

Business Plan

2024-25

Ministry of Social Services

Saskatchewan! 

Statement from the Minister



*The Honourable Gene Makowsky
Minister of Social Services*

I am pleased to present the Ministry of Social Services' Business Plan for 2024-25. This year's Social Services budget is a record \$1.54 billion investment to meet the evolving needs of vulnerable clients.

Working families with low incomes will benefit from the first full year of the Saskatchewan Employment Incentive program, and Saskatchewan Income Support (SIS) and Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) clients will receive higher monthly income assistance benefits. Saskatchewan seniors will also benefit from an increase to the Personal Care Home Benefit monthly income threshold.

The ministry continues to work with other human service ministries and community partners to implement the Provincial Approach to Homelessness, including increased support for ongoing emergency shelter operations and a capital investment to continue to develop supportive housing spaces across the province. The ministry will also expand the Income Assistance Mobile Workforce to serve more clients where they are, and trusteeship and money management services will help more clients pay their rent and other bills each month.

The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation will invest in the repair and maintenance of provincially-owned housing units to prevent and reduce vacancies and respond to the increasing demand for social housing. In the coming year, investments will be focused where there is the greatest need in major urban centres and northern Saskatchewan.

Support for people with disabilities will be increased through capital investments and establishment of a new quality assurance team to strengthen relationships and oversight of homes supporting adults with intellectual disabilities. Additionally, the Autism Spectrum Disorder Individualized Funding program will receive increased funding to meet the needs of children and their families.

Investments will also improve services and supports for at-risk families, children and youth, including additional residential care options for children and youth with complex needs, increased supports for youth transitioning from care, and bringing intensive in-home support programs to more communities.

In the coming year, the ministry will provide increased funding to community-based service providers across the province to help us deliver services that enable Saskatchewan people to achieve a better quality of life. Funding to community-based organizations represents over 30 per cent of the ministry's budget and is a significant contribution to supporting the growing needs of Saskatchewan families and local communities.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gene Makowsky', written in a cursive style.

Gene Makowsky
Minister of Social Service

2024-25 Budget Highlights

1	<p>The 2024-25 Ministry of Social Services' budget is \$1.54 billion, which is an increase of \$112.4 million, or 7.8 per cent, over 2023-24.</p>
2	<p>Increased income assistance investments will help low-income individuals, families and seniors provide for their basic needs, as they work to become more self-sufficient and independent to the best of their abilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A \$17 million investment will deliver the first full year of the Saskatchewan Employment Incentive program.• Monthly income assistance benefits will rise by three per cent for Saskatchewan Income Support (SIS) and Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) clients.• The Personal Care Home Benefit monthly income threshold will increase by \$100 to \$2,500.
3	<p>Services to individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness will be enhanced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A \$16.7 million increase will support the implementation of the Provincial Approach to Homelessness to support ongoing emergency shelter operations and continue to develop supportive housing spaces in Regina and Saskatoon.• The Income Assistance Mobile Workforce initiative will place an additional 10 ministry employees on-site with select community-based organizations to serve clients where they are.• Trusteeship and money management services will be expanded to help 150 more clients pay their rent and other bills each month.• A new benefit will be introduced to support clients to secure identification, so they have better access to services.
4	<p>Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC) will invest in the repair and maintenance of provincially-owned housing units in 2024-25. A \$9.6 million increase will target the prevention and reduction of vacancies in social housing units, and respond to the increasing demand for social housing.</p>

5	<p>The ministry is increasing funding to better support adults with intellectual disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A \$10.4 million increase will support the changing service needs of current clients, and the delivery of residential and day programs to new clients.• A \$7.6 million investment will plan and construct 10 new group homes and one assessment and stabilization home.• The ministry will develop a new quality assurance team to strengthen relationships and oversight of homes supporting adults with intellectual disabilities.
6	<p>The ministry is committed to improving services and supports for at-risk families, children and youth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An additional \$2.7 million will support residential care options for children and youth with complex needs.• \$500,000 in new funding will increase supports for youth transitioning from care.• A \$375,000 increase will bring intensive in-home support programs to communities where they do not currently exist.

