

Annual Report

2025-26

Ministry of Government Relations

Letters of Transmittal



The Honourable Eric Schmalz
Minister of Government Relations
Minister Responsible for First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for the Provincial Capital Commission

Office of the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan

I respectfully submit the Annual Report for the Ministry of Government Relations for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Eric Schmalz".

Eric Schmalz
Minister of Government Relations
Minister Responsible for First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for the Provincial Capital Commission



Drew Wilby
Deputy Minister of Government Relations and for First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs

The Honourable Eric Schmalz
Minister of Government Relations, Minister Responsible for First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs and Minister Responsible for the Provincial Capital Commission

Dear Minister:

I have the honour of submitting the Annual Report of the Ministry of Government Relations for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Drew Wilby".

Drew Wilby
Deputy Minister of Minister of Government Relations
Deputy Minister for First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs

Ministry of Government Relations

Overview

The Ministry of Government Relations is responsible for municipal relations; building and technical standards; First Nation, Métis and northern affairs; and the Provincial Capital Commission. The ministry engages a diverse range of partners and stakeholders to plan for and respond to the opportunities and challenges of growth, provide leadership and direction so that integrated public services are available to communities and their residents, and support responsible governments.

The ministry's full-time equivalent (FTE) utilization in 2025-26 was 169.7 FTEs.

Legislation

<i>The Amusement Ride Safety Act</i>	<i>The Métis Act</i>
<i>The Assessment Appraisers Act</i>	<i>The Municipal Board Act</i>
<i>The Assessment Management Agency Act</i>	<i>The Municipal Expropriation Act</i>
<i>The Boiler and Pressure Vessel Act, 1999</i>	<i>The Municipal Grants Act</i>
<i>The Border Areas Act</i>	<i>The Municipal Tax Sharing (Potash) Act</i>
<i>The Cities Act</i>	<i>The Municipalities Act</i>
<i>The City of Lloydminster Act</i>	<i>The Northern Municipalities Act, 2010</i>
<i>The Community Planning Profession Act, 2013</i>	<i>The Passenger and Freight Elevator Act</i>
<i>The Construction Codes Act</i>	<i>The Planning and Development Act, 2007</i>
<i>The Education Property Tax Act</i>	<i>The Rural Municipal Administrators Act</i>
<i>The Electrical Inspection Act, 1993</i>	<i>The Saskatchewan Natural Resources Transfer Agreement (Treaty Land Entitlement) Act</i>
<i>The Electrical Licensing Act</i>	<i>The Tax Enforcement Act</i>
<i>The Flin-Flon Extension of Boundaries Act, 1952</i>	<i>The Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan Act</i>
<i>The Gas Inspection Act, 1993</i>	<i>The Time Act</i>
<i>The Gas Licensing Act</i>	<i>The Treaty Land Entitlement Implementation Act</i>
<i>The Government Relations Administration Act</i>	<i>The Urban Municipal Administrators Act</i>
<i>The Indian and Native Affairs Act</i>	<i>The Urban Municipality Act, 1984</i>
<i>The Local Government Election Act, 2015</i>	
<i>The Local Improvements Act, 1993</i>	
<i>The Lotteries and Gaming Saskatchewan Corporation Act</i>	

Mission

Government Relations is dedicated to working with our partners and stakeholders to support and invest in municipal, First Nation and Métis communities through the effective and efficient delivery of programs and services aimed at fostering good governance, a strong economy, respecting Aboriginal and Treaty rights and promoting resident safety.

View the ministry's 2025-26 Business Plan at [Ministry of Government's Relations 2025-26 published business plan](#)

Progress on Goal 1: Citizens live in safe, well-governed and sustainable communities that support economic growth

Strong local governments lead to strong communities. Municipal councils are at the forefront of Saskatchewan communities and their work and decisions are connected to the high quality of life enjoyed across our province. Government Relations works to support local governments with investments and tools to serve their residents, stimulate the local and provincial economy and partner with neighbouring communities, which leads to a strong and vibrant Saskatchewan.

Strategy: *The approach we took to achieve our goal*

Draft effective legislation, regulations, codes, standards and frameworks that define and support municipal decisions and responsibilities.

Key Actions: *What we did to get there*

- Review property assessment and taxation legislation and regulations to ensure the tax system supports growth and is as equitable and fair as possible.
 - In 2025-26, amendments related to the assessment of leased oil and gas properties and tax phase-in provisions were approved and implemented with corresponding updates made to *The Municipalities Regulations*, *The Cities Regulations* and *The Northern Municipalities Regulations*.
 - More than 10 educational documents and five website pages were updated to reflect the most up-to-date property assessment and taxation regulations, legislations and policy guidance.
 - Thirty-four stakeholder events and seven sector-wide events were attended, supporting informed decision making and functional relationship building.
- Review municipal legislation and regulations for policy and process improvements that support good local governance, more community collaboration, administrative efficiency and local economic competitiveness.
 - The ministry continued to review municipal legislation, regulations and policies to strengthen local governance, collaboration and administrative efficiency, advancing 15 legislative, regulatory and policy items for approval in 2025-26.
 - Advanced the development of Bill 43: *The Municipalities Modernization and Red Tape Reduction Act*. Bill 43 will enhance public access to municipal information, support councillor training and workplace safety, enhance the property assessment appeal system and give municipalities more tools to address taxation and bylaw enforcement in their communities.
- Develop and distribute information and materials to support property owners, industry, municipalities, building officials and other codes users in the construction of safe, habitable buildings.
 - Updated 13 technical advisories and guidance documents in 2025-26 including resources related to construction codes amendments, building official orders, sprinkler systems with antifreeze solutions, building permit process and fire alarm monitoring.
 - Continued to provide ongoing technical support by maintaining a dedicated public website and responding to 894 technical inquiries, providing timely

