Legal Aid BC

2025/26 – 2027/28
Service Plan

March 2025

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Board Chair's Accountability Statement

The 2025/26 – 2027/28 Legal Aid BC Service Plan was prepared under the Board's direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. This plan is consistent with government's strategic priorities and fiscal plan. The Board is accountable for the contents of this plan and is responsible for the validity and reliability of the information presented.

All significant assumptions, policy decisions, events and identified risks, as of February 13, 2025, have been considered in preparing the plan. The performance measures presented are consistent with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*, Legal Aid BC's mandate and goals, and focus on aspects critical to the organization's performance. The targets in this plan have been determined based on an assessment of Legal Aid BC's operating environment, forecast conditions, risk assessment and past performance.

Signed on behalf of the Board by:

Allan Seckel, KC
Board Chair, Legal Aid BC
February 13, 2025

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Strategic Direction

In 2025/26, public sector organizations will continue to prioritize delivering the services and infrastructure needed for people to build good lives in strong communities.

To support this objective public sector organizations will support Government's focus on growing the economy, responding to the threat of tariffs, creating good paying jobs, improving affordability, strengthening health care and education, and making communities safer.

Public sector organizations will also continue to work as directed to support the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan.

This 2025/26 service plan outlines how Legal Aid BC will support the government's priorities and selected action items identified in the most recent Legal Aid BC Mandate Letter.

Purpose of the Organization and Alignment with Government Priorities

Legal Aid BC (LABC) provides legal aid in British Columbia. Our mission is to strengthen client-centred legal help for British Columbians experiencing barriers accessing the legal system. Our clients' barriers to exercising their legal rights include things like low income, addictions, and mental health challenges. Each year, tens of thousands of British Columbians rely on us for legal advice, representation and information services in the areas of criminal, family, child protection and immigration law.

Created by the Legal Services Society Act in 1979, we are a provincial Crown Corporation with a mandate to assist individuals to resolve their legal problems, administer an effective and efficient system for providing legal aid, and to provide advice to the Attorney General respecting legal aid and access to justice. We are funded by the Ministry of Attorney General (the Ministry), with additional support of the Department of Justice Canada, the Law Foundation of BC and Notary Foundation of BC.

Our vision is aspirational: BC's legal system transformed, by the way LABC represents our clients, into one that is more equitable and inclusive. Our core beliefs reflect our employees' compassion, and have Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) at their centre. These beliefs guide us to be client-focused, advance Truth and Reconciliation, find strength in EDI, and demonstrate leadership that supports positive changes to the legal system.

In 2025/26, we will support key priorities identified by the Ministry for LABC: working with the Ministry and stakeholders to identify the best ways and tools to improve access to justice for low-income families; aligning legal aid service delivery approaches with transformative changes in the justice sector focussed on efficient, timely, and accessible legal services; and continuing to work towards lasting and meaningful Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

LABC will also advance another government priority; ensuring that equity is reflected in our operations and programs by adopting the Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens, by developing and delivering a GBA+ approach to guide how we plan, implement, evaluate and continuously improve our policies and initiatives and their impacts on people across a diverse range of identity factors.

Operating Environment

In 2025/26 LABC faces new opportunities and challenges to advance our strategic framework, as reflected in this Service Plan. Our strategic goals, objectives, key strategies and performance measures are designed to promote the best outcomes possible for legal aid clients, and to embed Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in everything we do.

To increase the equality of outcomes for all legal aid clients, this service plan includes strategies to embed Truth and Reconciliation and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in our organizational policies and processes, led by the Truth and Reconciliation department and the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion department, along with our EDI council. These initiatives build organizational capacity to tackle the systemic barriers faced by our clients and employees when engaging with LABC. In 2025/26 LABC will begin to implement recommendations of a third-party gender equity assessment, focusing on key policies, programs, practices and behaviours. We will also continue to expand our collection of disaggregated demographic data, with an ongoing focus on measuring and monitoring client and employee equity.

LABC will continue to prioritize working with Indigenous leadership, organizations and communities to support the implementation of Indigenous justice initiatives and strategies. In particular, we will continue to share information with the BC First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC) to support the ongoing implementation of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy (FNJS), including the transition of legal aid services for Indigenous people to the BCFNJC. As well, we will continue to liaise with Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) to explore how LABC can support the implementation of the Métis Justice Strategy.

This service plan includes strategies – like our Legal Aid Navigators program – to strengthen LABC's ability to support clients facing intersecting challenges such as housing, addictions, mental health and other social issues, and contribute to safer, healthier communities.

The demand for family law services is expected to remain high in 2025/26, especially for those facing intimate partner violence. A key focus this year will be implementing LABC's new Family Law Centre program to provide enhanced support to survivors of family violence and families facing complex challenges that limit their access to justice, in collaboration with key stakeholders.

Immigration and refugee case volumes spiked to unprecedented levels in 2024/25. While demand has declined in part from the unprecedented post-pandemic growth observed through the end of 2023, it remains higher than historical averages. LABC remains committed to working closely with the federal government to ensure sustainable delivery of immigration and refugee law services.

LABC has completed its review of the lawyer roster, recruitment, and retention strategies. The insights from this review are informing improvements to the onboarding process and the development of quality assurance and recruitment and retention initiatives. Given the increasing demand for legal services and the challenges in the labour market, this continues to be a top priority for LABC as we work to ensure timely and quality legal aid for our clients.

