

# Business Plan

2026-27

Ministry of Government Relations

# 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 2026-27.

The Ministry of Government Relations provides funding and supports upon which communities rely. We are delivering services, safety and strength to Saskatchewan citizens in a more efficient and effective way.

In 2026-27, the Municipal Revenue Sharing program once again provides record-setting funding to municipalities. In addition to this predictable annual funding, we provide communities with the governance support they need to develop and maintain strong, local governments that serve the citizens of today and the generations to come. Sharing the goal to grow Saskatchewan, we will continue to focus on efforts to help develop long-lasting infrastructure programs that meet the needs of this province with our partners in both the federal government and municipal sector.

We are positioning our province to capitalize on the opportunities presented by *Saskatchewan's Growth Plan* through the thoughtful planning of communities and by working with our government partners to ensure Saskatchewan can build the critical infrastructure our province needs. We are adopting building codes that maintain coordination with other Canadian jurisdictions and meet the needs of industry while preserving affordability.

In northern Saskatchewan, we are increasing local support to improve the delivery of core municipal services. We prioritize a robust northern workforce through leading the negotiation of new Mineral Surface Lease Agreements, while amplifying northern voices through the Northern Saskatchewan Environmental Quality Committee and supporting engagement through our First Nation and Métis Consultation Policy Framework.

The Ministry of Government Relations will meet the goals outlined in this plan because of dedicated staff who diligently provide Saskatchewan people with excellent service, programs and policy support. A new on-boarding process will help staff quickly find their footing at work and our investment in upskilling and change management allows staff to adapt to Saskatchewan's evolving needs. Guided by our commitment to excellence, we are steadfast in improving our service delivery.

The ministry will report on progress made toward these key actions in our 2026-27 annual report.

# 2026-27 Budget Highlights

<b>1</b>	A record \$392.4 million in unconditional funding to municipalities through the Municipal Revenue Sharing (MRS) program, representing an increase of \$30.7 million from last year. Since 2007-08, the Government of Saskatchewan has provided the municipal sector with nearly \$5 billion in MRS grants to support their local priorities, community growth and sustainable service delivery.
<b>2</b>	\$236.7 million for community infrastructure projects through federal-provincial and federal cost-share programs. These projects support strong communities and help maintain a high quality of life for Saskatchewan residents. Funding includes \$3 million through the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund, a new federal-provincial initiative that enables drinking water, wastewater, stormwater and solid waste infrastructure to accelerate housing development and increased density in Saskatchewan communities.
<b>3</b>	\$137.9 million for First Nations Gaming Payments and the Métis Development Fund to support Indigenous-led social and economic initiatives across Saskatchewan. This increase of \$30.5 million from 2025-26 reflects strong casino and online gaming performance. These payments, delivered through established agreements, support community priorities while reinforcing the importance of economic partnership between Indigenous people and Saskatchewan.

# 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 2026-27 annual reports.

## Ministry of Government Relations Overview

### 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.

### 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 actions are central to the high quality of life enjoyed across our province, including public safety, efficient service delivery and long-term sustainability. Delivering on *Saskatchewan's Growth Plan*, Government Relations strengthens local governments through investments, governance tools, advisory services and legislative and regulatory frameworks that help municipalities serve residents, improve transparency and accountability and stimulate local and provincial economies, leading to a strong, resilient 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, programs that facilitate effective community collaboration, administrative efficiency, construction safety 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, healthy, 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*

- Provide regulatory oversight and support municipalities to meet their legislated responsibilities and strengthen local transparency and accountability.
- Support local elected leaders and administrators by developing resources and participating in stakeholder events to improve governance, critical service delivery and future planning.

- Support strong partnerships among municipalities through participation at sector events and cross-sector meetings for information sharing and networking.
- Develop educational material to help citizens understand the role of local government.

**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 to the Targeted Sector Support Initiative to encourage capacity building, regional co-operation, municipal transition and relationship building/dispute resolution.
- Implement quality assurance-based compliance monitoring of municipalities to allow for earlier identification of governance and sustainability concerns and intensive support from Advisory Services and Municipal Relations.
- Develop resources and tools for municipalities to evaluate their overall health and support restructuring activities should municipalities choose to create a district, merge or dissolve. Also, allocate \$1.5 million under Communities in Transit Program to support transitioning communities.
- Strengthen regional planning by supporting municipalities through education and training materials and encourage continued intermunicipal cooperation and partnerships.
- Review and approve community planning bylaws and subdivisions to support critical infrastructure to assist with growth.
- Govern and provide municipal services to residents living in the north by acting as council for the District.
- 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 with enhanced eligibility for northern communities under a declaration of emergency or evacuation order.