- guidance that reduced uncertainty, enabled regulatory compliance and supported consistent application of codes across Saskatchewan.
- Work with stakeholders to ensure legislation, regulations, codes and standards meet the needs of property owners, municipalities, industry, regulatory officials and jurisdictions across Canada.
 - In 2025-26, delivered 29 in-person workshops, virtual presentations and webinar sessions to 4,437 stakeholders, 2,540 more than last year, covering topics including energy efficiency, fire safety, occupancy classification, Alternative Family Care Homes (AFCH) fire safety training, administration and enforcement and First Nations childcare facilities.
 - The ministry also contributed to the development and implementation of *The Construction Codes (Derelict Buildings) Amendment Act, 2025*; *The Building Code (Derelict Buildings) Amendment Regulations, 2025*; *The Building Code Amendment Regulations, 2025*; *The Gas Inspection (Adoption of Codes) Amendment Regulations* and *The Reconciliation Agreement to Improve Interjurisdictional Commerce and the Mobility of Gasfitters*.
 - Protect people and property through the Integrated Subdivision Approval program which ensures development occurs safely and away from natural hazards.
 - Supported safe and responsible land development by approving 1,393 subdivisions sites through the Integrated Subdivision Approval Program.
 - 95 per cent of subdivision applications were received online, increasing accessibility and overall client service for municipalities and developers.
 - Through this program, the ministry protected \$36.9 million in development value by ensuring proposed subdivisions avoided natural hazard lands, reducing future risks to people, property and infrastructure while minimizing long-term costs related to damage, emergency response and remediation.

Strategy: *The approach we took to achieve our goal*

Improve municipal transparency and accountability to build strong communities throughout the province.

Key Actions: *What we did to get there*

- Support municipal administration and governance by helping municipalities meet their legislated responsibilities and strengthen local transparency and accountability.
 - The ministry monitored compliance with key legislative responsibilities through its compliance monitoring framework, achieving a 92.5 per cent compliance rate across six core legislative requirements, strengthening transparency and sound governance at the local level.
 - Technical inquiry calls declined from 6,445 in the previous year to 4,688 in 2025-26 fiscal year. This reflects both the ministry's success in building municipal staff capacity and promoting greater use of online guidance and resources, as well as lower election-year activity compared to the prior year.
- Support strong partnerships among municipalities through participation at sector events and hosting of cross-sector meetings for information sharing and networking.
 - The ministry strengthened partnerships and collaboration across the municipal sector by participating in and hosting 12 sector stakeholder sessions. These included facilitated discussions with Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) and Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) to improve sustainability supports, as well as an educational session for

- the Municipal Peer Network, delivered in partnership with the Provincial Ombudsman's Office, focused on code of conduct and dispute resolution.
- Work with stakeholders to support training that ensures municipal leaders have the skills and knowledge needed to perform their work.
 - Supported municipal leadership development by delivering six training sessions and workshops reaching 746 participants with practical guidance on legislative requirements for procedures, bylaw creation and administration, helping administrators strengthen performance and better support councils in demonstrating good governance.
 - In partnership with SUMA and SARM, Government Relations led a public education campaign to improve awareness of municipal roles and responsibilities including council role, authority and eligibility for elected office, generating strong engagement through social media.

Strategy: *The approach we took to achieve our goal*

Improve essential community infrastructure, services and strategies to support municipal sustainability.

Key Actions: *What we did to get there*

- Administer community infrastructure investments through government programs such as the Municipal Revenue Sharing Program, Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, Canada Community-Building Fund, Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund and Transit Assistance for People with Disabilities Program.
 - Through a suite of provincial, federal and joint funding programs, the ministry supports municipalities to plan and build core infrastructure including water and wastewater systems, solid waste management systems, transit and community facilities. These investments ensure municipalities can meet current service demands and prepare for future growth.
 - In 2025-26, the ministry distributed \$361.6 million for the Municipal Revenue Sharing Program, \$100.2 million for Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP), \$67.6 million for Canada Community-Building Fund (CCBF), \$14.6 million Grants-in-Lieu of Property Taxes and \$3.8 million for Transit Assistance for People with Disabilities Program.
 - A total of 485 community infrastructure projects were completed in 2025-26, two of such projects completed under ICIP are highlighted below:
 - In the Town of Balgonie, federal and provincial funding under ICIP supported the construction of a new aquatic centre, replacing an aging facility built in 1972. Officially completed in December 2025, the modern outdoor pool features a zero-depth beach entry to improve accessibility for all ages and abilities supporting recreation, swimming education and community well-being as the community continues to grow.
 - In the Town of Moosomin, federal and provincial investments under ICIP supported significant upgrades to its water treatment plant, ensuring the community meets or exceeds provincial drinking-water quality standards. Substantially completed in late summer 2025, the project modernized treatment systems, improved system reliability and strengthened capacity to support current and future residential and economic growth.
 - Three projects were approved in 2025-26 under the newly established Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund.

