called Motivational Interviewing, which is a way of interacting with clients to partner with them to make positive changes in their lives and achieve their goals. Clients are connected with community supports to meet their needs and advance their plan.

- Staff help clients learn how to make good financial decisions, manage their benefits, budget for household expenses and work toward becoming self-sufficient to the best of their abilities.
- In 2022-23, the ministry expanded funded emergency shelter spaces to support vulnerable people in need. Salvation Army Waterston Centre in Regina increased capacity from 15 beds to 26. The Salvation Army Crossroads in Saskatoon began providing an enhanced shelter service in October 2022 with an increase of 30 beds for a total of 75 beds open 24 hours a day, seven days per week.
- In 2022-23, the ministry expanded money management and trustee services by approximately 40 spaces, bringing the total number of trustee spaces available in 2022-23 to 807.
- The ministry continued to offer direct payment of rent and utilities for clients with complex needs who were at risk of homelessness.
- Implement the Education and Training Incentive (ETI) to support income assistance clients as they complete education and training programs on the path to employment.
 - On July 1, 2022, the Ministry of Social Services began the delivery of ETI, a financial benefit through the SIS and Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) programs.
 - The ETI is available to help adults with low income complete their high school education or attend workforce or skills training programs, replacing the former Provincial Training Allowance.
 - This change simplifies the application process for clients, allowing them to focus on their studies instead of on paperwork required by multiple ministries.
- Continue to implement the Saskatchewan Poverty Reduction Strategy.
 - Addressing the complex issue of poverty requires continued cooperation between all levels of government, Indigenous organizations and community partners.
 - The Government of Saskatchewan continues to make progress on the actions identified in the 10-year strategy. Since the strategy's release in 2016, the ministry has implemented several initiatives to address poverty including the launch of the Saskatchewan Housing Benefit, increases to SIP benefits, increased income exemptions in the SAID and SIS programs and the funding of housing units for people who have trouble securing housing due to disability, mental health, addictions or other challenges.
- Support clients to access earned income exemptions under the Saskatchewan Income Support (SIS) program.
 - The SIS program has an earned income exemption of \$325 for single individuals, \$425 for couples without dependent children and \$500 per month for families to enable and encourage clients to work more on their path to self-sufficiency.
 - Training and employment opportunities continued to be made available through government-funded community-based organizations or other ministries, such as the Ministry of Immigration and Career Training, and/or through community-based training resources, such as Partners in Employment.

Performance Measure Results:

Proportion of Saskatchewan Income Support (SIS) clients who leave income assistance.

Target: In 2022-23, 25 per cent of clients will no longer require SIS benefits.

- Of all households who had received SIS benefits in 2021-22, 25 per cent were subsequently not in receipt of SIS benefits in 2022-23.
- Clients leave SIS for a variety of reasons including finding employment, moving to another province and enrolment in education or training programs. The ministry begins working with new SIS clients by matching services to their needs, partnering with clients as they work to achieve their goals. The ministry uses supportive communication approaches such as Motivational Interviewing, providing budgeting and financial information, and referring them to services and supports as they work to become self-sufficient to the best of their abilities.

Percentage of SIS clients reporting earned income.

Target: In 2022-23, two per cent of SIS clients will access earned income exemptions.

- In 2022-23, this target was exceeded as 2.1 per cent of SIS clients accessed earned income exemptions.

Percentage of SIS and SAID clients accessing the Education and Training Incentive (ETI).

Target: In 2022-23, track the percentage of SIS and SAID clients accessing the ETI.

- ETI was implemented on July 1, 2022.
- By year-end of 2022-23, 2.6 per cent of SIS households and 0.4 per cent of SAID households accessed ETI or 1.5 per cent of the combined SIS and SAID households.

Percentage of Saskatchewan people who experience poverty for two or more consecutive years.

Target: By March 31, 2025, the number of Saskatchewan people who experience poverty for two years or more will be reduced by 50 per cent.

- Persistent (or long-term) poverty rates have declined overall in Saskatchewan since 2007. Using the Low-Income Measure, the persistent poverty rate has declined from 12.4 per cent in 2007-08, to 6.1 per cent in 2019-20 (the most recent data available).

Progress on Goal 2: Improved outcomes for Indigenous clients.

The ministry prioritizes and supports culture, inclusion and diversity. Many of Social Services' clients are Indigenous. We believe clients should see their culture reflected in the staff who deliver services, and that staff understand clients' cultural and historical experiences. The ministry also funds and partners with service providers across the province to provide a wide range of services and supports. Strengthening our ministry's capacity for diversity and inclusion will make us a better employer and partner in delivering services and supports to clients.