**Performance Measures:** *What success looks like*

**Municipal transparency and accountability**

- Percentage of municipalities that are compliant with applicable municipal legislation.
- Number of quality assurance reviews completed.
- Municipalities complying with other governance and safety requirements including board of revision certification, legislated limits on use of tax tools and appointment of building officials.
- Percentage of population covered under planning bylaws.

**Government and community priorities**

- Number of completed community infrastructure projects since the implementation of the Canada Community-Building Fund and the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.

- Percentage of Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program funding paid to recipients.
- Number of approved community infrastructure projects supported since the implementation of the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund and the Canada Community-Building Fund.
- Number of approved Targeted Sector Support Initiative applications and completed projects.

**Construction safety**

- Number of licensed building officials.
- Number of building bylaws reviewed and approved.
- Number of municipalities that have adopted their own building bylaws.
- Number of presentations delivered to stakeholders and number of participants attended.

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

Advancing reconciliation and inclusive economic participation requires strong, respectful relationships and honouring government's commitments to First Nation, Métis and northern communities. Government Relations supports this goal by engaging Indigenous leaders and representative organizations along with provincial ministries, Crown corporations, federal departments and industry partners to inform policies and programs, respond to community-identified priorities and meet government's commitments related to Aboriginal and Treaty rights. This work supports First Nation, Métis and northern communities to participate in Saskatchewan's social and economic opportunities, in alignment with Saskatchewan's Growth Plan.

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

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

### **Key Actions:** *What we will do 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.
- Engage with leaders of First Nation and Métis communities and representative organizations on subjects of mutual interest.
- Build relationships with First Nation and Métis communities and industry for effective and meaningful engagement and consultations.
- Strengthen relationships and implementation of land claim agreements through education and awareness and encourage First Nation-municipal cooperation and partnerships.
- 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*

- Lead negotiations on 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, participating in the development of a mental health workbook for youth 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*

- Provide advice and guidance to other ministries, agencies and Crowns on the implementation of the *First Nation and Métis Consultation Policy Framework*.
- Administer gaming profits for the First Nations Gaming Payments and the Métis Development Fund based on the Gaming Framework Agreement and applicable legislation.
- Deliver on provincial legal obligations by leading provincial collaboration with First Nation partners and Canada to implement land claim agreements and negotiate new Treaty Land Entitlement Agreements, to deliver on the province's legal obligations.
- Co-ordinate provincial reporting on the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

**Performance Measures:** *What success looks like*

**Engage First Nation and Métis communities, government and other 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 *First Nation and Métis Consultation Policy Framework*.
- Number of meetings with First Nation and Métis communities and impacted organizations, including industry

**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 Treaty Land Entitlement obligations.

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

A strong public service supports strong Saskatchewan communities. Government Relations demonstrates excellence by fostering collaboration across teams and with partners, maintaining a professional high-performing workforce, leveraging innovation and technology and ensuring the efficient use of resources. By upholding standards of accountability, transparency and continuous improvement, the ministry strengthens public trust, delivers effective services and supports better outcomes for Saskatchewan residents. This work contributes to the Government of Saskatchewan's broader priorities of providing quality of life for all residents.

**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*

- Enable ministry staff to access resources 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.

**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.
- Modernize service delivery through the development and use of digital tools and applications, strengthened information management and optimized business processes and continuity practices.
- Strengthen change management through a network of change agents to support and guide staff 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 through promotion of Government of Saskatchewan learning opportunities, development of a common on-boarding tool and communicating the activities and successes of branch projects and priorities.
- Improve information management throughout the ministry using existing communication structures like the Middle Managers Network and the Senior Leadership Team.
- Improve key indicators as identified in the Employment Engagement and Culture Survey including actions to ensure that employees roles and professional development opportunities are aligned with ministry goals.

**Performance Measures:** *What success looks like*

**Excellence in action**

- Percentage of staff participating in mandatory and other learning and development opportunities.
- Percentage of staff who have taken Indigenous Awareness training.
- 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.
- Number of business processes improved or supported through modernized digital tools and applications.
- Improved response times to information requests from the public, partners and stakeholders.