LABC continues to work with its justice system partners to modernize the court system, building on and extending technical and process innovations adopted during the pandemic. While working with others to expand the digital delivery of services, LABC is also supporting modified forms of service delivery that reflect the increasingly hybrid nature of justice system processes. To ensure LABC is best able to support ministries, the judiciary and other partners in our court modernization, we will continue to invest in out IT infrastructure. We also continue to work with the Ministry and stakeholders to support the Early Resolution Process (ERP) expansion, pursuant to the Provincial Court Family Rules.

Performance Planning

2025/26 marks the third year that our new strategic framework is set out in LABC's Service Plan. This strategic framework will help us achieve our renewed vision of BC's legal system transformed, by the way LABC represents our clients, into one more equitable and inclusive. It will also guide us in carrying out our renewed mission, which is to strengthen client-centred legal help for British Columbians experiencing barriers accessing the legal system. Our strategic framework reflects our current environment and priorities and is intended to guide LABC through and beyond the three-year period of this plan. We have retained most of the new performance measures that were introduced in 2023/24 to track progress on our new goals, and we will continue to refine our key strategies and performance measures as we implement this plan.

Goal 1: LABC clients achieve better outcomes

Improving outcomes for our clients is LABC's over-arching goal, and we will focus on delivering high quality core services to advance that goal. Recognizing that a client could receive excellent services but not be satisfied with an outcome, we will work with service providers and clients to define service quality measures that consider multiple perspectives and track our performance over time against concrete targets.

Objective 1.1: Provide high-quality legal services

High-quality legal services are essential to clients achieving better outcomes. Continuous improvement in service quality, linked to outcomes, will lead to better results for our clients.

Key Strategies

- Continuously improve and evaluate the new Family Law Centre providing enhanced services for clients facing intimate partner violence

- Ongoing assessment and evaluation of the Legal Aid Navigators program implementation to improve service delivery
- Develop and implement a lawyer quality assurance framework and implement recommendations from a lawyer roster, recruitment and retention review to ensure accessible high-quality legal services for our clients
- Expand enhanced Family Duty Counsel (FDC) services to support the roll out of the Early Resolution Process (ERP) in various registries around BC

Discussion

LABC provides legal advice and representation services, but equally important, we help clients navigate the legal system – which is complex and overwhelming to anyone in a legal crisis. Our key strategies focus on both of those service dimensions, which together provide clients with the services they need to address their legal problems. Navigator services are also key to connecting clients to supports for interrelated issues, such as health, housing or debt, that can arise from or lead to legal issues. Help for interrelated needs can improve client outcomes and reduce clients' use of legal, health and social services over the long term. In 2024/25, LABC assessed the impact of the Navigator services on client outcomes and made recommended adjustments based on that assessment. In 2025/26, LABC will continue to monitor the impact of these services and implement further adjustments as necessary to improve service delivery and better meet client needs.

Providing high-quality legal representation to clients facing intimate partner violence is central not only to the disposition of their legal matter but also to ensuring their physical safety. With the launch of the new Family Law Centre program in December 2024, operating in-person and virtual services in Surrey and Victoria, LABC will be able to provide greater support to survivors of family violence. In collaboration with key service providers, we are dedicated to continuously improving the services over time, with the goal of supporting further service expansion in the future. As part of its commitment to enhance family legal aid services, LABC is also expanding its pilot to introduce family law cases within the Parents Legal Centres (PLCs).

Lawyers are integral to our advice and representation services. It is crucial that LABC build a sustainable supply of skilled and committed lawyers who can deliver high-quality legal services to our clients over the long term. In 2023/24, LABC expanded the scope of work for its lawyer roster, recruitment and retention review to include quality assurance. The review identified quality assurance as both central to, and an extension of roster management and the recruitment and retention process. In 2025/26, LABC plans to further develop lawyer quality assurance improvements, incorporating recommendations from the review's final report.

The Early Resolution Process under the Provincial Court Family Rules emphasizes front-end services, directing most parties to Family Justice Services for needs assessments, referrals, and mediation. This model increases collaboration with Family Justice Services, Court Services, the judiciary, and community support organizations, ultimately providing better service to FDC clients by supporting them in better representing themselves in the legal system. This leads to better outcomes for clients and reduces wasted court time. The model was initially piloted in Victoria in 2019, and based on the success of the prototype, the process was implemented in

Surrey in 2020 followed by Port Coquitlam in November 2024. It will be further expanded to Abbotsford, Chilliwack, and New Westminster on April 1, 2025, and to five additional registries by November 1, 2025 (Robson Square, North Vancouver, Richmond, Sechelt, and Pemberton).

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2018/19 Baseline	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
1a Percent of clients provided LABC services for interrelated needs, or referred to other services for interrelated needs[1]	21%	29%	33%	34%	36%

Data source: LABC client information system and other operational data (reported by fiscal year as annual measure)

[1] In 2023/24, LABC shifted this metric from a raw number to a percentage to provide a better picture of LABC's performance. The percentage is calculated by dividing the number of unique individuals who received an LABC service to address an interrelated need or were referred to another service for an interrelated need (as previously reported), by the total number of people who applied for or received LABC services for which information is recorded for support provided or referrals made for interrelated needs. This includes the total number of applicants for representation services, approved or not, plus the total number of PLC clients, expanded family duty counsel clients, and Family LawLINE clients.