Strategy:

2.1 Strengthen diversity and inclusion by championing respect for Indigenous culture and values.

Key Actions:

- Actively recruit Indigenous employees.
 - The ministry prioritized recruitment and retention of Indigenous employees to build a more diverse workplace and better support our clients. Efforts to increase recruitment include posting job competitions where hiring preference is given to a diversity group candidate or Indigenous person based on the ministry's recruitment plan and strategic direction.
 - The ministry encourages staff and employment candidates to self declare their diversity group or indigenous status.
 - Mâmawatoskêwak Team of Indigenous Employees Saskatchewan (TIES) was established in 2017 and provides a place for Indigenous employees to support one another and provide ideas for improving the work in Child and Family Programs that makes an impact for Indigenous families and children. TIES has developed a relationship with the First Nations University of Canada and led recruitment initiatives to attract Indigenous employees and retention initiatives, such as supporting cultural events and providing Indigenous knowledge/teachings to fellow staff.
- Support Indigenous education and training for ministry employees.
 - Eighty managers from across the ministry attended Reconciliation and Indigenous cultural awareness training in 2022-23.
 - In Child and Family Programs, culturally informed training is provided to all front-line staff and is facilitated by First Nations Consultants. These trainings, when coupled with ministry policies, support a culturally informed and responsive child welfare approach that assists to maintain an Indigenous child's connection with family, community and culture. Current training includes:
 - Indigenous Cultural Teachings;
 - Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Workshops;
 - Substance Misuse, Addiction and Domestic Violence; and
 - Touchstones of Hope.

- Ministry programs are informed by Indigenous culture and values.
 - Child and Family Program offices across the province work with First Nation and Métis Elders to support and guide staff in cultural awareness, Truth and Reconciliation, cultural supports, and learning more about traditional customs and practices to better serve children, families, and caregivers. In many locations, cultural spaces are available for the Elders to meet with staff and/or families to be able to smudge and to participate in cultural teaching and activities.

Strategy:

2.2 Strengthen partnerships to better meet the needs of clients today and into the future.

Key Actions:

- Establish partnerships with First Nations and/or Indigenous organizations, communities and other service providers.
 - The ministry funds an array of services delivered by Indigenous service providers intended to ensure that Indigenous children receive culturally competent services.
 - In collaboration with Indigenous communities the ministry has developed:
 - First Contact Panels to assist with case planning;
 - Family Finders programs that help identify extended family to care for Indigenous children; and
 - the Identity and Belonging policy to support early identification of Indigenous status and determination of eligibility to register children for Treaty status, Métis Citizenship or eligibility as a beneficiary to one of the four Inuit land claims, as may be applicable.
 - The ministry supports 19 delegated First Nations Child and Family agencies to provide child and family services on reserve to 65 First Nations and to three remote off reserve communities. The ministry also provides services directly to eight First Nations.
 - The ministry partners with the Saskatoon Tribal Council to deliver Sawêyihotân, an interagency response to individuals who are homeless in downtown Saskatoon. The project utilizes resources from Social Services as well as other ministries including the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General, Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety, Ministry of Health, and Saskatchewan Housing Corporation.
 - Continue to identify opportunities to demonstrate our commitment to working together to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action.
 - Ministry staff across the province observed Orange Shirt Day in recognition of September 30, 2022.
 - Ministry staff attended Miwo-wiciwitowan Day on September 29, 2022, at Mosaic Stadium in Regina. Presentations and performances centred around understanding the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
 - Community Living Service Delivery's North Service Area established an Elders Advisory Group to provide Disability Programs with knowledge, support, and wisdom about Indigenous culture and traditions. It assists Disability Programs to engage in culturally sensitive approaches when working with, and developing services and supports for, Indigenous people.
 - In honour of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in the fall of 2022,

Disability Programs partnered with Elmwood Residences, Canadian Deafblind Association, and SARC to offer a two-part Truth and Reconciliation Speakers Series to the disability sector.

- Ministry staff in Housing programs shared information to promote knowledge and foster understanding through the launch of a virtual Truth and Reconciliation Wall, facilitation of a Reconciliation speaker's panel, and participating in a history of Indigenous food event.

Performance Measure Results:

Percentage of ministry employees who identify as Indigenous.

Target: At least 12.6 per cent of ministry employees self-identify as Indigenous by March 31, 2023.

- Approximately 11 per cent of ministry employees self-identified as Indigenous by March 31, 2023.

Number of ministry employees who complete Reconciliation and Indigenous cultural awareness training.

Target: Ministry middle management complete training in Reconciliation and Indigenous cultural awareness training.