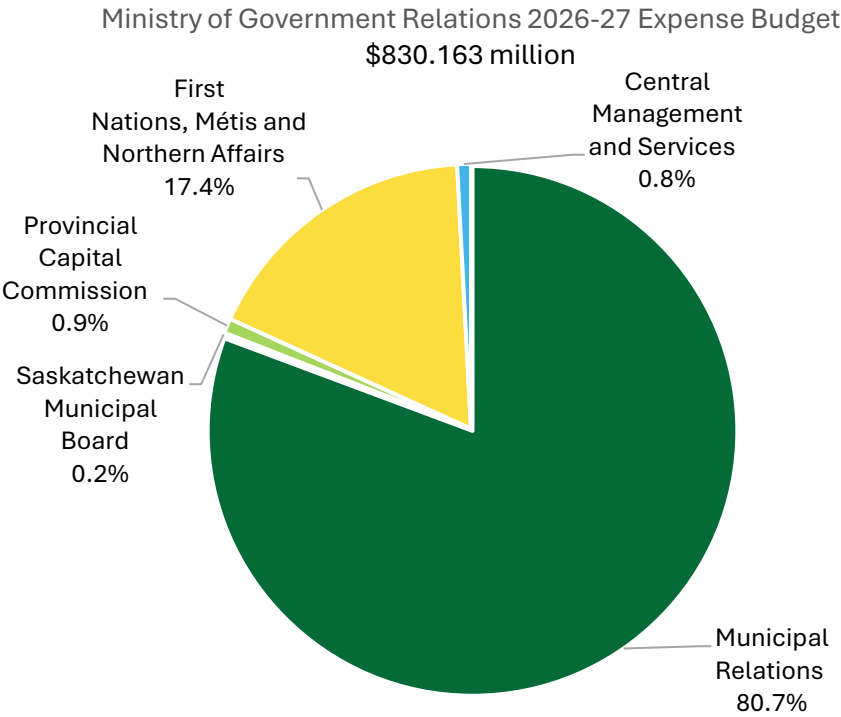
# 2026-27 Improvement and Innovation Highlights

<p><b>1</b></p>	<p><b>Enhancing Northern Focus</b></p> <p>Government Relations will support northern socio-economic benefits by leading the negotiation of new Mineral Surface Lease Agreements that reflect ongoing economic interest in the province including opportunities for northern employment and business participation. The ministry will also support the implementation of land claim agreements by growing education and awareness efforts that encourage First Nation-municipal cooperation and partnerships. Recognizing the unique service delivery challenges in northern Saskatchewan, the ministry’s Northern Municipal Services branch is enhancing access to funding during emergency situations and building local capacity to deliver core municipal services. Together, these efforts support strong government-community relationships, emergency preparedness and economic activity in the North.</p>
<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>Strengthening Municipal Capacity</b></p> <p>Government Relations will support municipalities to meet their legislated responsibilities by enhancing governance practices, advisory services and approach to existing funding model. In the upcoming fiscal year, Government Relations will advance an improved approach to tools, guidance and training, including a quality assurance-based compliance monitoring and review system. The ministry will improve program parameters to better respond to future demand, expand education and sustainability resources and encourage innovative approaches to long-term municipal viability. These efforts will support better planning, stronger governance and sustainable service delivery.</p>
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>2025 National Model Codes Adoption</b></p> <p>The 2025 National Model Codes represent one of the most significant updates to Canada’s construction regulatory framework in recent years. Recognizing the breadth and complexity of this update, Government Relations will continue to enhance stakeholder engagement and consultation through early and targeted engagement with municipalities, industry and sector partners. These efforts will support provincial preparation for the 2025 National Model Codes while meeting national harmonization commitment and maintaining affordability.</p>
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Advancing Digital Tools and Applications</b></p> <p>The Ministry of Government Relations is leveraging its digital environment to improve service delivery, information management and operational resilience. By expanding the effective use</p>

	<p>of digital tools, optimizing business processes and continuity practices, the ministry is improving efficiency, oversight and coordination across programs. These digital improvements support better client service to communities across Saskatchewan.</p>
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# Financial Summary

Ministry of Government Relations 2026-27 Estimates (\$830.163 million)		(in thousands of dollars)
Central Management and Services		\$8,976
Saskatchewan Municipal Board		\$1,873
Municipal Relations		\$669,744
First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs		\$144,019
Provincial Capital Commission		\$7,471
<b>Total Appropriation</b>		<b>\$832,083</b>
Add: Non-Appropriated Expense Adjustment		\$100
Less: Government Owned Capital		\$2,020
<b>Total Expense</b>		<b>\$830,163</b>



## Links to more information

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