- Work with the federal government on infrastructure funding programs that support Saskatchewan's priorities as described in the Growth Plan.
 - The ministry continued to work closely with the federal government to deliver infrastructure investments aligned with Saskatchewan's Growth Plan.
 - In fall 2025, Government Relations Minister Eric Schmalz and Saskatchewan municipal leaders met with federal leaders on the importance of cost-shared programs to build that necessary infrastructure in Saskatchewan and across Canada.
- Allocate \$1.5 million in the Targeted Sector Support (TSS) Initiative with municipal associations to encourage inter-community collaboration, help build capacity of core municipal responsibilities and promote good governance.
 - Through the TSS Initiative, \$1.5 million was allocated to municipalities and their partner organizations for 36 projects, 14 more than the previous year. Supported initiatives included intermunicipal collaboration frameworks, updated emergency response plans, regional asset mapping, zoning bylaw and official community plan development, and council training on implementing a harassment free workplace.
 - The ministry also advanced four Strategic Action Projects under the TSS Initiative, completing the redesign of the Board of Revision Online Training Program and opening additional projects focused on procurement and asset management. These initiatives help strengthen core municipal governance and administrative capabilities across Saskatchewan.
- Govern and provide municipal services to residents living in the north by acting as council for the District.
 - In northern Saskatchewan, the ministry plays a direct municipal role by acting as the local government authority for the District, a northern municipality that includes all unorganized areas of the north, excluding park lands and incorporated municipalities. In this capacity, the Minister of Government Relations serves as the District's mayor and council, responsible for governance, service delivery and municipal well-being.
 - Through its Northern Municipal Services Branch, the ministry continued to deliver essential municipal services including water and sewer systems, fire protection and community facilities, attended five District council meetings, ensuring oversight, accountability and meaningful input into decision making on local affairs while managing local infrastructure and funding, benefiting 16,935 northern residents.
 - In 2025-26, the ministry led the District's municipal wildfire response that included issuance of evacuation orders and local emergency declarations in 16 communities, participation in local and provincial emergency operations, consultation with Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency (SPSA), northern residents and northern municipal leaders to protect public safety during active wildfire events.
 - In collaboration with the SPSA Recovery Task Team, the ministry assisted community recovery following the total loss of the East Trout Lake Resort Subdivision and the loss of 53 per cent of residential homes in the Northern Village of Denare Beach. The efforts included expediting planning, permitting and inspections, prioritizing utility reconnections and establishing temporary housing for displaced residents.
 - Through the Northern Municipal Trust Account (NMTA), \$315,000 was provided in wildfire assistance grants to 630 District residents and \$215,000 to the

Northern Village of Denare Beach to compensate for lost property tax and utility billing revenues due to wildfire losses.

- Review and approve community planning bylaws and subdivisions to support critical infrastructure to assist with growth.
 - Reviewed and approved 52 new bylaws for zoning, official community plans and development, strengthening community planning across Saskatchewan.
 - The ministry contributed to the development of *The Building Schools Faster Act*, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of SaskBuilds and Procurement. Approved by Cabinet in September 2025, the legislation streamlines school site planning by requiring municipalities to provide serviced land for new schools, helping ensure that education infrastructure keeps pace with population growth in rapidly expanding communities.
 - Worked with the Water Security Agency to advance amendments to *The Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations*, approved by Cabinet in June 2025. The regulations align with federal disaster-mitigation funding requirements and support safe development in areas affected by flood and water-related risks.
- Support voluntary municipal restructuring.
 - In 2025-26, five municipal restructuring actions were supported including the villages of Denholm, Quinton, Yarbo, Kincaid and Glen Ewen, improving local governance and regional efficiency.
- Strengthen regional planning by supporting existing districts through education and training materials and encourage continued intermunicipal cooperation and partnerships.
 - Four training sessions were delivered in 2025-26, reaching 295 municipal officials, providing practical guidance on land-use planning in Saskatchewan including planning roles, legislative frameworks, bylaws, subdivision processes, hazard lands, servicing agreements, development levies, appeals boards and regional planning.
- Develop and administer Northern Municipal Trust Account (NMTA) programs to provide grants for core municipal services that benefit northern municipalities.
 - The ministry administers the funds under NMTA to support municipal governance, infrastructure development and provision of essential services in northern Saskatchewan. Key funding programs under NMTA include Northern Municipal Revenue Sharing, Northern Capital Grants Program, Northern Water and Sewer Program and Wildfire Mitigation Project. In 2025, \$38.3 million (as per un-audited accounts) was expensed through NMTA under various programs, showing an increase of six per cent from last year.
 - The NMTA Northern Water and Sewer Program had 26 active projects in the 2025-26 fiscal year, benefiting 19 northern municipalities. Five of these projects were completed in Brabant Lake, Cumberland House, Creighton, Uranium City and La Ronge.
 - Under NMTA Emergency Water and Sewer Program, the ministry worked on six projects to address unforeseen problems threatening the safe and efficient operations of northern municipal water and sewer systems. Two of these projects were completed in Cumberland House and Air Ronge.
 - In 2025-26, the ICIP Northwest Regional Solid Waste Management project was expanded to establish regional landfills and decommission existing sites in the northwest and northeast communities. The project is progressing in

collaboration with Indigenous Services Canada to deliver equitable outcomes for First Nations in the region.

- Deliver the Northern Capital Grants Program which provides financial assistance for municipal infrastructure and capital asset projects.
 - Delivered the Northern Capital Grants Program by approving eight applications across three municipalities, providing \$300,000 in funding to support priority municipal infrastructure and capital asset projects. Program uptake in 2025-26 reflected the significant impacts of wildfires across northern Saskatchewan. The ministry responded by prioritizing recovery efforts and maintaining program availability to support communities.

Performance Measure Results:

Municipal transparency and accountability

- Percentage of municipalities that meet eligibility requirements for the Municipal Revenue Sharing Program.
 - More than 98 per cent of municipalities were eligible to receive funding under the Municipal Revenue Sharing Program in 2025-26 fiscal year, demonstrating strong provincial support to municipalities for their local growth priorities.
- Municipalities complying with other governance and safety requirements including board of revision certification, use of tax tools and appointment of building officials.
 - 100 per cent of Saskatchewan municipalities appointed a Certified Board of Revision for the 2025 taxation year.
 - For the 2025 tax year, more than 99 per cent of the municipalities were compliant with the Effective Tax Rate Ratio (ETR) limit.
- Percentage of population covered under planning and building bylaws.
 - 68 per cent of municipalities have adopted planning bylaws, covering 94 per cent of the provincial population.