- Offering Truth and Reconciliation and Indigenous cultural training to staff is a key component of working toward reconciliation. In 2022-23, the ministry prioritized providing cultural awareness training to middle managers. Bonnie and Diane Musqua, Indigenous Consultants from Keeseekoose First Nation, offered five one-and-a-half-day sessions to 80 middle managers across the ministry.

Target: Develop an inventory of reconciliation and Indigenous cultural awareness learning opportunities and materials by March 31, 2023, for education purposes.

- The ministry has developed an inventory of reconciliation and Indigenous cultural awareness training available to ministry staff. In 2022-23, planning began to develop a new online Indigenous cultural awareness training option for all staff.

Progress on Goal 3: Ministry employees are engaged and supported to deliver high quality service to our clients and partners.

Employee engagement and workplace culture are critical to our success and we need to recognize employee efforts that contribute to excellence in client service. A healthy workplace culture enables ministry staff to be a strong partner in meeting and adapting to the needs of Saskatchewan citizens today and into the future.

Strategy:

3.1 Develop a long-term strategy to support the ministry's existing and emerging business needs.

Key Actions:

- Ensure information technology services maintain and support business solutions in a consistent, secure, sustainable and cost-effective manner.
 - The ministry has been expanding on its Information Technology Strategy and engaging with leaders across the ministry through the IT Steering Committee. This ensures that there is consistent intake, prioritization and reporting on ministry strategic initiatives.
 - The ministry collaborates with the IT Division of SaskBuilds and Procurement to leverage new enterprise technology and services that align with the larger government IT strategy.
 - Risk management is a priority for the ministry to identify and address the highest risks and implement appropriate mitigation strategies. To ensure consistent availability for services, the ministry is also focused on maintaining and ensuring that important business solutions are readily available. With these efforts, the ministry aims to maintain a reliable and efficient IT infrastructure that supports the delivery of important ministry services.
- Take a ministry-wide view to oversight of contracts with community-based service providers.
 - The ministry collaborates and provides funding to various service providers throughout the province to ensure a broad spectrum of services and supports are accessible to the people and families of Saskatchewan. Local agencies and their workforce frequently serve as the primary point of contact with clients in their respective communities. The ministry forms agreements and contracts with these service providers that encompass elements of accountability, adherence to quality assurance standards, licensing prerequisites, and service commitments.
 - The ministry is focusing on streamlining its processes for more effective collaboration with service providers and partners, recognizing their crucial role in the system. Concurrently, the ministry is dedicated to continuous improvement of relationships with service providers. Part of this commitment involves analyzing our current operational systems and strategies to ensure optimal effectiveness, ultimately leading to enhanced outcomes for clients.

- Continue to implement improvements and make progress on delivering effective and efficient services and programs.
 - The ministry collects and reports on improvement projects and initiatives occurring throughout all areas of the organization. Highlights of improvement activities are presented regularly to the ministry's senior leadership.
 - In February 2023, the ministry introduced an online application through Saskatchewan.ca for individuals applying to the SAID program. The new online application process is more client-friendly and has fewer steps during the application process, which allows the ministry to process applications and connect clients to their benefits and services more quickly.
 - Online applications can now be submitted 24 hours per day, seven days per week at a time that is best for the applicant. Applying online or over the phone takes approximately 30 minutes and no longer requires an in-person meeting. Clients can also upload documents or update their personal information online rather than in-person, and they can sign up to receive text message alerts from the ministry regarding their file. This enhanced process improves the service the ministry provides to clients. It also improves accessibility for people with disabilities and supports the intent of new accessibility legislation (introduced in November 2022) to prevent and remove accessibility barriers for persons with disabilities.

Strategy:

3.3 Provide a safe and healthy workplace.

Key Actions:

- Focus on workplace culture and engagement including recruitment and retention, employee wellness, recognition, culture and inclusion.
 - The ministry continued to use Not Myself Today, a workplace initiative that assists the ministry to promote mental health in the workplace. It includes a variety of tools to build knowledge, understanding and start conversations about mental health. It is intended to reduce stigma and to help build a safe and supportive work environment.
 - The ministry offered training opportunities for staff to support mental wellbeing (e.g., Road to Mental Readiness, Mental Health First Aid and Psychological Wellness in the Workplace).
- Provide workplace health and safety supports for employees.
 - Mandatory safety training is required for all staff which includes incident reporting, workplace hazardous materials information systems, substance use in the workplace and respect in the workplace.
 - The ministry supported a variety of other safety training opportunities for employees and supervisors depending on the type of work they perform (e.g., de-escalating potentially violent situations, personal assault response training, Occupational Health Committee training).
 - Safety reminders were shared regularly with all staff and discussed in staff meetings to promote awareness regarding various safety issues. Topics included de-escalating potentially violent situations, how to de-stress at work, incident reporting process, winter driving, etc.
 - The ministry reported regularly to staff on health and safety performance (e.g.,

Incidents, Safety Survey results, Workplace Inspections, etc.).