Discussion

This is a composite measure across different LABC service types. It reports the percent of applicants for LABC representation services, Parents Legal Centres (PLCs) expanded family duty counsel services and the Family LawLINE who were given information or referrals to other service providers to assist with their interrelated needs. It also includes support for interrelated issues provided directly to PLC clients by advocates and Indigenous community Legal Workers at the PLCs. With the introduction of 11 Legal Aid Navigators in October 2023, we anticipate a significant increase in the percent of clients who get information or referrals to other service providers to assist with their interrelated issues. This expected increase is reflected in the forecasts and targets. LABC considers increasing our clients' access to wrap-around services an important measure of quality. A higher number of clients being referred indicates that more clients are getting the help they need to get better outcomes.

Performance Measure	2020/21 Baseline	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
1b Percent of clients who say LABC made it easy for them to deal with their issues	60%	64%	66%	68%	68%

Data source: LABC client information system with corresponding LABC client survey (reported by fiscal year as annual measure)

Performance Measure	2020/21 Baseline	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
1c Percent of clients who say their legal aid lawyer explained things in a way they understood	70%	74%	76%	76%	76%

Data source: LABC client information system with corresponding LABC client survey (reported by fiscal year as annual measure)

Discussion

PM 1b – Clients' experience of LABC: This measures clients' perception of how easy LABC made it for them to deal with their issues. This is a widely used metric in multiple sectors; outside benchmarks are available in other service industries. Data for this performance measure is being captured on an ongoing basis at the close of specific key interactions with various LABC services, including intake, duty counsel and PLCs. This ensures recency of recall, thereby a more accurate response. The survey is issued by email. LABC will report a weighted score from different types of interactions annually. Supporting metrics will provide results by service type and by area of law.

PM 1c: Clients' experience with their lawyer: LABC has included this measure in its biennial client survey since 2018 but had not reported on it in service plans prior to 2023/24. Previous surveys identified this measure as one of the top drivers of performance. Data for this measure is being captured on a more frequent, ongoing basis, and at key milestones in a client's case. The online survey captures data from clients who receive representation services from lawyers (including PLC lawyers) and clients who receive advice services from expanded duty counsel and Family LawLINE lawyers. Future years' targets may be revised once we have results from the new survey methodology.

Improvements in these measures will indicate an increase in service quality – key to achieving better client outcomes.

Goal 2: LABC employees are engaged

Goal 2 recognizes that LABC needs engaged staff to deliver high-quality, client-centred services. While our dedicated employees are our strength, high turnover and retirements make recruitment and retention a growing priority. Objectives 2.1 and 2.2 will ensure we are innovative in our recruitment, foster equitable opportunities for training and advancement, and work to build the inclusive culture that creates a diverse, skilled and committed team.

Objective 2.1: Create a work environment that strengthens employee commitment

Commitment to the mandate and values of LABC is a key driver of employee engagement. Creating a work environment that strengthens employee commitment will promote Goal 2.

Key Strategies

- Identify and implement improvements required to continue to be a Top 100 Employer in BC
- Develop and implement EDI-focused recruitment and retention strategies

Discussion

LABC will reinforce the commitment of current employees while supporting recruitment efforts and implementing necessary workplace enhancements needed to maintain its position as a top 100 employer year after year. LABC will work with our Truth and Reconciliation department and our EDI council to ensure that our recruitment and retention strategies are aligned with our core beliefs and help us achieve our targeted Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Benchmarks.

Objective 2.2: Develop future leaders

Job satisfaction and organization satisfaction are two key drivers of employee engagement. Creating equitable opportunities for training, leadership development and advancement within LABC will increase job and organization satisfaction and promote Goal 2.

Key Strategies

- Plan for and manage succession
- Collaborate with employees to build opportunities for career advancement and leadership development

Discussion

LABC needs strong and committed leaders to deliver high quality services. A new succession plan is now in place to develop individual leaders and strengthen LABC's overall leadership capacity, now and into the future. In 2025/26 LABC will also collaborate with employees to create employee-led leadership opportunities that drive engagement.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2022/23 Baseline	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
2a Employee retention rate	86%	83%	84%	85%	86%

Data source: Operational data (reported by fiscal year as annual measure)

Discussion

Employee retention rate is an objective and highly reliable measure of employee engagement. The retention calculation follows best practices. We will monitor industry standards and adjust future targets accordingly.

A key feature of this metric is the ability to disaggregate the data. The results on this measure will be reported on an organization-wide basis, but LABC will also track retention rates for

specific employee groups including by departments, managers compared to non-managerial staff, client-facing roles and non-client-facing roles, and staff self-identifying as inequity-experiencing. Analysis of results will consider the range of internal and external factors that might affect retention rates. The forecasted 2024/25 employee retention rate is projected to be slightly below the 2022/23 baseline, providing an opportunity to reassess future performance targets. The targets have been revised to ensure a focus on improvement that is more realistic given the forecast, but still aspirational to drive improvement.

Performance Measure	2020 Baseline	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
2b Employee engagement score[1]	66[2]	60%[3]	64%[3]	65%[3]	65%[3]

Data source: Semi-annual LABC Employee Survey (reported by fiscal year as annual measure)

[1] Revised performance measure introduced in 2023/24 Service Plan. The first semi-annual LABC Employee Survey will be conducted in Q4 of 2023/24.

[2] Baseline set using "overall employee engagement" results from the LABC Workplace Environment Survey conducted in 2020, which uses a 5-point survey scale and produces "average score" results.

