

Annual Report

2023-24

Ministry of Social Services

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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, 2024.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read '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, 2024.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read '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, 2024. It provides results of publicly committed strategies, key actions and performance measures identified in the Ministry of Social Services Plan for 2023-24. It also reflects progress toward commitments from the Government Direction for 2023-24, 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 1,900 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 2023-24 budget for Social Services was \$1.433 billion, an increase of \$46.7 million or 3.4 per cent over 2022-23.

Associated Offices

Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC) provides a range of social and affordable housing programs and support services across the province. SHC owns a rental housing portfolio of around 18,000 units located in more than 260 communities throughout the province. SHC owned units are targeted to households with the greatest need, including families, seniors, new immigrants, persons with disabilities, homeless and persons facing housing barriers such as addictions or mental health challenges. In addition, approximately 4,300 units, including 3,215 rental units and 1,120 special purpose housing units (i.e. special care, shelter, and group home beds) are owned and operated by non-profit groups and co-operatives.

To have successful housing initiatives and deliver programs and support services to people who could not otherwise afford or access adequate, safe and secure shelter, SHC proudly partners with Indigenous and community-level organizations, other levels of government and the SHC housing authority network. SHC also plays a lead role in developing housing policies on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan and in managing social housing-related investments from the provincial, federal, and municipal levels of government.

For more information on SHC, see the [2023 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, 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*, which came into force on December 3, 2023.

Partnerships and Operating Agreements

The Ministry of Social Services held more than 1,200 contracts with approximately 250 Indigenous and community-based organizations and third-party service providers across the province in 2023-24. This amounts to an investment of approximately \$461 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. The 2023-24 budget provided \$13.5 million in additional funding to help community-based service providers deliver high-quality client services.

SHC partners with 244 housing authorities to manage the social housing portfolio and rental housing programs. Additionally, more than 155 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

[Ministry of Social Services 2023-24 Business Plan](#)

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

The ministry provides a range of supports and services to Saskatchewan people. Clients may be experiencing crisis or suffer from abuse or neglect. We also support clients with disabilities and those who require assistance meeting their basic needs. The ministry aims to make our programs and services more accessible and effective to ensure our clients are safe and can participate in their communities. We also partner with third party service providers to provide services in communities throughout the province. With this support, clients are empowered to work towards achieving their goals so that they can build better lives for themselves.

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

Families are supported to safely care for their children.

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

- Expand intensive residential and supportive living for high needs families.
 - Supportive Family Living Programs (SFLP) use a family centred approach to help high-risk families remain safely together or reunify while receiving parenting guidance and supervision in community and residential settings. Services include access to cultural supports and ceremonies. Both Indigenous organizations and other third party service providers, deliver these services 24 hours per day.
 - The ministry partnered with:
 - Catholic Social Services (Lloydminster) to open a new 10 space SFLP in September 2023;
 - Meadow Lake Outreach Ministries to expand their existing SFLP from five to 10 spaces in January 2024; and
 - Sanctum Care Group (Saskatoon) to open four short-term assessment suites in March 2024.
 - Between April 1, 2023, and March 31, 2024, 439 at-risk families received services through 14 SFLPs. These programs provide 146 family spaces.
 - Additional SFLP services are being developed in partnership with Foxvalley (Moose Jaw) and Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) (Fort Qu'Appelle). These SFLP services are four spaces each and are to be operational in the 2024-25 fiscal year.
- Collaborate with Indigenous and community partners to provide prevention services that keep children safe.
 - The ministry invested over \$54.8 million in prevention programs in 2023-24 to support families to safely care for their children at home. This was an increase of \$3.4 million or 6.7 per cent.