- Implement a consistent, ministry-wide approach to supporting middle managers in their roles.
 - Middle Manager Excellence (MME) is a Government of Saskatchewan initiative with the purpose of enabling middle managers to excel in roles that best support a high performing organization, and to support them to grow and become more effective in their roles. The ministry completed the MME planning phase in 2022-23 and is currently in the implementation phase of this work.

Performance Measure Results:

Workplace injury rate.

Target: Reduce the workplace injury rate and continue to progress toward Mission Zero.

- The ministry's total injury rate in 2022 (calendar year) was 1.22 per cent, which was lower than the 2021 rate of 1.64 per cent. The ministry has seen a decreasing trend in the injury rate which aligns with the ministry target to continue to progress towards Mission Zero.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total Injury Rate	3.98%	3.78%	1.96%	1.64%	1.22%

Psychological safety score.

Target: Maintain or improve a psychological safety score of 3.10 out of 5 or higher by March 31, 2023.

- Over 61 per cent of ministry employees participated in the government-wide Saskatchewan Safety Survey. This year's psychological safety climate score was 3.21 out of 5, which is 3.9 per cent higher than 2021 score. The results indicate that the ministry acts decisively when concerns about psychological health of the employees are raised, and the psychological health and well-being of employees is a priority.

Employees have support at work to provide a high level of service.

Target: By December 31, 2023, at least 70 per cent of employees feel they have support at work to provide a high level of service.

- This measure will be included in the 2023-24 Annual Report when the results of the ministry's 2023 Employee Engagement and Culture Survey are available.

Financial Summary

Social Services' actual expenditures for 2022-23 were \$1.363 billion which is \$22.7 million under the ministry's budgeted appropriation of \$1.386 billion. A majority of the budget surplus is related to lower than anticipated utilization for the Saskatchewan Income Support (SIS) program, partially offset by new funding for Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC) to develop housing solutions to support safety and security for vulnerable citizens.

Social Services collects revenues related to fees from the SHC, transfers from the federal government and receipts from clients who have been overpaid public assistance benefits in prior years.

In 2022-23, the ministry recorded revenue of \$48.338 million as compared to the budget of \$40.176 million. The difference in actual revenue compared to budget is primarily due to an increase in transfer payments from the federal government related to child and family services.

Additional financial information can be found in the Government of Saskatchewan Public Accounts located at <https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/#/categories/893>.

The following table outlines actual and budgeted expenditures by subvote and subprogram and provides explanations for significant variances.

Expense Summary

Subvote/Allocation	2021-22 Actuals (\$000's)	2022-23 Budget (\$000's)	2022-23 Actuals (\$000's)	Variance to Budget	Notes
Central Management and Services (SS01)					
Minister's Salary	\$ 51	\$ 53	\$ 54	\$ 1	
Executive Management	2,098	1,875	1,797	(78)	
Central Services	37,370	39,027	39,218	191	
Accommodation Services	16,672	17,214	15,989	(1,225)	1
Subvote Total	\$ 56,191	\$ 58,169	\$ 57,058	\$ (1,111)	
Income Assistance Services (SS03)					
Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability	\$ 273,745	\$ 281,932	\$ 289,549	\$ 7,617	2
Saskatchewan Income Support	154,238	261,542	216,365	(45,177)	3
Saskatchewan Assistance Program	18,281	-	-	-	4
Transitional Employment Allowance	3,632			-	4
Seniors Income Plan	28,462	34,171	34,008	(163)	
Saskatchewan Employment Supplement	3,950	5,013	3,485	(1,528)	3
Income Assistance Program Delivery	27,355	26,649	27,956	1,307	5
Income Assistance Community Services	7,049	7,749	7,546	(203)	
Child Care Parent Subsidies	6,460	5,780	2,096	(3,684)	3
Rental Housing Supplements	20,711	12,227	16,904	4,677	2
Seniors Personal Care Home Benefit	2,057	2,216	1,044	(1,172)	3
Subvote Total	\$ 545,940	\$ 637,279	\$ 598,953	\$ (38,326)	
Child and Family Services (SS04)					
Child and Family Program Maintenance & Support	\$ 149,460	\$ 141,919	\$ 157,514	\$ 15,595	6
Child and Family Community-Based Organization Services	148,360	164,352	153,568	(10,784)	7
Child and Family Program Delivery	56,339	57,347	59,281	1,934	8
Subvote Total	\$ 354,159	\$ 363,618	\$ 370,363	\$ 6,745	