[3] The new survey methodology will produce a percentage score

Discussion

LABC needs engaged staff to deliver high-quality, client-centred services. High employee engagement in the public sector is linked to increased staff retention and improved services for clients. In 2023/24, LABC changed survey methodology and increased frequency.

Similar to the employee retention data, employe engagement results will be reported on an organization-wide basis, but LABC will also track results for specific employee groups including by department, management/ non-managerial staff, and staff self-identifying as inequity-experiencing. These changes will enable LABC to target responses when and where they are most needed.

The forecasted 2024/25 employee engagement score is projected to decrease below the 2020 baseline, providing an opportunity to reassess future performance targets. The lower forecast score indicates that the targets set in the 2024/25 Service Plan were based on conditions that no longer reflect the evolving conditions and realities of LABC's workforce. Adjusting future targets ensures that they remain both realistic and aligned with current capabilities.

Performance Measure	2022/23 Baseline	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
2c Percentage of internal promotions or lateral changes	37%	33%	35%	35%	36%

Data source: Operational data (reported by fiscal year as annual measure)

Discussion

Tracking internal promotion or lateral changes is an objective measure that will be strongly influenced by leadership training, internal communications, and employee engagement. A "lateral change" for this metric is when an employee was successful in their application for

another LABC position that is not considered a "higher" job class. Originally expressed as "Percentage of internal promotions compared to external hires," we expanded the metric to include lateral position changes.

Hiring will continue to be conducted on a merit basis considering both internal and external candidates; nevertheless, internal advancement is an important measure to track. Improvement on this measure will demonstrate that LABC is rewarding performance and creating the career paths that boost engagement and retention. In addition to this quantitative measure, LABC will assess employees' perceptions about opportunities for advancement and reasons for lateral moves to capture the full picture of employee engagement and commitment.

The forecasted 2024/25 internal promotions or lateral changes is expected to decrease below the 2022/23 baseline, providing an opportunity for reassessment of future performance targets. Decreasing the targets for the percentage of internal promotions or lateral changes based on the projected lower forecasted 2024/25 score provides LABC with the opportunity to align its goals with current realities. This adjustment supports a more practical approach to talent management, employee development, and organizational growth, while maintaining a focus on long-term improvement.

Goal 3: LABC has strong collaborative relationships

People in need of LABC services benefit from client-focussed collaboration across legal service organizations. LABC is one of many providers of legal services to people facing barriers to accessing the legal system in British Columbia. Goal 3 recognizes that strong collaborative relationships with service providers and stronger partnerships with others in the legal system will enable LABC to deliver sustainable, comprehensive client-centred legal services – with fewer gaps and overlaps.

Lawyers are key providers of quality legal aid services to clients and one of LABC's primary service provider relationships, which is reflected in two of the performance measures related to this Goal.

Objective 3.1: Collaborate with service providers to benefit our clients

Lawyers are a primary provider of legal aid services. At the same time, many LABC clients must navigate a complex, multi-provider environment to get the services they need to address their legal issues. More client-focussed collaboration should enable clients to move between legal and other service providers with greater ease and efficiency – increasing the likelihood of a better outcome.

Key Strategies

- Share data across justice and other sectors

Discussion

LABC engages with a range of service providers across BC to improve service delivery to our shared clients. These service providers include agencies providing legal and advocacy services,

as well as agencies providing health and social services. In 2025/26 LABC's strategic project implementation is designed to engage stakeholders both in the project implementation and in the ongoing service delivery, to enhance internal and cross-agency coordination of these efforts to close gaps and reduce duplication. LABC will develop data sharing agreements with other service providers to better serve our mutual clients to support more efficient collaborative service delivery and to track outcomes – such as warm referrals. LABC is committed to the protection of personal information and to maintaining client privacy and confidentiality. These data sharing agreements will comply with all applicable privacy legislation and maintain appropriate security and privacy practices.

Objective 3.2: Strengthen our relationships with partners in the legal system

Our partners in the legal system include government ministries, Indigenous organizations and communities, and a variety of other organizations and professionals, including the Association of Legal Aid Lawyers. By strengthening these relationships and working together, we can help clients achieve better outcomes.

Key Strategies

- Support the implementation of Indigenous justice strategies
- Engagement with the Association of Legal Aid Lawyers to implement recruitment and retention strategies

Discussion

During 2025/26, LABC will continue working with the Attorney General, and with Indigenous leadership, organizations and communities to support implementation of Indigenous justice strategies, such as the FNJS and the Métis Justice Strategy. Providing timely and effective support as requested will build the strong, collaborative relationships needed to deliver better outcomes for clients. Information sharing will be central to the successful transition of services and supporting better client outcomes.

Building on work started in 2024/25, LABC will continue to strengthen its ongoing engagement with the Association of Legal Aid Lawyers to implement tariff lawyer recruitment and retention strategies. Working together on this strategy will help build collaborative relationships while creating mutually beneficial results to ensure a healthy roster of legal aid lawyers.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2022/23 Baseline	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
3a LABC tariff lawyer retention rate[1]	84%	84%	85%	85%[2]	85%[2]

Data source: LABC client information system (reported by fiscal year as annual measure)

[1] New performance measure introduced in 2023/24 Service Plan. The metric calculation was determined during 2023/24, and the baseline was set in 2023/24 using 2022/23 data. Tariff lawyers are lawyers in private practice who (1) accept contracts from LABC to represent clients with court cases involving criminal, family, child protection and/or immigration law and/or (2) accept contracts from LABC to provide legal advice services to clients.