- There are approximately 40 third party service providers contracted to provide family support across the province. Services include supportive family living programs, intensive family support programs, outreach services, emergency after hours' services, teen parent support and counselling services.
- The ministry continued to work collaboratively with the Saskatchewan Health Authority, Indigenous service providers and other community partners, to support at-risk mothers, with the goal of keeping families together.
- Strengthen supports for extended family caregivers.
 - The extended family support worker initiative is available across the province to connect extended family caregivers to community-based supports, in-home services and learning opportunities that strengthen caregiver skills, confidence and knowledge.
 - Extended family is the preferred care arrangement of the ministry. Children placed with extended family experience continued connection with their family, culture and community.
 - The ministry provided \$206,000 in funding to expand Family Finder services with Mistahi Sipi and Awasisak Nikan First Nations agencies in 2023-24. The ministry invests \$1.8 million annually (Family Finders) with all 19 First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) agencies to find families for children who require out-of-home care.
 - In 2023-24, the ministry provided a two per cent increase to basic maintenance payments at a cost of \$825,000 for foster homes and extended family caregivers to help cover the costs of caring for a child.
 - *Traditions of Caring* is a Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education (PRIDE)-based program for extended family caregivers available across the province. Voluntary participation in *Traditions of Caring* sessions offer education, support, and provide opportunities to build support networks with other caregivers.
 - The ministry initiated a comprehensive review of the Person of Sufficient Interest (PSI) program in 2023-24. The review will inform future action areas to strengthen PSI care in 2024-25.

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

Children and youth in care are supported 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.
 - In collaboration with the Youth Advisory Teams (YATs) created in 2021, the ministry continued work to implement a comprehensive youth engagement initiative.
 - The ministry continued work with three third party service providers to help support the YATs: Prince Albert Outreach, EGADZ in Saskatoon, and John Howard Society in Regina. YATs meet, at minimum, monthly and empower youth to share ideas on improvements to services, policies and programs that directly impact

- hard-to-serve youth.
- An additional \$504,000 was invested for youth engagement in 2023-24, including:
 - \$294,000 for two drop-in centres; one in Regina (with plans to open in April 2024) and one in Prince Albert (under development); and
 - \$210,000 for three full-time YAT coordinator positions.
 - The ministry engaged youth in discussions on policies and practice, including on annual case plan reviews for children and youth in care.
 - The YAT in Prince Albert identified the need for more emergency youth transitional housing in the north. In response, the Government of Saskatchewan invested an additional \$625,000 in 2023-24 to expand the Youth Transitional Housing Service in Prince Albert. This enabled the YWCA to increase spaces from eight to 10 and to provide 24/7 staffing. These services are provided to 16- to 18-year-old youth with complex needs, allowing them to access supports in a safe, stable home environment in their home community.
 - In the 2023-24 provincial budget, the ministries of Social Services and Health committed \$1.2 million each to develop three mental health group homes to serve youth struggling with mental health and addictions issues.
 - The Saskatoon YAT was instrumental in co-developing the Garden of Hope home which officially opened in December 2023. This new home is a partnership between the Government of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Health Authority and EGADZ, providing youth-driven therapeutic housing to youth ages 12 to 18.
 - In December 2023, a joint request for proposals (RFP) was issued by Social Services, the Ministry of Health and the Saskatchewan Health Authority to find prospective candidates to develop and operate mental health group homes in Regina and Prince Albert. In March 2024, the RFP for Prince Albert was awarded to PA Outreach. The ministry is continuing to search for a successful candidate for Regina.
 - The Saskatoon YAT was instrumental in developing the Missing Youth Saskatchewan online application, developed by EGADZ with the support of the ministry. In 2023-24, EGADZ expanded the use of the tool to third party service providers that care for youth across the province. Approximately 70 per cent of the service providers caring for youth in group homes are currently using the tool and online application. The provincial rollout and the expanded use of the tool and application will continue into 2024-25.
 - Support specialized training for foster parents.
 - The ministry, in partnership with the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association, continued to deliver PRIDE Levels of Pay in 2022. This includes mandatory education, training, and annual support for professional development, to help foster families care for children with complex needs.
 - Developing a larger pool of foster parents with specialized training in critical areas such as fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, trauma and complex medical care will mean that more children in care of the ministry are able to be nurtured in family settings rather than in group homes.