Government and community priorities

- Number of completed community infrastructure projects supported this year by ministry-administered grant programs.
 - A total of 485 community infrastructure projects were completed in 2025-26, an increase of 57 per cent over the last year. These completed projects include 429 projects under CCBF and 56 projects under ICIP.
- Percentage of ICIP funding paid to recipients.
 - Approximately 59 per cent of ICIP funding has been paid since the inception of the program with more than eight per cent paid in 2025-26 fiscal year. Under ICIP, a total of 432 projects have been approved since its inception.
- Number of approved community infrastructure projects supported this year by the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund and the Canada Community-Building Fund.
 - In 2025-26, 473 projects were approved under the Canada Community-Building Fund and three projects were approved under newly started Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund.

Construction safety

- Number of licensed building officials.
 - 196 licensed building officials across Saskatchewan, an increase of 11 per cent from last year.
- Number of building bylaws reviewed and approved.
 - 56 building bylaws were reviewed and approved in 2025-26 fiscal year.
- Number of municipalities that have adopted their own building bylaws.
 - 82 per cent of Saskatchewan municipalities have adopted their own building bylaws and 18 per cent have been prescribed the model building bylaw.

Progress on Goal 2: First Nation, Métis and northern communities fully share in Saskatchewan's benefits and opportunities.

The Ministry of Government Relations works toward this goal by continuing to build and strengthen relationships with First Nation, Métis and northern communities, organizations and other partners, as well as with provincial ministries, agencies, Crown corporations, federal departments and municipalities. This involves honouring government's commitment related to Aboriginal and Treaty rights and engaging with First Nation and Métis people on areas of mutual interest including government policies and programs.

Strategy: *The approach we took to achieve our goal*

Engage First Nation and Métis communities and government entities to improve policies and programs.

Key Actions: *What we did to get there*

- Participate in and provide support to the Northern Development Ministers Forum to advance the diverse and common interests within northern communities across Canada.
 - Continued to lead the Youth Leadership Project; the work completed thus far will be presented to the ministers for further direction at the next forum.
- Engage with leaders of First Nation and Métis communities and representative organizations on subjects of mutual interest such as strengthening Treaty awareness and education.
 - Engaged with First Nation and Métis leaders and representative organizations including the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, rural municipalities, Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan and Community Development Corporations.
 - Advanced reconciliation commitments by responding to 30 of the 34 Calls to Action directed at provincial governments and 16 additional Calls to Action directed at other parties, supporting ongoing progress toward reconciliation through collaboration and education.
- Build relationships with First Nation and Métis communities and industry for effective and meaningful engagement and consultations.
 - Participated in 25 engagement meetings with First Nation and Métis communities and industry partners that brought together northern leaders, industry representatives and government officials to support open dialogue and shared understanding.
 - Through these engagements, the ministry supported discussions on issues including labour market opportunities, responsible resource development, health considerations and regulatory processes.
 - The ministry's role focused on facilitating meaningful, informed engagement, ensuring that all parties understood each other's priorities and that provincial policies and initiatives reflected a northern lens.

- Connect northern communities to the mining industry through the Northern Saskatchewan Environmental Quality Committee, employment and business opportunities, and human service initiatives.
 - In 2025-26, the ministry continued to strengthen connections between northern communities, government and the mining industry through the Northern Saskatchewan Environmental Quality Committee (NSEQC), marking 30 years since its establishment as a trusted forum that supports respectful dialogue, shared understanding and improved communication on uranium mining and other developments that affect the land, water and people of the north.
 - Managed and funded by the ministry, NSEQC brings together industry, government and northern representation with 22 primary and four alternate members, and has supported the participation of more than 420 northerners in representing their communities and perspectives since 1995.
- Support and advise government ministries, Crowns and agencies on Indigenous and northern engagement, priorities and opportunities.
 - Led the development of Saskatchewan's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) 10-Year Anniversary Report, which was completed and made public on December 15, 2025.
 - Titled "Dayagen Togada Mani: 10 Years of Action Supporting Truth and Reconciliation in Saskatchewan," the cross-government publication highlights progress and examples of work underway across ministries, Crowns and agencies in response to the 94 TRC Calls to Action and reflects collaborative efforts to advance reconciliation in partnership with First Nation and Métis communities.
 - The report highlights initiatives across key sectors including education, health, justice, economic development, cultural recognition and community partnerships, supporting shared learning and continued progress toward reconciliation across the Government of Saskatchewan.

Strategy: *The approach we took to achieve our goal*

Respond to priorities identified by First Nation and Métis leaders and Northerners.

Key Actions: *What we did to get there*

- Help to negotiate new mineral surface lease agreements in the north, leading to new jobs, public awareness and economic growth opportunities for northern communities and residents.
 - The ministry supported finalization of two significant Mineral Surface Lease Agreements (MSLA) in 2025-26 fiscal year. This includes an agreement for NexGen's Rook I uranium project, the first new MSLA in nearly 20 years, strengthening Saskatchewan's position as a global uranium supplier and an agreement for the McIlvenna Bay copper-zinc project with Foran, supporting responsible resource development and long-term economic opportunities for northern communities.
- Advance reconciliation by investing in and supporting initiatives through the First Nations and Métis Sponsorships and Community Partnerships Projects funds and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls+ Community Response Fund.
 - Through the First Nations and Métis Sponsorships program, 28 community events were funded in 2025-26 that promoted awareness, leadership, reconciliation and economic participation. Supported initiatives included

Indigenous student engagement, Treaty and reconciliation education, women's leadership and business development and commemorations such as National Indigenous Day and Orange Shirt Day.