[2] LABC will review and refine targets for future years based on findings from the lawyer roster, recruitment and retention review.

Discussion

A higher retention rate for tariff lawyers is an objective and reliable measure that LABC is effectively supporting lawyers in their work providing high quality legal aid services to clients. Beyond reporting the aggregated retention rate, LABC will track retention by categories like area of law, lawyer gender and lawyer age. This will generate deeper insights into targeted tactics that will help us drive higher retention where we need it most. Analysis of results will consider the range of internal and external factors that might affect retention rates.

LABC is not aware of any industry standard of a lawyer retention metric. The lawyer roster, recruitment and retention review (see Goal 1), scheduled to be completed in 2024/25, is expected to provide insights into the optimal rates of retention needed to ensure a sustainable supply of skilled lawyers to deliver better outcomes for clients.

Performance Measure	2023/24 Baseline	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
3b Percent of tariff lawyers who said LABC was easy to work with on behalf of the client[1]	Baseline set[2]	N/A	TBD[2]	TBD[2]	TBD[2]

Data source: LABC Tariff Lawyer Survey (reported by fiscal year as annual measure)

[1] New performance measure introduced in 2023/24 Service Plan.

[2] Baseline will be set using 2024/25 data at year end (March 31, 2025) and targets will be set at that time.

Discussion

LABC strives to make it as easy as possible for lawyers to administer their legal aid files so that they can focus on providing quality services to clients. This performance measure tracks lawyers' perception of our administrative efficiency and effectiveness and closely mirrors the measure of clients' experience of LABC (performance measure 1b).

LABC previously used lawyer satisfaction surveys and conducted every two to three years to track lawyer satisfaction with the support they receive from LABC. In comparison, data for this new performance measure will be captured on an ongoing basis at the close of a specific transaction (such as when a case is closed) making this metric more reliable and timely, and

providing LABC with the information it needs to drive continuous service and process improvements. LABC will also track secondary measures that flag, for example, specific case type or areas of law where LABC is receiving low or high scores from both lawyers and clients.

Performance Measure	Baseline	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
3c Percent of agencies who say that LABC was easy to work with on behalf of the client[1]	—	N/A	Baseline set[2]	TBD[2]	TBD[2]

Data source: Proposed annual survey of various agency stakeholders (reported by fiscal year as annual measure)

[1] New performance measure introduced in 2023/24 Service Plan.

[2] Proposed annual survey of agency stakeholders will be implemented in 2024/25 and baseline will be set at year end (March 31, 2025), with targets to be set once the baseline is set.

Discussion

This measure identifies how easy it is for service providers and partners to work with LABC in support of their clients. It mirrors the similar measures that track clients' and lawyers' perceptions. This year, LABC will work with service providers and partners to develop and implement the survey instrument. Data reliability may be undermined by response rate and due to recent/recall, depending on survey methodology used.

Goal 4: LABC is a responsive organization

In a fast-changing environment, LABC must have agile systems and processes to deliver quality services to clients when and where they need them. We also need the right data to drive continuous improvement. We invest in direct client services and organizational infrastructure to achieve the best outcomes for our clients. Objectives 4.1 and 4.2 highlight modernization of our Information Technology (IT) and data management as essential to serving our clients better over the long term.

Objective 4.1: Assess and demonstrate our impact to continuously improve our services

Reliable data on the impact of LABC services on client outcomes is essential to identify what's working, what isn't, and why. Assessing and sharing results with service providers, partners, and the public will build accountability, demonstrate value, and guide improvements.

Key Strategies

- Design and implement a continuous improvement framework to support LABC to deliver better client outcomes.

Discussion

In 2025/26 LABC will continue development of a continuous improvement framework focussed on client outcomes. This objective is closely linked to Goal 1 (better client outcomes) and focusses on the data-gathering and data-sharing required to assess the impact of LABC

services on client outcomes and guide improvements to our services. Continuing the work that began in 2023/24, LABC will establish the key strategic and operational performance indicators that will drive improvements and gather relevant data in LABC systems or from other sources. Measuring our impact on some client outcomes may require data sharing with partner organizations, as described under Goal 3. Executing the framework will enable LABC to use data to guide decision making and improve our overall organizational responsiveness.

Objective 4.2: Leverage technology to optimize our operations and service delivery

In an era of hybrid service delivery and flexible workplaces, the importance of technology to internal process efficacy as well as service quality has never been greater. By investing in our IT infrastructure, LABC will be better able to support our justice partners to modernize the court system and expand the digital delivery of services for clients.

Key Strategies

- Execute LABC's five year Digital Transformation Program

Discussion

LABC's Digital Transformation Program is a five-year strategic initiative that will advance Goal 4. Through the program, LABC is investing in people, process and technology to improve our services and to help strengthen the digital capabilities of the justice sector as whole. The program involves rethinking and redesigning the delivery of legal aid services, such as online platforms, chatbots, artificial intelligence, and data analytics, to improve client service, reduce costs, and increase effectiveness. LABC launched the program in 2023/24 by establishing a centralized Project Management Office to manage Digital Transformation and strategic initiatives. As part of a high-level Business Intelligence Strategy, LABC will also establish an Information Governance Committee to provide oversight over business intelligence projects and the use of corporate data.