Client Support (SS05)

Service Centre Client

Support	\$ 12,913	\$ 12,963	\$ 13,678	\$ 715	
Subvote Total	\$ 12,913	\$ 12,963	\$ 13,678	\$ 715	

Housing (SS12)

Program Delivery	\$ 6,846	\$ 7,626	\$ 6,811	\$ (815)	
Saskatchewan Housing Corporation	9,127	9,964	25,264	15,300	9
Subvote Total	\$ 15,973	\$ 17,590	\$ 32,075	\$ 14,485	

Disability Programs and Services (SS14)

Disability Services	\$ 252,725	\$ 274,549	\$ 270,266	\$ (4,283)	10
Disability Program Delivery	19,457	21,349	20,425	(924)	
Subvote Total	\$ 272,182	\$ 295,898	\$ 290,691	\$ (5,207)	

Total Expenditure	\$ 1,257,358	\$1,385,517	\$1,362,818	\$ 22,699	
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Less: Capital Asset Acquisitions 1

Acquisitions	\$ (6,593)	\$ (7,134)	\$ (5,914)	\$ 1,220	
Add: Non-Appropriated Expense Adjustment	7,741	7,466	8,657	1,191	

Total Appropriation	\$ 1,258,506	\$1,385,849	\$1,365,561	\$ 20,288	
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Notes:

- Under-expenditure is related to capital project deferrals.
- Program utilization higher than budgeted levels.
- Program utilization lower than budgeted levels.
- Programs closed on August 31, 2021.
- Higher than budgeted salary pressures due to overtime use.
- Pressures primarily related to third-party contracts for emergency and intensive services, partially offset by lower than budgeted use of foster care.
- Under-expenditure is primarily related to recoveries from third-party service providers and deferred projects
- Pressures related to salary overtime use and higher than budgeted travel costs.
- The Ministry provided funding to the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation to support Wellness Centre agreements in both Regina and Saskatoon as well as housing solutions for persons experiencing chronic homelessness in Saskatoon, cold weather initiatives that provide safety and security to vulnerable citizens in Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon and to support the Women and Families Development Project (YWCA).
- Under-expenditure is primarily related to recoveries from third-party service providers, partially offset by increased utilization of the Autism Spectrum Disorder Individualized Funding program.

Detailed payee information will be published in Volume 2 of the 2022-23 Public Accounts.

Revenue Summary

A summary of the Ministry's 2022-23 budgeted revenue compared to actual revenue is presented below with explanations for significant variances.

Revenue by Source	2021-22 Actuals (\$000's)	2022-23 Budget (\$000's)	2022-23 Actuals (\$000's)	2022-23 Variance (\$000's)	Notes
Sales, Services and Service Fees					
Management and Collection Services	\$ 4,422	\$ 4,422	\$ 4,422	\$ -	
Miscellaneous Medical and Institutional Services	-	66	-	(66)	
Other Miscellaneous Services	-	2	-	(2)	
Subtotal	\$ 4,422	\$ 4,490	\$ 4,422	\$ (68)	
Transfers from the Federal Government					
Special Allowance for Children in Care	\$ 34,125	\$ 30,000	\$ 32,472	\$ 2,472	1
Indigenous Services Canada	9,398	3,016	7,649	4,633	2
Subtotal	\$ 43,523	\$ 33,016	\$ 40,121	\$ 7,105	
Other Revenue					
Maintenance Order Revenues	\$ 472	\$ 625	\$ 320	\$ (305)	
Casual Revenue	(2)	45	31	(14)	
Realized Gain or Loss	-	-	-	-	
Repayment - Public Assistance, Pensions and Allowance Programs	997	1,500	3,294	1,794	3
Refunds of Previous Years' Expenses	212	500	52	(448)	
Changes in Previous Years' Estimate	203	-	30	30	
Salary Overpayment Refunds - Previous Years' Expense	-	-	67	67	
Collection Agency Fees Withheld	-	-	-	-	
Subtotal	\$ 1,882	\$ 2,670	\$ 3,794	\$ 1,124	
Total Revenue	\$ 49,827	\$ 40,176	\$ 48,338	\$ 8,162	

Explanation of Significant

Variances:

1. Variance is due to higher numbers of children in care.
2. Variance is due to higher child welfare expense reimbursements.
3. Variance is due to an increase in repayments from clients.

Additional financial information can be found in the Government of Saskatchewan Public Accounts located at <https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/#/categories/893>

Ministry of Social Services Organizational Chart