- Through the First Nations and Métis Community Partnerships Projects Fund, invested in community-driven initiatives by supporting 10 projects focused on strengthening family foundations, building safe communities, supporting student achievement and economic growth and stimulating local economic development.
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls+ Community Response Fund was fully utilized, supporting 25 community-based projects that advanced prevention, safety, healing and empowerment for Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit and gender-diverse people. Funded initiatives emphasized culturally grounded approaches to strengthen community resilience.
- Support the Embracing Life Initiative to reduce the risk of suicide through northern initiatives such as training, a suicide prevention mobile app and providing other tools to strengthen resilience and mental health.
 - Continued to support the Embracing Life Initiative to strengthen mental health and reduce suicide risk, using a community-focused approach that combines training, digital tools and practical resources to build resilience and well-being.
 - In 2025-26, the Embracing Life suicide prevention app was downloaded more than 4,000 times and initiative resources reached 289 communities across Saskatchewan, representing a 65 per cent increase from the previous year.
 - The ministry also supported publication of a Youth Voice Toolkit on mental health and suicide prevention that was shared with multiple agencies and distributed through conferences and professional networks to support early intervention, awareness and youth well-being.

Strategy: *The approach we took to achieve our goal*

Honour government's commitments.

Key Actions: *What we did to get there*

- Continue implementation of the revised *First Nation and Métis Consultation and Policy Framework*.
 - Continued implementation of the revised *First Nations and Métis Consultation and Policy Framework* by engaging in 47 meetings with First Nation and Métis communities, impacted organizations and industry partners, reaching more than 1,400 participants in the 2025-26 fiscal year.
 - Provided \$1.4 million through the First Nation and Métis Consultation Participation Fund to help communities and organizations engage fully in consultation activities related to decisions that may affect their rights and interests.
- Provide other ministries, agencies, and Crowns with advice and support to navigate the duty to consult.
 - Continued to provide ongoing advice and support to other ministries, agencies and Crown corporations on fulfilling the duty to consult to help ensure that engagement processes are aligned with established frameworks.
- Administer gaming profits based on the Gaming Framework Agreement and applicable legislation.
 - Distributed \$153.5 million in 2025-26 to First Nation and Métis organizations in accordance with the Gaming Framework Agreement and *The Lotteries and*

Gaming Saskatchewan Corporation Act. These gaming payments support economic development and community wellbeing of First Nation and Métis people.

- Lead provincial collaboration with First Nation partners and Canada to implement land claim agreements, negotiate new Treaty Land Entitlement Agreements and review approaches to improve First Nation land acquisition processes to deliver on the province's legal obligations.
 - The ministry led provincial collaboration with First Nation partners and the Government of Canada to advance Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) commitments, facilitating the transfer of 5,490 acres to reserve status in 2025-26 and bringing the total land transferred to reserve under TLE agreements to 898,672 acres to date.

Performance Measure Results:

Engage First Nation and Métis communities and government entities to improve policies and programs

- Number of events and organized meetings attended where expertise on northern resource management is provided to partners and clients including community representatives, industry and regulators.
 - Recorded 25 engagements providing expertise on northern resource management to partners and clients including community representatives, industry and regulators.
- Number of training sessions held for government officials to implement the revised First Nation and Métis Consultation Policy Framework.
 - Reviewed and updated the training materials related to the revised First Nation and Métis Consultation Policy Framework, ensuring the content better reflects community perspectives and responds to stakeholder needs.
- Number of meetings with First Nation and Métis communities and impacted organizations including industry, on the 2023 First Nation and Métis Consultation Policy Framework.
 - Attended 47 meetings with First Nation and Métis communities, impacted organizations and industry partners with more than 1,400 participants in the 2025-26 fiscal year.

Respond to priorities identified by First Nation and Métis leaders

- Number of grants disbursed under the First Nations and Métis Sponsorships and Community Partnership Projects and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls+ Community Response Fund.
 - Funded 28 First Nations and Métis Sponsorships program, 10 First Nations and Métis Community Partnerships Projects and 25 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls+ Community Response Fund projects.

Honouring government's commitments

- Number of grants and funding provided under the First Nation and Métis Consultation Participation Fund.
 - In 2025-26, \$1.4 million was provided under the First Nation and Métis Consultation Participation Fund. This includes \$1.33 million for 156 grants approved in the current fiscal year and \$70,000 for 43 second payments for grants approved in prior fiscal years.
- Amount of funding distributed through gaming payments based on the Gaming Framework Agreement and applicable legislation.
 - Provided \$153.5 million to the First Nations Trust, Community Development Corporations and the Clarence Campeau Development Fund.
- Number of acres transferred to reserve status to meet land claim agreements obligations.
 - 5,490.12 acres were transferred to reserve status in 2025-26 which is an increase of 1,115.12 acres over the last fiscal year, bringing the total land transferred to 898,672.04 acres to date.

Progress on Goal 3: The Ministry of Government Relations' teams demonstrate our commitment to excellence

A strong public service supports strong Saskatchewan communities. The Ministry of Government Relations works to uphold the Government of Saskatchewan's commitment to excellence by promoting innovation and collaboration in our work with partners, working transparently and efficiently and investing in opportunities to better understand and serve all Saskatchewan citizens.

Strategy: *The approach we took to achieve our goal*

Support the continuous improvement of a high-performing team.