In 2025/26, LABC will continue building on this foundation with key initiatives, including the migration of an on-premise relationship management system into the main LABC client information system: the Large Case Management (LCM) database. In addition, an IT Security Plan will be introduced to enhance the safety and stewardship of our employee and client data.

Building on previous work to surface key performance indicators, LABC will launch a major project to transition to an improved Business Intelligence platform. This will result in increased transparency and insights that will allow for improved efficiency. Looking ahead to 2025/26, another key project underway is the update to the Duty Counsel Scheduling system, which will streamline the scheduling process and improve the delivery of this critical service to thousands of individuals who rely on it annually.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2020/21 Baseline	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
4a Percent of clients who say the application process was straightforward.[1]	71%	72%	72%	74%	74%

Data source: Ongoing LABC Client Survey (reported by fiscal year as annual measure)

[1] New performance measure introduced in 2023/24 Service Plan. Baseline set using results from the biennial LABC client survey conducted in 2020/21.

Discussion

Individuals seeking legal aid services can apply to LABC through our call centre, with the help of a third-party advocate or their lawyer, or at one of our in-person legal aid intake locations around the province. Intake personnel interview and assess each applicant to determine if they are eligible for legal aid services. In our 2020 client survey, the application process was identified as one of the top drivers of client satisfaction and a top priority" metric. It serves as an indirect measure of the responsiveness of the systems and processes involved in obtaining legal services. Positive change in the client application experience offers a subjective measure of improvement in those systems and processes.

In 2023/24, LABC changed our client survey methodology to track progress on this measure. Data is captured on an ongoing basis from clients after they initiate the application process. The survey is issued by email. Overall results are reported annually. Supporting metrics will show results by area of law and type of inquiry, to provide more detailed operational insights about where the application process causes friction for clients.

Goal 5: LABC has a culture of Truth and Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Building a culture of Truth and Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is integral to living our core beliefs, fulfilling our mission to strengthen client-centred legal help for British Columbians experiencing barriers accessing the legal system, and advancing our vision of BC's legal system transformed, by the way LABC represents our clients, into one more equitable and inclusive. LABC will advance this work by implementing initiatives and measuring our progress against Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (GDEIB) Benchmarks as prioritized by the EDI council; the Manager, Truth and Reconciliation; and the Manager Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Objective 5.1: Embed Truth and Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion throughout every aspect of LABC

Integrating Truth and Reconciliation and EDI throughout every aspect of the organization is critical to building that culture within LABC, and we prioritize ongoing resources to achieve that.

Key Strategies

- Progress to Proactive level in prioritized GDEIB categories
- Integrate Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) principles across LABC
- Advance priority actions identified in the LABC Reconciliation Action Plan

Discussion

The GDEIB is a recognized international benchmarking system for organizations to identify their progress in making EDI an integral part of the organization. The implementation of GDEIB priorities will advance priority actions identified in the LABC Reconciliation Action Plan. LABC's EDI council has identified five GDEIB categories as first priorities:

1. Leadership and Accountability
2. Vision, Strategy, and Business Impact
3. Structure and Implementation
4. Work-Life Integration, Flexibility, and Benefits
5. Learning and Development

Guided by the Manager, Truth and Reconciliation, the Manager Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and our EDI council, LABC will identify and implement activities to meet GDEIB standards and achieve a "Proactive" level in those prioritized categories.

GBA+ is an analytical process used to plan for, implement and evaluate policies, programs and initiatives based on how different, women, men and gender diverse people may experience them, with consideration to their intersecting identities including race, age, income, sexuality and disabilities. In 2025/26 LABC will develop and deliver a GBA+ approach to guide how we plan, implement, evaluate and continuously improve LABC policies, and initiatives and their impacts on people across a diverse range of identity factors.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	Baseline	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
5a Employee Equity Variance[1]	—	Baseline set[2]	TBD[2]	TBD[2]	TBD[2]

Data source: LABC HR System and employee survey conducted by a third-party research firm

[1] New performance measures introduced in 2023/24 Service Plan.

[2] In 2024/25 LABC began collecting expanded employee experience and demographic data needed to calculate the Employee Equity Variance. The baseline will be set at year end (March 31, 2025), and targets will be set at that time.

Performance Measure	Baseline	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
5b Client Equity Variance[1]	—	Baseline set[2]	TBD[2]	TBD[2]	TBD[2]

Data source: LABC client information system

[1] New performance measures introduced in 2024/25 Service Plan.

[2] In 2024/25 LABC began collecting client experience and demographic data needed to calculate the Client Equity Variance. The baseline will be set at year end (March 31, 2025), and targets will be set at that time.

Discussion

To measure progress toward embedding Truth and Reconciliation, and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion throughout every aspect of LABC, LABC will calculate the equity variance of employee and client outcomes based on race, Indigenous identity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and diverse abilities. The Employee Equity Variance measure is expected to include variances in hiring, retention, promotion, exits, organizational-level representation, and experience. The Client Equity Variance measure is expected to include variances in client experience and outcomes across different LABC services and client interactions. Zero variance would indicate equality of outcomes achieved through equitable service and workplace practices that mitigate individual inequities and bias in LABC policies, programs, practices, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours.