Government Vision and Goals

Saskatchewan's Vision

"...to be the best place in Canada – to live, to work, to start a business, to get an education, to raise a family and to build a life."

>> Government Goals

A Strong Economy

Strong Communities

Strong Families

Saskatchewan's vision and three goals provide the strategic direction for organizations to align their programs and services to build a strong Saskatchewan.

All organizations will report on progress in their 2024-25 annual reports.

Ministry of Social Services Overview

Mandate

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

Mission

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

Vision

Saskatchewan people have a better quality of life.

Goal 1: Individuals and families in need are safe and supported.

The Ministry of Social Services supports vulnerable people and families as they build a better quality of life. We help people with their immediate needs and provide supports for: families to safely care for their children, children and youth in care to be successful, people with disabilities to access community-based services, access to affordable housing, and income assistance to meet people's basic needs as they work to become self-sufficient to the best of their abilities. Together with Indigenous and community partners, we work to make a positive difference in the lives of our clients every day.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*
Support families to safely care for their children.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Provide intensive support services to keep at-risk families together.
- Collaborate with Indigenous and community partners to provide prevention services that keep children safe.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*
Support children and youth in care to be successful.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Engage with youth in care to ensure their perspective on programs and services is integrated.
- Improve supports for children and youth within community-based care.
- Provide enhanced services to youth who are transitioning out of care or have recently transitioned from care.
- Strengthen support for family-based care.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*
Support the participation and inclusion of people with disabilities in their community.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Increase client access to community-based day programs.
- Develop the Government of Saskatchewan Accessibility Plan as required by *The Accessible Saskatchewan Act*.
- Work in partnership with community-based organizations to improve quality of life for people with disabilities.
- Operationalize a quality assurance unit within Disability Programs by March 31, 2025.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*
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: *What we will do to get there*

- Support people with low incomes to enter and remain in the workforce through the Education Training Incentive and the Saskatchewan Employment Incentive.
- Increase earned income exemptions.
- Continue to implement the Saskatchewan Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- Increase trusteeship and money management supports for Saskatchewan Income Support (SIS) and Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) clients.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Provide Saskatchewan residents in need with supportive social and/or affordable housing.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Improve housing affordability by increasing the number of households receiving the Saskatchewan Housing Benefit.
- Increase availability of social housing units for Saskatchewan residents in need.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Provide increased access to supports for Saskatchewan residents experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness, to meet their needs while moving towards stable housing.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Work with all levels of government, Indigenous and community partners to improve access to supports for individuals experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness.
- Enhance street outreach services to support unsheltered individuals in Regina and Prince Albert.
- Continue to expand the Income Assistance mobile workforce to better serve clients with complex needs where they are within communities.

Performance Measures: *What success looks like*

Proportion of children receiving ongoing child protection services who are safe with services at home

Target: In 2024-25, 59 per cent of children receiving ongoing child protection services are safe with services at home.

Percentage of children in out-of-home care placed in family-based care

Target: By the end of 2024-25, 75 per cent of children in out-of-home care are placed in family-based care.

Percentage of children in out-of-home care placed with extended family

Target: By the end of 2024-25, 60 per cent of children in out-of-home care are placed with extended family.

First year foster family retention rate

Target: In 2024-25, the ministry will have a 95 per cent annual first year foster family retention rate.

Approval of new foster families created by recruitment

Target: In 2024-25, 50 new foster families are recruited and approved.

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.

Number of households living in Saskatchewan Housing Corporation-owned housing units

Target: In 2024-25, 350 additional households will be housed in Saskatchewan Housing Corporation-owned housing units.

Number of Saskatchewan Housing Corporation-owned housing units repaired

Target: In 2024-25, 1,400 SHC-owned housing units will be repaired.