- In 2023-24, 27 caregivers (18 families) were trained and approved for a higher level of specialized PRIDE training (not including core PRIDE levels of training).
- Cultural components are included in all areas of PRIDE including during the assessment and approval of potential foster families, in the onboarding of new foster families, and throughout training.
- A First Nations PRIDE manager leads a PRIDE First Nations supervisor and a team of consultants that are contracted to work with ministry served First Nations and 19 FNCFS agencies. Their core work centers around providing train-the-trainer opportunities to support agency staff in delivering pre-service 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. In addition, this team facilitates various important cultural and relationship bridging activities with First Nation communities.
- Improve supports for children and youth within community-based care.
 - The ministry invested \$350,000 in 2023-24 to strengthen oversight of group homes caring for children and youth by adding six new positions to ensure children and youth are receiving quality care and to provide on-site support, follow up when concerns are identified, and provide training to service providers.
 - The ministry has partnered with Clare Parker Homes (Regina) and Autism Services of Saskatoon to develop and operate two new group homes with specialized services for children and youth in care with special needs.
 - The ministry partnered with Foxvalley Counseling Services Inc. to provide temporary placement options in Yorkton for children entering care. Two short term community-based homes (STCBH) opened in October 2023. A STCBH offers an immediate placement option for children who cannot remain safely at home. This allows staff to work with parents to address safety concerns or to locate a family-based care option.
 - The First Nations PRIDE team leads the Awasisak Awi Pekiwehwak - The Children Are Coming Home (CACH) program. In 2023-24, 75 children were connected to 25 home communities through CACH, facilitating nine extended family placements for children formerly in group care.

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

People with disabilities are supported to have an improved quality of life.

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

- Increase client access to community-based day programs.
 - The ministry continues work to ensure more community-based day program options are available across the province and accessible to individuals residing in assessment and stabilization homes. An array of options ensures that the specific needs of individuals can be more effectively met. Appropriate day program options help to support the individual's personal development and offers those providing support valuable respite. For individuals residing in the assessment and stabilization homes, access to day programs helps to maintain a pattern of daily

living that most individuals are accustomed to. This helps to minimize the impact of moving from their previous home environment.

- Implement *The Accessible Saskatchewan Act*, including the regulatory framework.
 - The *Accessible Saskatchewan Act* received Royal Assent on May 17, 2023, and was brought into force on December 3, 2023.
 - The Accessible Saskatchewan Regulations were developed and brought into force alongside *The Accessible Saskatchewan Act*. The regulations name the organizations that are required to develop an accessibility plan by December 3, 2025.
 - On March 1, 2024, the Accessibility Advisory Committee was established to provide advice to the provincial government on proposed accessibility standards that may be adopted into regulation.
- Improve partnerships with community based organizations to support enhanced quality of life for people with disabilities.
 - Through the Outcomes-Based Service Delivery pilot project the ministry has partnered with service providers supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities to develop a community of practice to share best practices and create new knowledge in supporting individuals in achieving their best quality of life.
- Implement an online application process for Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID).
 - The ministry is committed to improving program accessibility. In 2023, a new streamlined application process was fully implemented with improved services that include online, over-the-phone, or in-person options to apply for SAID.

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

Saskatchewan residents in need can access affordable and appropriate housing.

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

- Work with all levels of government and Indigenous and community partners to improve access to supports for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.
 - In October 2023, the Government of Saskatchewan announced a new Provincial Approach to Homelessness (PATH) to create 155 new supportive housing spaces, 120 new permanent emergency shelter spaces, and enhance community safety and outreach. This integrated approach between the ministries of Social Services, Health, and Corrections, Policing and Public Safety provides a continuum of services with targeted supports in appropriate settings, that are aligned with the needs of the individual.
- Improve the effectiveness of social housing programs and ensure the Saskatchewan Housing Benefit (SHB) meets the needs of clients.
 - The SHB provides a flat-rate monthly benefit to households with low to moderate incomes and assets. SHC collected client feedback in September 2023, and 93 per cent of respondents reported that the benefit had a positive impact on their lives. As of January 2024, clients of the Saskatchewan Employment Incentive can apply to receive the SHB ensuring more households can access the benefit.

- SHC continues to provide affordable housing through the North Central Pilot Project, allowing SHC to approve units with chronic vacancies for affordable rental rates where it is deemed appropriate. The pilot program has been successful in removing barriers for families and individuals seeking affordable housing as applicants are not required to provide proof of income or assets.

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*

- Enhance outreach supports to better serve clients with community-based organizations.
 - In 2023-24, the ministry invested \$656,000 in a Mobile Outreach Initiative to place up to 10 ministry employees within select third party service providers to support clients with complex challenges where they are. Currently, the Mobile Outreach Initiative serves clients in 26 locations through partnerships with 21 third party service providers.
 - The ministry received positive feedback from clients and service providers regarding the success of the initiative, citing improved access and timely connections to supports.
- Support Income Assistance clients to access employment and education.
 - In January 2024, the ministry launched the Saskatchewan Employment Incentive (SEI). This new program provides working families who have lower incomes with a monthly financial benefit, 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.
 - In 2023-24, the ministry continued to offer the Education and Training Incentive (ETI) through SAID and Saskatchewan Income Support (SIS) to provide financial support for individuals who attended an approved education or training program. In 2023-2024, the number of households accessing ETI was more than 1,300.
 - In 2023-24, Income Assistance clients seeking employment continue to be referred to career services through the ICT.
 - In 2023-24, the ministry invested \$633,000 to improve the experience for clients accessing the Income Assistance Client Service Centre. The addition of 10 FTEs supports improved call response times and access to services and supports.
- Continue to implement the Saskatchewan Poverty Reduction Strategy.
 - 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.
 - In 2023-24:
 - The SIS Adult Basic Benefit, Shelter Benefit, and Alternate Heating Benefit were each increased by \$30 per month.

- SAID clients began receiving \$30 more per month in living income benefits. SAID clients under age 65 who live in personal care homes began receiving up to \$684 more per month.
- Senior's Income Plan (SIP) Benefits were increased from \$270 to \$360, fulfilling government's three-year commitment to increase the maximum monthly SIP benefit.
- The Personal Care Home Benefit monthly income threshold was increased by \$400 per month to \$2,400 per month (20 per cent increase).
- The ministry expanded trustee and money management services by approximately 300 spaces to over 1,100.

Performance Measure Results:

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

- Target: In 2023-24, 55 per cent of children receiving ongoing child protection services are safe with services at home.
 - On March 31, 2024, 57.6 per cent of children receiving child protection services were 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.
 - On March 31, 2024, 58.5 per cent of children in out-of-home care were placed with extended family.

First year foster family retention rate

- Target: In 2023-24, the ministry will have a 95 per cent annual first year foster family retention rate.
 - In 2023-24, the ministry had an overall first-year foster family retention rate of 97.1 per cent (33 out of 34 foster homes recruited in 2022-23 were still operating one year later).

Approval of new foster families created by recruitment

- Target: In 2023-24, 50 new foster families are recruited and approved per year.
 - In 2023-24, 36 new foster families were recruited and approved.

Community-based participation in day programming activities by Community Living Service Delivery (CLSD) clients with intellectual disabilities

- Target: By March 31, 2024, 70 per cent of CLSD clients with intellectual disabilities will participate in community-based day programming activities.
 - 62.5 per cent of CLSD clients with intellectual disabilities participated in community-based day programming activities.

Work collaboratively to provide supportive services and housing programs

- Target: Increase the number of clients accessing supportive housing.
 - In 2023-24, SHC partnered with third party service providers to provide 91 housing spaces for individuals to access health and wellness programs, cultural programs, educational training, addictions support, and life skills programs.
 - Through the PATH initiative, SHC in collaboration with Indigenous, municipal and community partners created 100 emergency shelter spaces and 75 supportive housing spaces as of March 31, 2024.

The number of households living in SHC-owned social and affordable units

- Target: in 2023-24, 300 additional households will be housed in SHC-owned units.
 - In 2023-24, SHC increased the number of households living in SHC-owned units by 270 new households being housed. This captures the net change of move-ins and move-outs throughout the fiscal year and does not represent the total number of clients who have been housed in SHC-owned social units.

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

- Target: in 2023-24, 325 social housing units will be repaired.
 - In 2023-24, SHC repaired 470 existing social housing units, surpassing the SHC target and the multi-year National Housing Strategy target of 1,175. Under this target, SHC reports on large wrap-around projects that include major repairs and rejuvenation of the interior and exterior of the buildings.

Number of new households receiving the SHB

- Target: in 2023-24, 1,500 new households will have improved affordability by accessing the SHB.
 - In 2023-24, SHC exceeded the annual target by 26 per cent and 2,022 new households received the SHB.

Percentage of SIS clients reporting earned income

- Target: In 2023-24, there will be a 5 percent increase in the number of SIS clients who access earned income exemptions.
 - In 2023-2024, the ministry reached the targeted increase over last year of 5 percent with an average of 915 unique SIS households accessing earned income exemptions each quarter.

Proportion of SIS clients who leave income assistance

- Target: In 2023-24, 25 per cent of SIS clients will no longer require benefits.
 - Of all households who received SIS benefits in 2022-2023, 27.5 per cent did not require SIS benefits in 2023-2024.

Progress on Goal 2: Improved outcomes for Indigenous clients

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 and partners with 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 respect for Indigenous culture and values.

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

- Actively recruit and retain Indigenous employees.
 - The ministry continues to prioritize recruitment and retention of Indigenous employees through job postings that include a hiring preference for a diversity group candidate/Indigenous person, based on the ministry's recruitment plan and strategic direction.
 - The ministry continues to encourage staff and candidates to self declare their diversity group or Indigenous status.
- Provide Indigenous cultural awareness training to all ministry employees.
 - The ministry provides opportunities for all staff members to complete Indigenous cultural awareness training and supports employee participation in activities that expand cultural knowledge and experiences (i.e., Indigenous blanket exercise, Powwows, Round Dances, Aboriginal networks, and ongoing Indigenous teachings at monthly staff meetings).
- Engage with Indigenous partners to design and deliver programs and services.
 - The ministry currently has 101 contracts with Indigenous organizations who provide a range of services like supportive family living, youth mentorship, outreach, elder services, and group homes.
 - 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;
 - 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; and
 - Elder's Advisory groups to advise on communication, interactions, and

approach to partnering with First Nation communities, and to better support Indigenous clients.

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

Strengthen partnerships with Indigenous organizations, communities, and other service providers to better meet the needs of clients today and into the future.

KeyActions: *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*.
 - The work to renew the child welfare system is continuing with First Nations and Metis partners, so Indigenous children and families are supported by their communities, within their own customs and traditions.
 - There have been nine notices provided by First Nation Bands and one notice provided by a Métis Authority since January 1, 2020, pursuant to Section 20 of the federal Indigenous child welfare legislation known as *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children, youth and families*.
 - Muskeg Lake commenced Coordination Agreement table discussions with the ministry and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) in October 2023.
 - The Okanese First Nation Coordination Agreement table with the ministry and ISC commenced in February 2023.
 - The ministry continues to collaborate with Cowessess First Nation on transitional planning following the signing of their Coordination Agreement in July 2021.
- Enhance and strengthen relationships with Indigenous organizations, communities, and other service providers to better serve clients.
 - In 2023-24, the ministry continues to partner with Saskatoon Tribal Council on the Sawêyihotôtân project to provide daily health check-ins, transportation assistance, meal delivery and supports for people experiencing homelessness.
 - Child and Family Programs continues to support 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 nine First Nations.
 - Child and Family Programs contracts with 11 Indigenous third party service providers to provide residential services, which provide 291 spaces province-wide. The ministry also partners with FNCFS agencies that operate group homes, to deliver residential services.
 - Income Assistance contracted with Eagle Heart Centre to provide Trusteeship and Money management services.
 - SHC has 57 active agreements with 22 Indigenous and Métis housing groups in 16 communities, for a total of 730 units (590 affordable housing units, 126 social housing units, and 14 shelter enhancement program units).
- Support employee initiatives and networks to plan, share and implement priorities across the ministry, government, and partners.
 - The ministry continues to support the work of Mâmawatoskêwak: Team of

Indigenous Employees Saskatchewan (TIES), established in 2017, providing a place for Indigenous employees to support one another and provide ideas for improving the work in the ministry that makes an impact for Indigenous families and children.

- Continue to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action.
 - Ministry staff across the province observed National Ribbon Skirt Day in recognition of January 4, 2023.
 - Ministry staff across the province observed Orange Shirt Day in recognition of September 30, 2023, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.
 - Ministry staff participated in a blanket exercise, which teaches about Indigenous rights in Canada and explores major themes and findings of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.
 - The ministry continues to provide Truth and Reconciliation workshops to Child and Family Programs staff. The workshops are developed and facilitated by First Nations training consultants. Participants are introduced to the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and guided through an overview of findings, including the history of residential schools, the legacy, the challenges of reconciliation, and the Calls to Action.

Performance Measure Results:

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, 2024.
 - Approximately 12.0 per cent of ministry employees self-identify as Indigenous as of March 31, 2024.

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.
 - Offering Truth and Reconciliation and Indigenous cultural training to staff is essential for advancing reconciliation efforts. In 2023-24, 944 ministry employees, including 364 new employees, received online Indigenous cultural awareness training.

Progress on 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*

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

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

- Integrate the ministry's information technology services into business decisions through joint planning.
 - The ministry has improved communication channels and increased the frequency of interactions between business and technology partners through the business planning process. This action aims to deliver high-quality service to clients and address both existing and emerging business needs.
- Improve accountability and client outcomes through a more comprehensive approach to working with third-party service providers.
 - The ministry has completed its second year of piloting an Outcomes Based Service Delivery project working with third-party service providers to evaluate client outcomes with the aim of improving the quality of life and services for people with intellectual disabilities.
 - The ministry provides oversight to service providers as part of their service agreements to ensure terms of accountability, quality assurance, licensing requirements, and obligations for financial and operational reporting are being met.
 - The ministry continues to focus on streamlining its processes for more effective collaboration with service providers and partners, recognizing their crucial role in the system.
- Continue to implement improvements and make progress on delivering effective and efficient services and programs.
 - The ministry is currently updating the regulations and policies required to have *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2023* (CFSA) come into force. Amendments include raising the age of the child from 16 years to 18 years of age, expanding the confidentiality and information-sharing provisions, and

strengthening family, community and cultural connections. New regulations will allow for extensions of support for youth in the 16- and 17-year-old program (Section 10) who meet the criteria. This extension ensures youth who are living independently avoid disruption to their education.

- Updates to the Saskatchewan Child Abuse Protocol were made in December 2023. The protocol outlines the reporting of and response to abuse allegations.
- The ministry increased funding to the Saskatchewan First Nations Family and Community Institute (SFNFCI) by more than \$105,000 in 2023-24, for a total of nearly \$740,000 in annualized funding. SFNFCI provides culturally relevant training to the 19 FNCFS agencies who deliver child and family services on reserve.

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*

- Build organizational community and improve workplace culture through recruitment and retention, wellness, and employee growth.
 - In 2023, the ministry launched a new model of engagement called Building Organizational Community (BOC).
 - Six committees will operate under BOC for engagement: Four new committees in 2024 include *Recruitment; Culture; Inclusion; Psychological Safety*; and two existing committees: *Middle Manager Excellence; and Occupational Health and Safety- Management*.
 - The BOC committees will play a key role in formulating action plans to ensure committee work is aligned with ministry goals and improving work culture and retention for all staff.
 - Not Myself Today is a program that continues within the ministry to promote mental health. This workplace initiative builds knowledge and understanding on how to have conversations and support staff's mental health.
 - The ministry offered training opportunities for staff to support mental wellbeing including *The Road to Mental Readiness, Mental Health First Aid, and Psychological Wellness in the Workplace*.
 - Expanded education credentials for staffing Children/Youth Services and Caregiver Support Worker positions began April 1, 2023, and has increased the number of eligible candidates applying for these positions.
 - An additional 18 Children/Youth Services and Caregiver Support Worker positions were added in 2023-24.
- Provide workplace health and safety supports for employees.
 - Safety training related to incident reporting, workplace hazardous materials information systems, substance use in the workplace and respect in the workplace is required for all employees. Other types of training are also provided as required for employees depending on the type of work they perform (e.g., de-escalating potentially violent situations, trauma informed care, situational awareness training, personal assault response training, Occupational

- Health Committee training).
- To prevent and resolve ergonomic-related injuries among employees, the Ergonomics Policy, including education and peer assessment, was updated.
- The First Aid Policy was updated outlining the provision of first aid personnel and supplies within the ministry.
- Quarterly incident reports are shared and discussed in staff meetings to promote awareness and corrective actions to mitigate risk. Safety Talks are included with these reports on topics such as coping following a traumatic event, the ergonomics assessment process, and avoiding slips, trips and falls.

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 2023 (calendar year) was 1.07 per cent, which was lower than the 2022 rate of 1.22 per cent. The ministry has seen a consistent decreasing trend in the injury rate.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total Injury Rate	3.78%	1.96%	1.64%	1.22%	1.07%

Psychological safety score

- Target: Maintain or improve the ministry’s psychological safety score by March 31, 2024.
 - Over 55 per cent of ministry employees participated in the government-wide Saskatchewan Safety Survey. This year’s psychological safety climate score was 3.23 out of 5, a 0.6 per cent improvement from 2022.

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

- In 2023, 61 per cent of ministry employees agreed or strongly agreed that they had support at work to provide a high level of service.

Financial Summary

Social Services' actual expenditures for 2023-24 were \$1.456 billion, which is \$25.1 million greater than the ministry's 2023-24 budget. The increased expenditures were primarily due to higher than budgeted costs to deliver Child and Family Services, the implementation of the PATH initiative, and increased utilization of the Autism Spectrum Disorder Individualized Funding Program.

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 2023-24, the ministry recorded revenue of \$51.612 million as compared to the budget of \$46.176 million. The difference in actual revenue compared to budget is primarily due to higher than budgeted transfer payments from the federal government and repayments from clients.

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

Expense Summary

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

Ministry of Social Services Expense Actuals

Subvote/Allocation	2022-23 Actuals (\$000's)	2023-24 Budget (\$000's)	2023-24 Actuals (\$000's)	Variance to Budget	Notes
Central Management and Services (SS01)					
Minister's Salary	\$ 54	\$ 56	\$ 54	\$ (2)	
Executive Management	1,797	1,875	1,945	70	
Central Services	39,218	38,905	41,891	2,986	1
Accommodation Services	15,989	16,050	15,163	887)	
Subvote Total	\$ 57,058	\$ 56,886	\$ 59,053	\$ 2,167	
Income Assistance Services (SS03)					
Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability	\$ 289,549	\$ 298,982	\$ 298,631	\$ (351)	
Saskatchewan Income Support	216,365	249,842	242,351	(7,491)	2
Seniors Income Plan	34,008	37,171	38,837	1,666	3
Saskatchewan Employment Supplement	3,485	5,013	2,580	(2,433)	2
Saskatchewan Employment Incentive	-	-	242	242	4
Income Assistance Program Delivery	27,956	26,860	30,780	3,920	5
Income Assistance Community Services	7,546	9,005	7,870	(1,135)	2
Child Care Parent Subsidies	2,096	4,580	1,032	(3,548)	2
Rental Housing Supplements	16,904	11,521	13,832	2,311	3
Seniors Personal Care Home Benefit	1,044	4,416	2,738	(1,678)	2
Subvote Total	\$ 598,953	\$ 647,390	\$ 638,893	\$ (8,497)	

Child and Family Services (SS04)

Child and Family Program Maintenance & Support	\$ 157,514	\$ 146,432	\$ 179,943	\$ 33,511	3
Child and Family Community-Based Organization Services	153,568	173,608	160,930	(12,678)	6
Child and Family Program Delivery	59,281	59,047	60,920	1,873	7
Subvote Total	\$ 370,363	\$ 379,087	\$ 401,793	\$ 22,706	

Client Support (SS05)

Service Centre Client Support	\$ 13,678	\$ 12,963	\$ 14,634	\$ 1,671	8
Subvote Total	\$ 13,678	\$ 12,963	\$ 14,634	\$ 1,671	

Housing (SS12)

Program Delivery	\$ 6,811	\$ 7,626	\$ 7,000	\$ (626)	
Saskatchewan Housing Corporation	25,264	16,436	25,136	8,700	9
Subvote Total	\$ 32,075	\$ 24,062	\$ 32,136	\$ 8,074	

Disability Programs and Services (SS14)

Disability Services	\$ 270,266	\$ 289,119	\$ 288,822	\$ (297)	
Disability Program Delivery	20,425	21,790	21,102	(688)	
Subvote Total	\$ 290,691	\$ 310,909	\$ 309,924	\$ (985)	

Total Appropriation	\$ 1,362,818	\$1,431,297	\$ 1,456,433	\$ 25,136	
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Less: Capital Asset Acquisitions		(6,382)		(5,791)	
	\$ (5,914)		\$ (5,791)		

Add:	Non-Appropriated Expense Adjustment				
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	Change in Prepaids				
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Total Expense	\$ 1,365,561	\$1,432,525	\$ 1,453,670	\$ 21,145	
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Notes:

Special Warrants/Supplementary Estimates

During 2023-24, the ministry received \$32.9 million in Supplementary Estimates and Special Warrant funding for implementation of the Saskatchewan Employment Incentive and Provincial Approach to Homelessness, and to support utilization pressures in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Individualized Funding program and intensive third-party residential services for the care of children and youth in the Minister's care.

Revenue Summary

A summary of the ministry's 2023-24 budgeted revenue compared to actual revenue is presented below with explanations for significant variances.

Ministry of Social Services Revenue

Revenue by Source	2022-23 Actuals (\$000's)	2023-24 Budget (\$000's)	2023-24 Actuals (\$000's)	2023-24 Variance (\$000's)	Notes
Sales, Services and Service Fees					
Management and Collection Services	\$ 4,422	\$ 4,422	\$ 4,422	\$ (1)	
Sale of Previously Expensed Asset	-	-	1	1	
Freedom of Information	-	-	3	3	
Miscellaneous Deductions - Staff Salaries	-	66	-	(66)	
Other Miscellaneous Services	-	2	-	(2)	
Subtotal	\$ 4,422	\$ 4,490	\$ 4,425	\$ (65)	
Transfers from the Federal Government					
Special Allowance for Children in Care	\$ 32,472	\$ 32,000	\$ 35,459	\$ 3,459	1
Indigenous Services Canada	7,649	7,016	6,560	(456)	2
Subtotal	\$ 40,121	\$ 39,016	\$ 42,019	\$ 3,003	

Other Revenue

Maintenance Order Revenues	\$ 320	\$ 625	\$ 168	\$ (457)	
Casual Revenue	31	45	312	267	
Repayment - Public Assistance, Pensions and Allowance Programs	3,294	1,500	3,526	2,026	3
Refunds of Previous Years' Expenses	52	500	1,174	674	
Changes in Previous Years' Estimate	30	-	(120)	(120)	
Salary Overpayment Refunds - Previous Years' Expense	67	-	140	140	
Accrued Revenue - Sales, Services and Service Fees	-	-	(31)	(31)	
Subtotal	\$ 3,794	\$ 2,670	\$ 5,169	\$ 2,499	
Total Revenue	\$ 48,338	\$ 46,176	\$ 51,612	\$ 5,436	

Notes:

1. Variance due to higher than budgeted federal revenue for children in care.
2. Variance due to lower child welfare expense reimbursements.
3. Variance due to an increase in repayments from clients.

Trust Accounts:

The Ministry of Social Services administers the Social Services Central Trust Account, the Valley View Centre Residents' Trust Account, and the Valley View Centre Grants and Donations Trust Account and Institutional Collective Benefit Fund (Trusts). The Trusts were used to hold funds for the benefit of residents in institutions previously operated by the ministry. The Trusts are no longer required and are in the process of being closed. The year end balances were transferred to the General Revenue Fund (GRF) in accordance with *The Financial Administration Act, 1993* and Treasury Board policies. The bank accounts related to the Trusts were closed in April 2024. In 2024-25, the ministry will disperse these funds in alignment with the intent of the Trusts.

Accounts	Opening Balance	Interest Earned During 2023-24	Transferred to the GRF	March 31, 2024 Balance
Resident Trust Account	\$ 4,725	\$ 1,557	\$ 6,282	\$ 0
Central Trust Account	81,964	3,979	85,943	0
Valley View Grants and Donations Account	16,142	781	16,923	0

Institutional Collective Benefit Account – Bazaar Account	12,503	610	13,093	20
Institutional Collective Benefit Account - Canteen Account	47,018	2,236	48,879	375

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