LABC initiated the collection of disaggregated demographic data in 2024/25 in accordance with privacy and confidentiality guidelines, advanced work to build buy-in and trust from employees, and clients, and worked to increase the rates of voluntary self-disclosure to enable collection of a complete data set for calculating the measures. Initial results may provide limited insights into the cause of or interventions to address a variance because of low rates of representation of certain groups, having launched data collection in the last half of the reporting period, as well as improved outcome data and other data that may be included in later iterations.

Financial Plan

Financial Summary

$000s	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 Plan	2027/28 Plan
Revenues				
Provincial Government	142,326	138,620	140,187	140,187
Federal Government	11,367	11,340	7,500	7,500
Other Income & Recoveries [1]	6,648	8,360	10,732	13,158
Total Revenue	**160,341**	**158,320**	**158,419**	**160,845**
Expenses				
Criminal tariff [2]	69,884	69,152	70,241	71,355
Family tariff [2]	44,313	38,699	41,264	42,324
Child Protection tariff [2]	7,560	6,617	6,754	6,895
Immigration and Refugee tariff [2]	11,368	11,340	7,609	7,720
Justice Initiatives [3]	10,919	13,298	13,336	13,336
Community Engagement	2,210	2,312	2,312	2,312
Publications	492	485	485	485
Administration[4]	13,595	16,417	16,418	16,418
Total Expenses	**160,341**	**158,320**	**158,419**	**160,845**
Annual Surplus (Deficit)	-	-	-	-
Total Debt	-	-	-	-
Accumulated Surplus (Deficit)	**939**	**939**	**939**	**939**
Capital Expenditures	**1,089**	**3,716**	**-**	**18,225**

Note: The above financial information was prepared based on the Public Sector Accounting Standards.

[1] Other Income & Recoveries includes funding from the Law Foundation, the Notary Foundation, Investment Income, and Federally Funded Cases by the Department of Justice (DOJ) Canada.

[2] Direct costs are allocated to the tariffs based on the budgeted figures.

[3] Justice Initiatives include Family LawLINE, Parents Legal Centres, Family Law Centres and other justice services initiatives.

[4] Commencing in 2024/25, all head office lease costs are included in Administration, previously allocated to all departments.

Key Forecast Assumptions, Risks and Sensitivities

The tariff budget is based on tariff model projections of contract volumes, average case costs, and billing patterns taking into consideration any known changes to fees, policies, initiatives, and historical trends. The model also includes exogenous factors such as projected BC criminal charges, BC Stats population, and StatsCan offence/charge history.

External Risk Factors

1. Approximately 26.1 percent of 2025/26 Service Plan's non-government revenue ($2.2 million) is interest-rate sensitive (i.e. revenue from the Notary Foundation, and investment income). This revenue is used to fund information technology projects and administrative support costs.

2. Material changes to forecasts may be caused by changes in government policies, the justice system, the economy, and the geopolitical situation.

3. Complex criminal trials are taking longer because of police investigation techniques, disclosure challenges, undercover operations, and gang-related prosecutions. These factors result in higher costs to LABC, including case preparation and court attendance. Fixed budgets mean LABC must allocate resources prudently, often impacting the level of service provided to other areas to manage these cost pressures.

4. Changes in service demand and billing patterns, including increases in contract volumes and cost per contract because of government policies and requirements, may result in higher costs. Changes to financial eligibility also impacts service demand and total cost of service.

5. A risk LABC continues to face is the recruitment and retention of key staff. LABC is exploring options with the Provincial government on ways to mitigate this risk.

Management's Perspective on Financial Outlook

LABC is dependent on provincial and federal government funding to finance most of its expenditures. LABC also receives revenue from non-government sources which are tied to interest rates. Due to those contingencies, LABC will provide services based on the available revenue.

Risk Mitigation Strategies

1. LABC will use models for budgeting and forecasting and revenue estimates.
2. LABC will monitor client demand, case costs and billing times to advise the Ministry of the Attorney General. In case of a projected deficit, LABC will request additional funding and/or deficit authorization with the Ministry. In case of a projected surplus, LABC will follow MOU protocols. LABC will consider revising policies related to annual billing caps, more stringent financial eligibility assessments, and other measures to contain costs.

3. LABC will use data analytics, trend analysis, and seek timely access to other justice system data (for example, government, courts, and judiciary).
4. With its Digital Transformation Program, LABC will invest in equipment and services to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our programs and services.
5. LABC will pursue increased collaboration and discussions with the Federal and Provincial governments, as well as other justice system stakeholders.
6. LABC has implemented a Management Succession Plan to ensure continuity of leadership.

Appendix A: Mandate Letter from the Minister Responsible

June 22, 2023

Allan Seckel, KC, Chair
Legal Aid BC
400 – 510 Burrard Street
Vancouver BC V6C 3A8

Dear Allan Seckel:

On behalf of Premier Eby and the Executive Council, I would like to extend my thanks to you, your board members and your organization's leadership for your dedication, expertise, and service to the people of British Columbia.

Public sector organizations – including Crowns, Health Authorities and Post Secondary Institution Boards – support British Columbians by delivering vital public services and are accountable to the public through their responsible Minister. Your leadership in advancing and protecting the public interest strengthens trust in public institutions.

You are serving British Columbians at a time when people in our province continue to recover from and respond to the upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, an ongoing toxic drug crisis, climate-related natural disasters, and while global inflation is driving up costs. Now more than ever, we need to focus on building a prosperous, low-carbon, sustainable economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – in rural areas, in cities, and in Indigenous communities.