Number of new households receiving the Saskatchewan Housing Benefit (SHB)

Target: In 2024-25, 800 new households will have improved affordability by accessing the SHB.

Percentage of Saskatchewan Income Support (SIS) clients reporting earned income

Target: In 2024-25, there will be a 5 percent increase in the number of SIS clients who access earned income exemptions.

Proportion of clients who leave SIS

In 2024-25, 25 per cent of SIS clients will no longer require SIS benefits.

Complete the Government of Saskatchewan Accessibility Plan by December 3, 2024

Number of households receiving Saskatchewan Employment Incentive

(Baseline to be developed.)

Number of new supportive housing units in Regina and Saskatoon

Target: 100 new supportive housing units in Regina and Saskatoon.

Number of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) the ministry partners with through the Income Assistance mobile workforce

Target: Increase Mobile Workforce presence to over 30 facilities operated by community partners.

Number of CBO-based trusteeship spaces available to clients

Target: Increase number of CBO-based trusteeship spaces by 150.

Goal 2: Enhanced Indigenous engagement, collaboration, and outcomes.

Many of Social Services' clients are Indigenous. We believe clients should see themselves in the staff delivering services, and that staff understand clients' cultural and historical experiences. The ministry also funds Indigenous partners and service providers across the province to provide a wide range of services and supports. The ministry will continue to build these partnerships and strengthen our capacity to be a better employer and partner in supporting clients.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Embed Indigenous perspectives, knowledge, and cultural practices within the ministry.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Actively recruit and retain Indigenous employees.
- Continue to provide Indigenous cultural awareness training to all ministry employees.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Partner with Indigenous organizations and communities to support culturally appropriate and community-driven services.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Collaborate with Indigenous partners on implementation of *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*.
- Enhance and strengthen relationships with Indigenous organizations, communities, and other service providers to design and deliver programs that better serve clients.
- Increase opportunities for Indigenous perspectives to inform services, program design, and policy changes.
- Continue to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action.

Performance Measures: *What success looks like*

Percentage of ministry employees who self-identify as Indigenous

Target: At least 12.6 per cent of ministry employees self-identify as Indigenous by March 31, 2025.

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

Target: All new ministry employees complete introductory Indigenous awareness training within their first six months of onboarding.

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

The ministry prioritizes employee well-being and engagement and supports employee efforts to build a supportive and positive work environment. Inclusion, diversity, and a healthy workplace culture all contribute to our ability to deliver excellent client service. The ministry’s vision and plan for enhancing employee engagement will enable all staff to be strong partners in meeting the needs of clients now and into the future.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Continue to enhance innovation and improve accountability to support the ministry’s existing and emerging business needs.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Improve accountability and client outcomes through a more comprehensive approach to working with third-party service providers.
- Continue to implement improvements and make progress on delivering effective and efficient services and programs.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Provide a safe and healthy workplace.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Continue to implement the ministry-wide Building Organizational Community initiative to improve workplace culture and employee wellness (i.e., attract, keep, and grow talent; promote healthy workplaces; support leadership excellence).
- Continue to champion and provide workplace health and safety supports for employees.

Performance Measures: *What success looks like*

The ministry workplace injury rate

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

Psychological safety score

Target: Maintain or improve the ministry’s psychological safety score by March 31, 2025.

Percentage of ministry employees who feel they have support at work to provide a high level of service.

Target: By December 31, 2025, at least 70 per cent of ministry employees feel they have support at work to provide a high level of service.

Maintain or improve the percentage of ministry employees who feel the work they do is meaningful.

Target: By December 31, 2025, at least 80 per cent of ministry employees feel the work they do is meaningful.

2024-25 Improvement and Innovation Highlights

1

Implementation of Saskatchewan Employment Incentive (SEI)

The SEI provides working families who have lower incomes with a monthly financial incentive, supplementary health benefits, access to discount bus passes (where available), connections to employment supports through the Ministry of Immigration and Career Training (ICT) and access to the Saskatchewan Housing Benefit through the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation.

