

Business Plan

2025-26

Ministry of Government Relations

Saskatchewan! 

Statement from the Minister



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

I am honoured to present the Ministry of Government Relations Business Plan for 2025-26.

The Ministry of Government Relations is prepared to respond to the challenges and opportunities of growth. We work with our stakeholders to guide the province's growth in a responsible way through legislation, collaboration and careful, thoughtful planning. We empower Saskatchewan's municipalities to thrive as an independent level of government and invest in First Nation and Métis communities.

In 2025-26, we're making record investments in Municipal Revenue Sharing to deliver predictable, unrestricted funding to municipalities. We're also continuing to work with our federal partners to deliver necessary infrastructure to keep our communities strong and vibrant.

We're focused on strengthening our relationships with First Nation, Métis and northern residents so that all residents benefit from our province's strong and growing economy. We continue to honour our duty to consult and are keenly interested in supporting resource development that benefits everyone. We support reconciliation and continue to look for ways to enhance First Nation and Métis participation in our provincial economy, which will increase prosperity for Indigenous people and communities throughout Saskatchewan.

The foundation of this plan is our commitment to excellence, and our guiding desire to provide the people of Saskatchewan with the programs, policy support and services which strengthen the communities we call home. We work hard for *you*, the people of Saskatchewan, and will continue to deliver the stability upon which you can rely.

The ministry will report on progress made toward these key actions in our 2025-26 Annual Report.

2025-26 Budget Highlights

1	A record \$361.8 million in funding for unconditional grants for municipalities through the Municipal Revenue Sharing program. Since 2007-08, the Government of Saskatchewan has provided the municipal sector with more than \$4.6 billion in grants to support their growth priorities.
2	\$248.4 million to support community infrastructure projects through federal-provincial and federal cost-share programs. These projects build strong communities and deliver a high quality of life to Saskatchewan residents.
3	\$107.4 million in gaming grant payments to First Nation and Métis organizations to support Indigenous-led social and economic initiatives.
4	\$1.2 million in grants, including \$400,000 in matched federal funding, for Indigenous communities and organizations to support grassroots events that promote Indigenous cultures, initiatives and projects that prevent violence, and build safety for Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit individuals.
5	\$1 million to the Consultation Participation Fund to support the Government of Saskatchewan's commitment to its duty to consult with First Nation and Métis communities on proposed projects while growing the provincial economy.

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 2025-26 annual reports.

Ministry of Government Relations Overview

Mandate

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.

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.

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 will take to achieve our goal*

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

Key Actions: *What we will do 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.
- Review municipal legislation and regulations for policy and process improvements that support good local governance, more community collaboration, administrative efficiency and local economic competitiveness.
- 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.
- Work with stakeholders to ensure legislation, regulations, codes and standards meet the needs of property owners, municipalities, industry, regulatory officials and jurisdictions across Canada.
- Protect people and property through the Integrated Subdivision Approval program, which ensures development occurs safely and away from natural hazards.

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

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

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

- Support municipal administration and governance by helping municipalities meet their legislated responsibilities and strengthen local transparency and accountability.
- Support strong partnerships among municipalities through participation at sector events and hosting of cross-sector meetings for information sharing and networking.
- Work with stakeholders to support training that ensures municipal leaders have the skills and knowledge needed to perform their work.

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

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

Key Actions: *What we will do 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.
- Work with the federal government on infrastructure funding programs that support Saskatchewan's priorities as described in the Growth Plan.
- Allocate \$1.5 million in the Targeted Sector Support Initiative with municipal associations to encourage inter-community collaboration, help build capacity of core municipal responsibilities and promote good governance.
- Govern and provide municipal services to residents living in the north by acting as council for the District.
- Review and approve community planning bylaws and subdivisions to support critical infrastructure to assist with growth.
- Support voluntary municipal restructuring.
- Strengthen regional planning by supporting existing districts through education and training materials and encourage continued intermunicipal cooperation and partnerships.
- Develop and administer Northern Municipal Trust Account programs to provide grants for core municipal services that benefit northern municipalities.
- Deliver the Northern Capital Grants Program which provides financial assistance for municipal infrastructure and capital asset projects.

Performance Measures: *What success looks like*

Municipal transparency and accountability

- Percentage of municipalities that meet eligibility requirements for the Municipal Revenue Sharing Program.
- Municipalities complying with other governance and safety requirements including board of revision certification, use of tax tools and appointment of building officials.
- Percentage of population covered under planning and building bylaws.

Government and community priorities

- Number of completed community infrastructure projects supported this year by ministry-administered grant programs.
- Percentage of Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program funding paid to recipients.
- Number of approved community infrastructure projects supported this year by the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund and the Canada Community-Building Fund.

Construction safety

- Number of licensed building officials.
- Number of building bylaws reviewed and approved.
- Number of municipalities that have adopted their own building bylaws.

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

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 will take to achieve our goal*

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

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

- Participate in and provide support to the Northern Ministers Forum to advance the diverse and common interests within northern communities across Canada.
- Engage with leaders of First Nation and Métis communities and representative organizations on subjects of mutual interest such as strengthening Treaty awareness and education.
- Build relationships with First Nation and Métis communities and industry for effective and meaningful engagement and consultations.
- Connect northern communities to the mining industry through the Northern Saskatchewan Environmental Quality Committee, employment and business opportunities, and human service initiatives.
- Support and advise government ministries, Crowns and agencies on Indigenous and northern engagement, priorities and opportunities.

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

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

Key Actions: *What we will do 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*
Honour government's commitments.

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

- Continue implementation of the revised *First Nation and Métis Consultation and Policy Framework*.
- Administer gaming profits based on the Gaming Framework Agreement and applicable legislation.
- 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.
- Provide other ministries, agencies, and Crowns with advice and support to navigate the duty to consult.

Performance Measures: *What success looks like*

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.
- Number of training sessions held for government officials to implement the revised *First Nation and Métis Consultation Policy Framework*.
- Number of meetings with First Nation and Métis communities and impacted organizations, including industry, on the 2023 *First Nation and Métis Consultation Policy Framework*.

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.

Honouring government's commitments

- Number of grants and funding provided under the First Nation and Métis Consultation Participation Fund.
- Amount of funding distributed through gaming payments, based on the Gaming Framework Agreement and applicable legislation.
- Number of acres transferred to reserve status to meet land claim agreements obligations.

Goal 3: The Government Relations teams demonstrate our commitment to excellence.

A strong public service supports strong Saskatchewan communities. 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 will take to achieve our goal*

Support the continuous improvement of a high-performing team.

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

- Continue to enable ministry staff to access the mandatory Indigenous Awareness training to increase understanding of the history and cultures of Indigenous communities across Canada.
- Participate in events that recognize Indigenous commemorative and awareness days like National Indigenous Peoples Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.
- Coordinate learning and development opportunities to improve teamwork, collaboration and productivity among staff which improves services to residents.
- Improve key indicators as identified in the Employment Engagement and Culture Survey.

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

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

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

- Table financial documents within the required 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.
- Support a dynamic and flexible workforce to ensure staff are available to address Government Relations' priorities.

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

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

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

- Promote and use ministry's intranet to connect employees' work to ministry goals.
- Improve information management throughout the ministry using existing communication structures, like the Middle Managers Network and the Senior Leadership Team.
- Formalized change management process to increase ministry agility when responding to change.

Performance Measures: *What success looks like*

Excellence in action

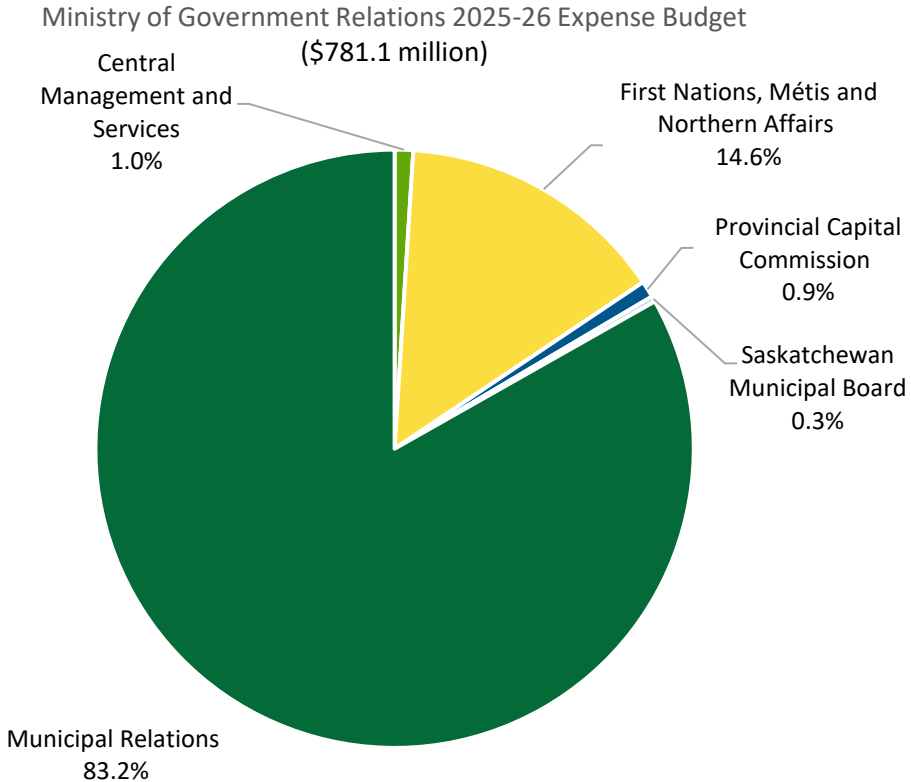
- Percentage of staff participating in mandatory and growth learning and development opportunities.
- Percentage of staff who have taken Indigenous Awareness training.
- Number of ministry financial documents that are tabled on time.
- Key indicators improve in the Employee Engagement and Culture Survey.
- Level of staff confidence in adapting to 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 will be hired in 2025-26. This team is expected to promote, enable and support ministry change implementation, leading to smoother adoption of new processes and ways of supporting Saskatchewan citizens.
2	The negotiation of three 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. Government Relations supports these negotiations with the goal of accountability, economic prosperity and job creation in the north.
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.
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.

Financial Summary

Ministry of Government Relations 2025-26 Estimates (\$781.1 million)	(in thousands of dollars)
Central Management and Services	\$7,987
Saskatchewan Municipal Board	\$2,021
Municipal Relations	\$649,656
First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs	\$113,843
Provincial Capital Commission	\$7,471
Total Appropriation	\$780,978
Non-Appropriated Expense Adjustment	\$100
Total Expense	\$781,078



Links to More Information

- [Ministry of Government Relations](#)
- [Government of Saskatchewan Budget, Planning and Reporting](#)