Key Actions: *What we did to get there*

- Continue to enable ministry staff to access mandatory Indigenous Awareness training to increase understanding of the history and cultures of Indigenous communities across Canada.
 - Continued to support staff access to Indigenous Awareness training, ensuring training and learning materials were available to build knowledge and understanding of Indigenous histories, cultures and perspectives. This work strengthened relationships and the delivery of services to Indigenous people within the organization and with the public.
- Participate in events that recognize Indigenous commemorative and awareness days like National Indigenous Peoples Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.
 - The ministry continued to support and encourage employees to attend Truth and Reconciliation/Orange Shirt Day events and other commemorations.
 - Through a range of communication channels, the ministry created and shared more than 75 information items to support awareness and learning about Indigenous culture and practices. This content generated more than 400 views on the ministry's intranet, reflecting a culture of respect and understanding.
- Coordinate learning and development opportunities to improve teamwork, collaboration and productivity among staff which improves services to residents.
 - Held an in-person all-staff day under the theme "Stronger Together." The event strengthened cross-branch collaboration through interactive activities that deepened understanding of each branch's roles and reduced barriers to effective collaboration. It included a cultural learning session led by First Nation community members to celebrate Indigenous culture and support respectful workplace relationships.
- Improve key indicators as identified in the Employment Engagement and Culture Survey.
 - In the 2025 Employment Engagement and Culture Survey, the ministry achieved a response rate of 90 per cent, three per cent higher than 2023 results and well above the Government of Saskatchewan average of 75 per cent, reflecting strong staff engagement and confidence in ministry culture.

- Leadership credibility and trust continued to improve, with Senior Leadership Values rated at 84 per cent, reflecting alignment with core values and ethical leadership.
- The Employee Engagement Score showed clear progress with overall engagement reaching 75 per cent, up from 73 per cent in 2023, supported by positive working relationships, work-life balance and overall job satisfaction.
- A collaborative, values-driven workplace culture remained a strong foundation, with an Employee Values Index of 86 per cent, demonstrating high performance across indicators such as Act as One Team and Show Respect and Integrity.

Strategy: *The approach we took to achieve our goal*

Support accountability and the efficient and effective use of government resources.

Key Actions: *What we did to get there*

- Table financial documents within the required timelines.
 - All the required financial documents were tabled within legislated timelines.
- Improve information management in the ministry through a network of change agents who support and guide people in adopting new systems and process improvements.
 - Throughout the 2025-26 fiscal year, the ministry's change management network supported staff in adopting new systems and processes while improving information management. These efforts included establishing the Admin Hub SharePoint site which provides administrative staff with a centralized location for procedural guides, templates and resources, improving consistency, efficiency and day-to-day operational effectiveness across the ministry.
- Support a dynamic and flexible workforce to ensure staff are available to address the ministry's priorities.
 - Promoted staff development and collaboration through initiatives such as Coffee Chats with Colleagues, Accelerated Leadership Development Program (ALDP) and the launch of the Brown Bag This Business virtual learning series. New in 2025-26, the series is designed to support staff development by sharing knowledge and experiences across the ministry.
 - Fostered an inclusive and connected workplace culture through initiatives such as the GReatvine Podcast which highlights ministry initiatives and celebrates staff contributions and monthly Diversity and Inclusion Conversation Series sessions focused on topics such as self-awareness, multiculturalism and Indigenous awareness. These initiatives support a respectful, engaged and flexible workforce.

Strategy: *The approach we took to achieve our goal*

Demonstrate our commitment to excellence by prioritizing the one team approach to achieving ministry goals.

Key Actions: *What we did to get there*

- Promote and use the ministry's intranet to connect employees' work to ministry goals.
 - Updated 23 webpages and created 24 new documents along with 60 stories and 39 posts to provide the most up-to-date information to its employees including topics related to health, safety and wellness, education and learning and government policies and procedures. This content generated more than

18,000 views, reflecting strong employee engagement and interest in ministry communications.

- Improve information management throughout the ministry using existing communication structures like the Middle Managers Network and the Senior Leadership Team.
 - Held quarterly Middle Managers Excellence (MME) Network meetings focused on strengthening core management capabilities in areas such as managing teams and workplace relationships, information and administrative management (including budgeting) and enabling individual performance through clearer roles and job descriptions.
- Formalized change management process to increase ministry agility when responding to change.
 - Hired a Change Management Lead in 2025-26 to guide a network of 15 certified change management agents. Through this change management network, the ministry supported staff in adopting new tools and processes including building readiness for the implementation of the Government Enterprise Management (GEM) system, enabling smoother transition while maintaining operational effectiveness.

Performance Measure Results:

Excellence in action

- Percentage of staff participating in mandatory and growth learning and development opportunities.
 - Supported mandatory financial training required by the Provincial Comptroller's Office, achieving 100 per cent completion among employees in designated roles, strengthening financial accountability and risk awareness across the ministry.
- Percentage of staff who have taken Indigenous Awareness training.
 - Nearly 90 per cent of ministry staff have completed the training.
- Number of ministry financial documents that are tabled on time.
 - Tabled all the required financial documents on time.
- Key indicators improvement in the Employee Engagement and Culture Survey.
 - Key indicators in the 2025 Employee Engagement and Culture Survey showed strong performance with a 90 per cent response rate and continued improvement in leadership credibility, trust and overall engagement.
- Level of staff confidence in adapting to change.
 - Staff confidence in adapting to change was strengthened through a people-first approach including targeted feedback mechanisms, updated SharePoint resources pages and supports refined based on staff engagement. As per internal staff survey conducted to assess staff readiness for the deployment of GEM, 81 per cent of respondents reported improved access to change-related support, indicating increased confidence in navigating change.

2025-26 Improvement and Innovation Highlights

1	The ministry is taking a proactive and intentional change management approach to navigating complicated and critical change efforts. In 2024, 15 ministry staff were trained and certified as APMG Change Agents and a Change Management Lead was hired in 2025-26. This team promotes, enables and supports ministry change implementation, leading to smoother adoption of new processes and ways of supporting Saskatchewan citizens. • In 2025-26, the Ministry strengthened its capacity to manage complex change through a formal, people-first change management approach. This includes hiring a dedicated Change Management Lead to guide and coordinate change efforts across the Ministry. This role leads a network of 15 certified change management agents, creating strong internal capacity to support staff through transitions and promote effective and consistent change practices. • The change management network improved staff readiness for major initiatives, including the transition to Government Enterprise Management (GEM) system and enhanced day-to-day efficiency through tools like the Admin Hub SharePoint site. These efforts position the ministry to respond with greater agility while continuing to deliver services to Saskatchewan residents.
2	The negotiation of new surface leases in northern Saskatchewan demonstrates new interest in the region for economic development. These negotiations involve companies that are new to mining in the region and, once complete, will double the number of companies mining in Saskatchewan's north. The Ministry of Government Relations supports these negotiations with the goal of accountability, economic prosperity and job creation in the north. • Two Mineral Surface Lease Agreements (MSLAs) were finalized in 2025-26, demonstrating renewed interest in resource development across the north. These agreements reflect growing confidence in the region's resource potential and signal opportunities for long-term economic growth, job creation and local participation. • The finalized MSLAs include NexGen's Rook I uranium project and Foran's McIlvenna Bay copper-zinc project representing important milestones and introducing new mining proponents to northern Saskatchewan. Together, these agreements strengthen Saskatchewan's position as a global resource producer while creating economic opportunities for northern and local communities.

3	The Ministry of Government Relations prioritizes its engagement with stakeholders by using a variety of communications methods including surveys, social media, issue papers, online workshops and webinars and pre-recorded video content. By using a variety of approaches to connect with the public, the ministry ensures that citizens' voices inform policy, program and service recommendations and decisions. • The ministry strengthened its stakeholder engagement through a diverse mix of digital, in-person and collaborative communication tools. These methods included training sessions, webinars, public education campaigns, technical guidance and sector forums to make information more accessible and encourage meaningful participation from municipalities, Indigenous partners, industry and the public. • In 2025-26, throughout the ministry, 29 workshops, webinars and presentations were delivered to more than 4,400 stakeholders, 12 multi stakeholder sessions were hosted, ongoing support through a dedicated website and technical enquiries was provided, and more than 1,000 municipal officials were reached through targeted training. • By combining training, consultation, public education campaigns and multistakeholder forums, the ministry ensured community and sector perspectives meaningfully informed policy development and service delivery across Saskatchewan.
4	The Northern Municipal Services branch has increased the flexibility of the application process for funding from the Northern Capital Grant Program. Thanks to this change, northern municipalities are better able to provide core municipal services like recreational facilities, roads, solid waste projects and water and sewer infrastructure, improving quality of life for northern residents. • The Northern Capital Grants Program continued to support municipal infrastructure in northern Saskatchewan during a year marked by significant wildfire impacts. Program uptake was lower than in previous years as many communities shifted focus to emergency response and wildfire recovery. In 2025-26 there were eight applications approved for three municipalities for a total expense of \$300,000. • During this period, the ministry prioritized supporting northern municipalities affected by significant wildfire impacts, redirecting capacity toward recovery and rebuilding efforts while maintaining core capital funding.

Financial Summary

In 2025-26, the ministry reported actual expenditures of \$753.9 million against an approved appropriation budget of \$781.0 million, resulting in a net underspend of \$27.1 million. This variance was primarily due to lower-than-anticipated infrastructure grant payments reflecting the timing and pacing of a small number of large-scale projects. These lower expenditures were partially offset by higher payments related to gaming agreements. Actual revenues totaled \$835.0 million compared to a budget of \$844.1 million, consistent with the reduced expenditures under federal and provincial infrastructure programs, partially offset by higher Education Property Tax (EPT) levy revenues and the reclassification of a portion of EPT to grants-in-lieu.

Expense Summary

The 2025-26 appropriation budget was \$781.0 million. Actual expenditure was \$753.9 million. This is a \$27.1 million decrease from the budget. This decrease primarily reflects:

- Lower than anticipated net infrastructure grant payments (\$74.6 million).
- Lower than anticipated Education Property Tax allowances due to a year-end entry to decrease the allowance amount (\$0.8 million).
- Lower net salaries and operating due to vacancy management and operating savings (\$0.4 million).

Partially offset by:

- An increase for First Nations Gaming Agreements and the Métis Development Fund (\$46.0 million).
- An increase for Treaty Land Entitlement (\$2.1 million).
- An increase for the First Nations and Métis Consultation Participation Fund (\$0.4 million).
- An increase for the Provincial Capital Commission (\$0.2 million).

The following table summarizes budgeted versus actual expenses by subvote and subprogram. Variance explanations are provided for all variances that are greater than five per cent and \$100,000.

**Ministry of Government Relations
Expense Actuals**

Subvote/Subprogram	2024-25 Actuals (\$000s)	2025-26 Budget (\$000s)	2025-26 Actuals (\$000s)	2025-26 Variance (\$000s)	Notes
Central Management and Services (GR01)	7,730	7,987	7,386	(601)	
Minister's Salary	56	57	57	-	
Executive Management	772	1,048	826	(222)	1
Central Services	5,351	5,455	4,825	(630)	2
Accommodations Services	1,551	1,427	1,678	251	3
First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs (GR12)	130,113	113,843	161,972	48,129	
First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs	4,681	5,064	4,663	(401)	1
Treaty Land Entitlement	3,325	335	2,440	2,105	4
First Nations and Métis Consultation Participation Fund	1,478	1,000	1,396	396	5
Métis Development Fund	3,664	2,722	2,547	(175)	6
First Nations Gaming Agreements	116,965	104,722	150,926	46,204	7
Municipal Relations (GR07)	623,752	649,656	575,085	(74,571)	
Urban Revenue Sharing	217,428	231,907	231,166	(741)	
Rural Revenue Sharing	97,100	103,110	103,752	642	
Northern Revenue Sharing	25,135	26,773	26,722	(51)	
New Building Canada Fund	5,065	4,000	6,015	2,015	8
Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program	175,066	174,468	100,167	(74,301)	9
Transit Assistance for People with Disabilities	3,787	3,787	3,787	-	
Grants-in-Lieu of Property Taxes	14,133	14,500	14,642	142	
Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency	12,288	12,288	12,288	-	
Municipal Relations	7,767	7,990	7,938	(52)	
Canada Community-Building Fund	65,094	69,886	67,623	(2,263)	
Building and Technical Standards	889	947	985	38	
Saskatchewan Municipal Board (GR06)	1,481	2,021	1,747	(274)	1
Provincial Capital Commission (GR14)	7,678	7,471	7,705	234	
Provincial Capital Commission	7,678	7,471	7,705	234	
Total Appropriation	770,754	780,978	753,895	(27,083)	
Less Capital Asset Acquisitions	-	-	-	-	
Plus Capital Asset Amortization	91	100	91	(9)	
Total Expense	770,845	781,078	753,986	(27,092)	

Notes:

1. Vacancy management and miscellaneous operating under-expenditure.
2. Under-expenditure primarily the result of a year-end accounting entry to decrease Education Property Tax allowances.
3. Over-expenditure the result of increased accommodation costs.
4. Over-expenditure for Treaty Land Entitlements reflecting adjustments to existing accruals for a contingent liability based on new census data provided by the federal government.
5. Over-expenditure reflecting increased activity of the fund compared to budget.
6. The variance relates to expenditure classification to ensure alignment with the appropriate funding program.
7. Over-expenditure reflecting higher actual net casino profits and online gaming profits from 2024-25, along with updated 2025-26 forecasts.
8. Over-expenditure reflecting ongoing projects progressing more quickly than anticipated.
9. Under-expenditure reflecting a small number of large projects not progressing as quickly as anticipated.

Revenue Summary

The 2025-26 revenue budget was \$844.1 million. Actual revenue was \$835.0 million. This is a \$9.1 million decrease over budget. This decrease is primarily attributed to:

- A decrease of revenue to reflect decreased expenditures for federal/provincial infrastructure programs (\$28.0 million).
- A decrease of federal funding for the Codes Acceleration Fund initiative (\$1.5 million).

Partially offset by:

- An increase to reclassify a portion of Education Property Tax (EPT) to grants-in-lieu (\$9.1 million).
- An increase for EPT levy (\$6.0 million).
- An increase for refunds to the General Revenue Fund, primarily for infrastructure programs where actual amounts were lower than what was accrued in prior years (\$2.8 million).
- An increase for gaming agreement payment account receivables for overpayments from previous years (\$1.6 million).
- An increase to reclassify a portion of EPT revenue for trailer fees (\$0.6 million).
- An increase of miscellaneous from across the ministry (\$0.3 million).

The ministry's major revenue relates to EPT and agreements with the federal government. All revenue collected is deposited in the General Revenue Fund. A summary of the ministry's 2025-26 budgeted revenue compared to actual revenue is presented below. Explanations are provided for all variances that are greater than \$100,000.

Ministry of Government Relations

Revenue

Revenue Category	2025-26 Budget (\$000s)	2025-26 Actuals (\$000s)	2025-26 Variance (\$000s)	Notes
Property Taxes	668,900	674,904	6,004	
Education Property Taxes	668,900	674,904	6,004	1
Other Licences and Permits	554	1,367	813	
Subdivision Fees	550	767	217	2
Building Official Licencing Fees	4	9	5	
Other Rental and Leases	-	591	591	3
Sales, Services and Service Fees	75	186	111	
Debenture Authorization	40	63	23	
Miscellaneous Services	5	2	(3)	
Other Service Fees	30	113	83	
Documentation, Searches and Other Fees	-	8	8	
Other Miscellaneous Revenue	-	13,458	13,458	
Change in Previous Year's Expenditures	-	4,399	4,399	4
Casual/Other Revenue	-	9,059	9,059	5
Other Federal/Provincial Agreements	174,571	145,089	29,482	
Canada Community-Building Fund	69,513	69,513	-	
Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program	103,542	76,038	(27,504)	6
New Building Canada Fund	-	(462)	(462)	7
Codes Acceleration Fund	1,516	-	(1,516)	8
Total Revenue	844,100	835,004	(9,096)	

Notes:

1. Increased revenue reflecting the actual growth rate of the assessment base being higher than the projected growth rate.
2. Increased subdivision application activity.
3. Reclassification of a portion of EPT revenue for trailer fees.
4. Increased revenue primarily reflecting refunds to the General Revenue Fund primarily for infrastructure programs, where actual amounts were lower than what was accrued in prior years.
5. Reclassification of a portion of EPT revenue to grants-in-lieu.
6. Decreased revenue reflecting projects progressing slower than anticipated.
7. Decreased revenue reflecting an accounts receivable accrual adjustment.
8. Decreased revenue reflecting the program is no longer proceeding, therefore federal revenue was not received.

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