The SEI is replacing the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement (SES) and Childcare Subsidy (CCS).

Paying for the costs of being at work, like transportation and childcare, can be difficult for families working lower income jobs, especially single parents. The SEI will support parents with low income, so they are financially better off working than being on income assistance.

Program design features:

- An online portal that is accessible to clients 24/7;
- Supplementary health benefits;
- Access to the Saskatchewan Housing Benefit;
- Access to discount bus passes (where available); and,
- Employment supports through ICT.

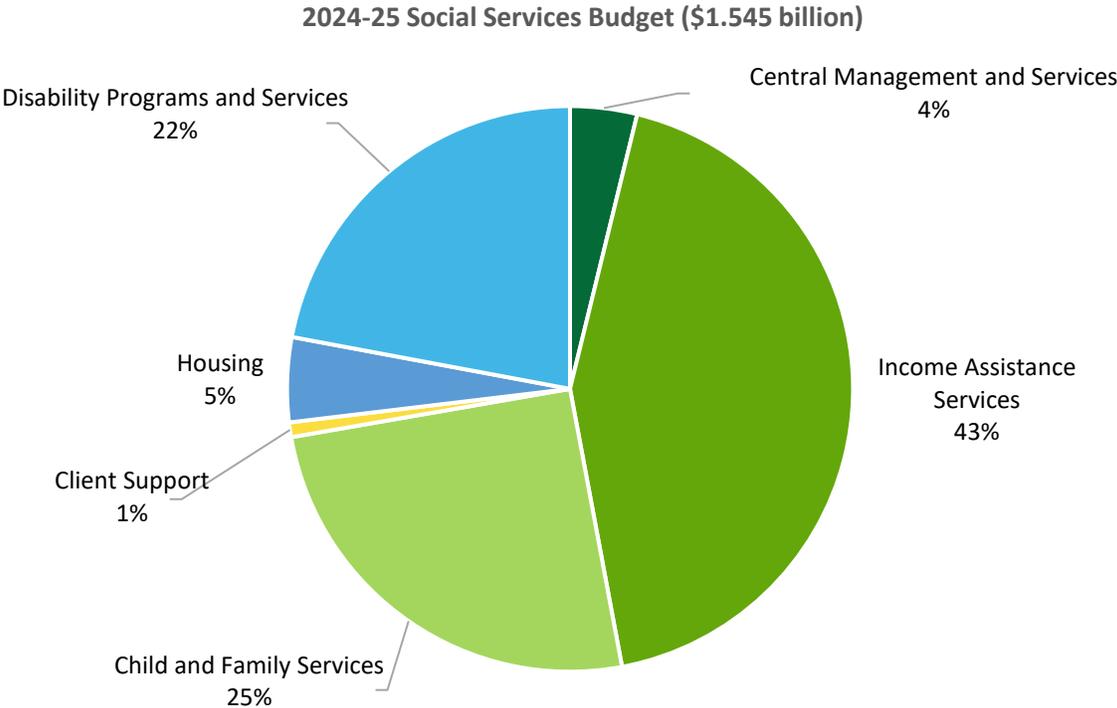
The SEI aims to:

- Support families to connect with and maintain employment;
- Reduce reliance on income assistance by promoting self-sufficiency.

The SEI was implemented in January 2024 and the 2024-25 budget will provide SEI with its first full year of funding.

Financial Summary

Ministry of Social Services 2024-25 Estimates (\$ 1.545 billion)		(in thousands of dollars)
Central Management and Services		\$59,008
Income Assistance Services		\$667,916
Child and Family Services		\$389,419
Client Support		\$12,963
Housing		\$74,727
Disability Programs and Services		\$340,777
Total Appropriation		\$1,544,810
Capital Asset Acquisitions		(\$6,382)
Non-Appropriated Expense Adjustment		\$6,453
Total Expense		\$1,544,881



Links to More Information

- <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/government-structure/ministries/social-services>
- [Government of Saskatchewan Budget, Planning and Reporting](#)