This mandate letter, which I am sending in my capacity as Minister responsible for Legal Aid BC (LABC), sets out overarching principles relevant to the entire public sector and specific direction on priorities and expectations for your organization for the remainder of Government's term.

Government and public sector organizations must continue to advance results that people can see and feel in these key areas: strengthened health care, safer communities, attainable and secure housing, and a clean and fair economy that delivers affordability and prosperity.

In doing so, you will continue working towards lasting and meaningful Reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in the province we are building together, and delivering on specific commitments as outlined in the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* action plan.

Ministry of Attorney General Office of the Minister
Mailing Address:
PO Box 9044 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E2
Telephone: 250 387-1866
Facsimile: 250 387-6411
Website: www.gov.bc.ca/ag

As required by the *Climate Change Accountability Act*, please ensure your organization implements targets and strategies for minimizing greenhouse gas emissions and managing climate risk, including achieving carbon neutrality each year and aligning with the CleanBC target of a 50% reduction in public sector building emissions and a 40% reduction in public sector fleet emissions by 2030. Your organization is expected to work with government to report out on these plans and activities as required by legislation.

Our province's history, identity and strength are rooted in its diverse population. Yet racialized and marginalized people face historic and present-day barriers that limit their full participation in their communities, workplaces, government and their lives. The public sector has a moral and ethical responsibility to tackle systemic discrimination in all its forms – and every public sector organization has a role in this work. As part of this work, your organization is expected to adopt the Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens to ensure gender equity is reflected in your operations and programs.

British Columbians expect that public sector organizations operate in a responsible manner to deliver quality services equitably in all regions of the province. This requires strategic stewardship of planning, operations, and policies in the areas of financial, risk, and human resource management including information security and privacy protection.

The protection of government data and networks is a priority, especially where it concerns personal information of British Columbians. Public sector organizations must maintain up to date systems and effective cybersecurity practices, including maintaining current information management and cybersecurity policies, guidelines and standards; evaluating your organization against industry standards; and maintaining appropriate security and privacy practices. The Office of the Chief Information Officer within the Ministry of Citizens Services is available to support and offer guidance to your organization in any of these areas.

Public sector organizations must also implement and maintain an effective fraud risk management strategy. The Office of the Comptroller General and the Risk Management Branch in the Ministry of Finance are available for consultation.

The Crown Agencies Secretariat (CAS) in the Ministry of Finance supports public sector organizations to operate effectively, in the public interest, and aligned with government's strategic direction and priorities. Within CAS, the Crown Agencies and Board Resourcing Office (CABRO) will continue to support you and your board on recruitment, appointments and professional development, as well ensuring Board composition and governance reflects the diversity of our province. CAS can support you in public sector governance best practices, policy and planning.

In addition to continuing to make progress on your 2021 mandate letter, I expect you to ensure the important priorities and areas of focus listed in this letter are incorporated into the practices of your organization.

Each board member is asked to sign this letter to acknowledge this direction from government to your organization. The signed letter is to be posted publicly on your website by summer 2023.

I look forward to continuing to work with you and your Board colleagues to meet the high standards set for us by all British Columbians.

Sincerely,

Niki Sharma, KC
Attorney General

Date: June 22, 2023

Enclosure

cc: Honourable David Eby, KC
Premier

Shannon Salter
Deputy Minister to the Premier, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the BC Public Service

Heather Wood
Deputy Minister and Secretary to Treasury Board
Ministry of Finance

Mary Sue Maloughney
Associate Deputy Minister, Crown Agencies Secretariat
Ministry of Finance

Barbara Carmichael, KC
Deputy Attorney General
Ministry of Attorney General

Karen Christiansen, FCPA, FCA
Member
LABC Board of Directors

Gisela Ruebsaat
Member
LABC Board of Directors

Donna M. Turko, KC
Member
LABC Board of Directors

Philip A. Riddell, KC
Member
LABC Board of Directors

Brad Daisley
Member
LABC Board of Directors

Tracy Porteous, OBC, LLD (h.c.)
Member
LABC Board of Directors

Brenda Knights
Member
LABC Board of Directors

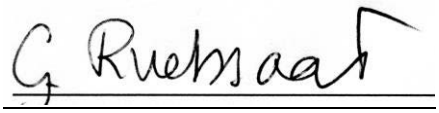
Lisa Scott
Member
LABC Board of Directors

Michael Bryant
Chief Executive Officer/President
LABC

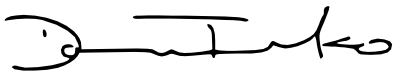
Legal Aid BC Mandate
Letter 2023/24 Board
Signature Sheet

Allan P. Seckel, KC
Chair, Legal Aid BC
Date:

Karen Christiansen
Director, Legal Aid BC
Date:



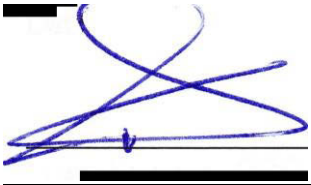
Gisela Ruebsaat
Director, Legal Aid BC
Date:



Donna M. Turko, KC
Director, Legal Aid BC
Date:

Philip A. Riddell, KC
Director, Legal Aid BC
Date:

Brad Daisley
Director, Legal Aid BC
Date:



Tracy Porteous, OBC, LLD (h.c)
Director, Legal Aid BC
Date:

Brenda Knights
Director, Legal Aid BC
Date:

Lisa Scott
Director, Legal Aid BC
Date: