

**SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

**ANNUAL REVIEW  
OF THE BUDGETS OF  
STATUTORY OFFICES:  
2024-25 TO 2026-27**



**DECEMBER 2023**

**THIRD REPORT, FOURTH SESSION, 42ND PARLIAMENT**



December 13, 2023

To the Honourable  
Legislative Assembly of the  
Province of British Columbia

Honourable Members:

I have the honour to present herewith the Third Report of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services for the Fourth Session of the 42nd Parliament. This report covers the Committee's review of the 2024-25 to 2026-27 budget submissions of the statutory offices, as approved by the Committee.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee,

Mike Starchuk, MLA  
Chair

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# COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

## Committee Members

Mike Starchuk, MLA, [Chair](#)  
Surrey-Cloverdale

Tom Shypitka, MLA, [Deputy Chair](#)  
Kootenay East

Susie Chant, MLA  
North Vancouver-Seymour

George Chow, MLA  
Vancouver-Fraserview

Ronna-Rae Leonard, MLA  
Courtenay-Comox

Coralee Oakes, MLA  
Cariboo North

Nicholas Simons, MLA  
Powell River-Sunshine Coast

Ben Stewart, MLA  
Kelowna West

Henry Yao, MLA  
Richmond South Centre

## Committee Staff

Jennifer Arril, Clerk of Committees

Katey Stickle, Committee Research Analyst

Jonathon Hamilton, Committee Researcher

Mary Heeg, Committee Researcher

Mary Newell, Committees Officer

Alexa Neufeld, Committee Coordinator



# TERMS OF REFERENCE

On February 21, 2023, the Legislative Assembly agreed that the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services be empowered to:

1. Examine, inquire into and make recommendations with respect to the budget consultation paper prepared by the Minister of Finance in accordance with section 2 of the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act* (S.B.C. 2000, c. 23) and, in particular, to:
  - a. conduct public consultations across British Columbia on proposals and recommendations regarding the provincial budget and fiscal policy for the coming fiscal year by any means the Committee considers appropriate; and
  - b. prepare a report no later than November 15, 2023, on the results of those consultations.
2. In conjunction with general oversight of the following statutory officers, namely, the:
  1. Auditor General;
  2. Chief Electoral Officer;
  3. Conflict of Interest Commissioner;
  4. Human Rights Commissioner;
  5. Information and Privacy Commissioner;
  6. Merit Commissioner;
  7. Ombudsperson;
  8. Police Complaint Commissioner; and
  9. Representative for Children and Youth
  - a. consider and make recommendations on the annual reports, rolling three-year service plans and budgets;
  - b. inquire into and make recommendations with respect to other matters brought to the Committee's attention by any of the aforementioned statutory officers; and
  - c. consider and make decisions, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, regarding the terms and

conditions of employment of any of the aforementioned statutory officers arising as a request of an officeholder during their term of appointment.

That the Committee be designated as the Committee referred to in sections 19, 20, 21 and 23 of the *Auditor General Act* (S.B.C. 2003, c. 2) and that the report in section 22 of the *Auditor General Act* (S.B.C. 2003, c. 2) be referred to the Committee.

That the Committee be designated as the Committee referred to in sections 47.02 and 47.03 of the *Human Rights Code* (R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 210).

That, in addition to the powers previously conferred upon the Select Standing Committees of the House, the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services be empowered to:

- a. appoint of its number one or more subcommittees and to refer to such subcommittees any of the matters referred to the Committee and to delegate to the subcommittees all or any of its powers except the power to report directly to the House;
- b. sit during a period in which the House is adjourned, during the recess after prorogation until the next following Session and during any sitting of the House;
- c. adjourn from place to place as may be convenient; and
- d. retain personnel as required to assist the Committee.

That the Committee report to the House as soon as possible; and that during a period of adjournment, the Committee deposit its reports with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, and upon resumption of the sittings of the House, or in the next following Session, as the case may be, the Chair present all reports to the House.





# OVERSIGHT OF STATUTORY OFFICE BUDGETS

The Legislative Assembly empowers the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services (the “Committee”) to consider and make recommendations with respect to the budgets, service plans, and annual reports of the province’s nine statutory officers, namely the:

- Auditor General;
- Chief Electoral Officer;
- Conflict of Interest Commissioner;
- Human Rights Commissioner;
- Information and Privacy Commissioner and Registrar of Lobbyists;
- Merit Commissioner;
- Ombudsperson;
- Police Complaint Commissioner; and
- Representative for Children and Youth

Each officer is independent of the executive branch of government and reports to the Legislative Assembly. The Committee meets with the statutory officers in the fall to review budget proposals and in the spring to receive financial and operational updates. The Committee also considers supplementary funding requests as needed throughout the year. This process supports legislative oversight and accountability, providing for ongoing dialogue between legislators and statutory officers on their work.

## Review of 2024-25 to 2026-27 Budget Submissions

To improve consistency, clarity, and detail in the budget proposals, as well as simplify the process for statutory offices and Committee Members, the Committee developed revised instructions and templates for the budget review process

this year. Committee Members appreciated statutory officers’ willingness to adapt to these requested changes.

In reviewing the budget submissions, Committee Members observed that many requests were related to inflationary pressures on salaries, building occupancy, and other expenses. Members also noted that many offices presented requests related to IT to refresh infrastructure and increase security. This year the Committee also saw requests related to ongoing capital projects, as well as funding to support significant events and initiatives related to the legislative mandates of some offices. Regarding staffing, Committee Members heard about progress being made by many offices to improve recruitment and retention and noted that some offices sought funding for new positions related to increased workload and outreach efforts.

The Committee also received several supplementary funding requests for the current fiscal year as part of the budget submissions. While considering these requests, Committee Members noted that supplementary funding requests have increased in frequency in recent years. They highlighted that statutory offices should work within their allocated budgets and request supplementary funding only in exceptional or extenuating circumstances.

As in recent years, Members reiterated the expectation that statutory offices forecast for inflation and anticipated needs in their budget requests, including in the two outer years, and were appreciative of the statutory offices that met this expectation. The Committee also reaffirmed the expectation that statutory offices clearly articulate the assumptions that inform budget requests, including for the outer years. Committee Members also encouraged statutory offices to explore opportunities for collaboration where possible, particularly with respect to

corporate services, and appreciated efforts to streamline costs and find efficiencies.

Committee Members recognize the significant work that statutory officers perform for British Columbians. They look forward to engaging with all officers again in the spring.

## Meetings Schedule

The Committee's review of budget submissions for the 2024-25 to 2026-27 fiscal years took place during the following meetings:

### Fourth Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament

October 23, 2023

- Review of 2024-25 to 2026-27 Budget Submissions: Office of the Auditor General
- Deliberations

October 25, 2023

- Review of 2024-25 to 2026-27 Budget Submissions: Office of the Ombudsperson
- Deliberations

October 26, 2023

- Review of 2024-25 to 2026-27 Budget Submissions: Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner; Office of the Representative for Children and Youth
- Deliberations

October 27, 2023

- Review of 2024-25 to 2026-27 Budget Submissions: Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner; Office of the Merit Commissioner; Elections BC; Office of the Human Rights Commissioner; Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner
- Deliberations

November 2, 2023

- Deliberations

November 22, 2023

- Review of 2024-25 to 2026-27 Budget Submissions – Follow-Up: Office of the Auditor General
- Deliberations

November 27, 2023

- Deliberations
- Adoption of the Report



# OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

As set out in the *Auditor General Act*, the Auditor General is an Independent Officer of the Legislature with a mandate to undertake audits of the financial statements of the government reporting entity; conduct performance audits on the efficiency, economy and effectiveness of government programs and services; and issue information reports. The Office's audit and information reports are tabled in the Legislative Assembly and referred to the Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts except for reports examining the administration and management of the Legislative Assembly which are referred to the Legislative Assembly Management Committee. Vote 2 of the annual provincial Estimates provides for the Office's operating expenses and capital expenditures.

## Supplementary Funding Requests for 2023-24

### Office Space Redesign and Building Occupancy (April 28, 2023)

On April 28, 2023, the Auditor General presented a supplementary funding request for operational costs of \$335,000 and \$165,000 for building occupancy costs. These costs related to project delays for the leading workplace strategy, which involves renovations to the office space to support hybrid work. The Committee agreed that the Office of the Auditor General be granted access to the funding requested for the office space redesign and building occupancy costs on April 28, 2023.

### Salaries and Benefits (April 28, 2023)

Also on April 28, 2023, the Auditor General presented a supplementary funding request for \$640,000 in operational funding to address the impact of salary increases from collective bargaining that were higher than the Office anticipated in its fall 2022 budget submission. He noted that the Office absorbed

the impacts of these salary increases in 2022-23, including retroactive payments, but is unable to absorb the increase for 2023-24 and onward. Members observed that the Office had already received a lift to salaries and benefits of nine percent for 2023-24 and therefore sought additional written information and a follow-up presentation to receive more detail and clarity regarding the calculations and rationale for the request. The follow-up presentation took place on June 12, 2023, and Committee Members asked several questions regarding the impact of increases to salaries approved in the previous fall on the current supplementary request, the effect of inflation on salaries and benefits, and the Office's plans to review compensation. Members considered the request, along with the additional information, and agreed to recommend that the Office of the Auditor General be provided access to the proposed supplementary funding for salaries and benefits. The Committee also reinforced its expectation that future requests and budget presentations should provide clear and comprehensive information to support a transparent process.

### Summary of Previous Committee Decisions

April 28, 2023: The Committee recommended that the Office of the Auditor General be granted access to supplementary funding up to \$335,000 for operating expenditures in 2023-24 for office space redesign and up to \$165,000 for operating expenditures in 2023-24 for building occupancy costs.

June 12, 2023: The Committee recommended that the Office of the Auditor General be granted access to supplementary funding up to \$640,000 for operating expenditures in 2023-24 for salaries and benefits.



## **IT Modernization Project and Office Space Redesign (October 23, 2023)**

During its meeting with the Committee on October 23, 2023, the Office made two supplementary funding requests for 2023-24. The first was for \$1.2 million in capital funding to purchase new hardware and servers related to the Office's proposed IT modernization project. Further details about this project are provided in the next section. The second request was for \$100,000 in capital funding to replace fluorescent tube lighting with LED lighting as part of the office redesign project. The Auditor General explained that new federal government regulations will ban the manufacture and sale of fluorescent tube lighting by 2026 and replacing the lighting as part of the office redesign is the most cost effective and least disruptive option.

## **Budget Submission for 2024-25 to 2026-27**

The Committee considered the Office of the Auditor General's budget request for 2024-25 to 2026-27 on October 23, 2023. Michael Pickup, Auditor General, was accompanied by Marie Thelisma, Assistant Auditor General, Critical Audit Support Services; John McNeill, Chief Financial Officer; Carlos Caraveo, Chief Information Officer; and Sonya Kofler, Executive Director, Strategic Human Resources. The Committee also held a follow-up meeting with the Office on November 22, 2023 to discuss the budget request in greater detail.

The Auditor General began his presentation with an overview of updates since the spring meeting with the Committee as well as highlights for the upcoming year. He noted that the Office has released 32 reports since he began his term as Auditor General in July 2020. Regarding staffing, he stated that employee engagement and satisfaction has increased over the past three years, while turnover decreased in 2022-23. Turning to the Office's service plan, the Auditor General highlighted key objectives including a corporate policy refresh and a new process to follow-up on the implementation of audit report recommendations.

The Office requested operating funding of \$26.373 million for 2024-25, a 12.6 percent (\$2.958 million) increase from the 2023-24 operating budget and a 14 percent (\$3.236 million) increase over the previously approved budget for 2024-25. For

2025-26 and 2026-27, the Office requested \$27.008 million and \$27.973 million respectively. Regarding the increase over 2023-24, the Auditor General stated that \$1.6 million is related to salaries and benefits, including a one percent inflationary increase in addition to the two percent increase included in the Office's previous estimate, for a total inflationary increase of three percent over 2023-24, as well as the cost of implementing a new compensation framework. Other increases related to professional services and maintenance for a proposed IT modernization project. In terms of capital funding, the Office requested \$263,000 in 2024-25, an 86 percent (\$1.644 million) reduction from the 2023-24 capital budget, and the same amount as the previously approved budget for 2024-25. This reduction is related to the anticipated completion of the office redesign project in 2023-24. The Office requested capital funding of \$450,000 in 2025-26, and \$380,000 in 2026-27.

Regarding the budget submission, the Auditor General highlighted a key request related to a new compensation framework that the Office developed to address recruitment and retention difficulties. The Auditor General shared that the Office conducted a review of positions under government's Management Classification Compensation Framework (MCCF) as well as a review of market competition. Based on this review, the Office developed a structured approach for its management staff (which comprise approximately 81 percent of its staff) to progress through their pay bands based on experience and performance. Further, the Office compared its starting salaries for management staff to similar positions in the public and private sectors to determine where best to start new employees in their pay band. The Auditor General requested \$1.1 million to implement the framework, followed by an increase in base salaries of 2.4 percent per year, for an estimated \$410,000 in 2025-26 and \$420,000 in 2026-27.

Turning to a second key request, the Auditor General noted that due to its size, the Office does not have the same resources dedicated to data security as larger organizations, making it an easier target for cyberattacks. To improve security, the Auditor General shared the Office's proposal to move its critical infrastructure and data to the Kamloops Data Centre, which is used by BC government ministries and other statutory offices. As noted above, as part of this proposal, the Office put forward a supplementary funding request for \$1.2 million in capital funding in 2023-24 to purchase new hardware and servers. For 2024-25,

the request is \$2.25 million in operating funding, consisting of \$1.25 million to migrate the IT infrastructure and data, \$750,000 for maintenance, and \$250,000 in amortization costs related to the planned capital spending on new hardware and servers. The request also includes \$1.75 million in operating funding in both 2025-26 and 2026-27, consisting of \$250,000 for amortization and \$1.5 million for maintenance.

## Committee Inquiry

Committee Members had several questions about the status of the office redesign project. The Chief Financial Officer shared that the Office recently finalized its bid for a general contractor. While the project will be slightly over budget, the Office will be able to absorb these costs in its overall capital budget. Further the project is on track to be completed by the end of this fiscal year with permits in place and demolition set to begin soon. In response to a question about the increase in occupancy costs in the budget request, the Chief Financial Officer explained that there is a five-year step increase to the Office's lease based on the Consumer Price Index which has resulted in an increase of \$399,000 to occupancy costs. In addition, he noted that the revenue from the sublease of one of the floors will go directly to government and cannot be used to offset the cost of their lease, but still generates a net benefit to the province on consolidation. In response to a question about the term of the lease, the Chief Financial Officer shared that it expires in 2034 and can be renewed to create greater savings.

At the follow-up meeting, the Auditor General responded to questions about why the costs to replace the fluorescent tube lighting with LED lighting were not considered and planned for as part of the previous requests for the office redesign project. He explained that the amendment to the regulation that will ban the manufacture and sale of fluorescent tube lighting was proposed in December 2022, while the Committee approved the request for the redesign project in the spring of that year. The Committee followed up to ask why the landlord isn't responsible for covering these costs. The Chief Financial Officer stated that the per the lease, the Office is responsible for any changes or improvements including the lighting. In response to questions about the procurement process for the office redesign project, the Chief Financial Officer shared that the Office invited ten contractors to bid on the job but only two submitted proposals,

likely due to the tight economic market in the trades. The Office chose the proposal that was lower which also aligned with the timelines for the project.

Regarding IT, Committee Members asked about the modernization project and the decision to use the Kamloops Data Centre. The Auditor General shared that the Office engaged an external firm to assess its decision to ensure they are headed in the right direction. Further, the Chief Information Officer explained that the Office will have a contract separate from government to maintain independence and ensure there are no conflicts of interest. In response to questions about the scalability of the project, the Auditor General explained at the follow-up meeting that the Office has outgrown its current system and server room, and the new infrastructure will accommodate growth with respect to server use and storage. He added that there will be cost efficiencies as the Office will have access to 200 IT support staff at the Kamloops Data Centre. Further, he noted that the Office conducted a risk analysis on the project which considered the difficulty finding an appropriate hosting environment, independence from government, difficulty acquiring new hardware, and disruptions to audit work during migration due to outages or unforeseen challenges. Based on this analysis, the Office found the risks to be low or medium with the current proposal.

Members also asked about existing information systems costs and the increase associated with the IT modernization project. The Chief Financial Officer stated that the costs of IT have gone up, but it is important to increase the budget in this area to reduce security risks. Members followed up to ask about the migration process. The Chief Financial Officer noted that \$1.25 million of the request is related to professional services contracts with the vendor to support the Office's staff to do the migration. In response to a question about the reduction in the professional services budget noted in the submission, the Chief Financial Officer explained that the Office has completed some complex audits and has a more stable workforce so there is less of a need for professional services, outside of the IT modernization project. Regarding maintenance costs, the Chief Information Officer explained that the Office is looking at its existing data and applications to migrate only what is needed and potentially reduce costs related to this request. During the follow-up meeting, the Auditor General responded to questions about opportunities to reduce the ongoing maintenance costs.

He referenced the rationalization process and added that this will help reduce the need for additional servers, power, and backups and could result in annual savings of \$500,000, but this will only become clear as the project moves forward.

Turning to the compensation framework, Committee Members asked about how the Office's compensation compares with that offered in the public and private sectors. The Assistant Auditor General, Critical Audit Support Services shared that the Office compared its compensation to other Auditor General's offices, other statutory offices, and government in developing its compensation framework. The Executive Director, Strategic Human Resources added that the Office also engaged Salary.com, an organization that specializes in salary surveys, to compare compensation with organizations of a similar size both across Canada and in Victoria and Vancouver. The Executive Director, Strategic Human Resources noted that for some roles in the Office, compensation is comparable but for others it is not. At the follow-up meeting, Members asked how the Office's compensation compares to other Auditor General offices in Canada. The Executive Director, Strategic Human Resources stated that the offices in Ontario and Alberta offer higher compensation, but with the new framework the Office is aiming to be positioned to be just slightly behind Alberta. Members followed up to ask about how the Office's benefits compare to those offered in Alberta. The Executive Director, Strategic Human Resources shared that the benefits are a set package and are comparable to those offered in Alberta and better than those offered in the private sector.

During the follow-up meeting, the Auditor General responded to questions about opportunities for the Office to align with existing government policy which sets out compensation rules for the MCCF including detailed guidance on performance based in-range compensation adjustments. He stated that the Office's approach is in alignment with the policy, but there is a problem with salary stagnation within the ranges. He added that the compensation adjustments set out in the policy don't provide sufficient progression or differentiation for years of experience, mainly because the range minimum continues to move up which slows movement within the salary range. To address stagnation of salaries, the Office proposes to establish incremental percentile step increases within the salary range that will reflect each year of additional strong performance. In response to questions about managing performance, the Executive Director, Strategic Human

Resources explained that the Office has a detailed and complex performance management system with performance reviews conducted after every audit. Where an employee is not meeting expectations, they are put on a performance improvement plan and would not qualify for the performance-based increase. Committee Members asked about forecasting in the outer years of the budget request in relation to the proposed compensation framework. The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that there is a request for \$410,000 in 2025-26 and \$420,000 in 2026-27 to align with the proposed framework and inflation. The Auditor General added that the request in the outer years will be the final request related to this framework.

## Recommendations

The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Auditor General and his staff for their valuable work including highlighting issues of importance to British Columbians in their audits and reports. Members acknowledged the Office's efforts to improve recruitment and retention and stabilize its workforce, noting that the Office has struggled with turnover and vacancies in recent years. As such, they were supportive of the Office's request regarding its proposed compensation framework. Committee Members emphasized the importance of forecasting inflationary costs and anticipated needs in the outer years of the budget requests and appreciated that the Office incorporated forecasting for wage inflation in its budget submission.

Regarding the IT modernization project, Members recognized that cybersecurity is important, especially considering the confidential information the Office gathers to conduct its work but expressed concern about the costs, particularly the \$1.5 million annual operating costs for maintenance. They noted that the Office has already identified savings by removing redundant applications and related licenses and anticipates finding additional annual savings of \$500,000 as it continues the rationalization process. As such, the Committee was supportive of the requests related to this project but requested quarterly progress updates including on the identification of savings and efficiencies.

Committee Members noted that the budget submission included a request to increase the Auditor General's salary in 2024-25, 2025-26, and 2026-27. Pursuant to the *Auditor General Act*, the Auditor General's salary is equal to that of the chief judge of the

Provincial Court of British Columbia. At the time of the budget process, the salary for the chief judge for fiscal years 2023-2024, 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 has not yet been determined. While the Committee appreciates forecasting in general, it is of the view that the salary budget for statutory officers (STOB 54: Legislative Salaries and Indemnities) should reflect their current compensation and known increases only. As such, the Committee

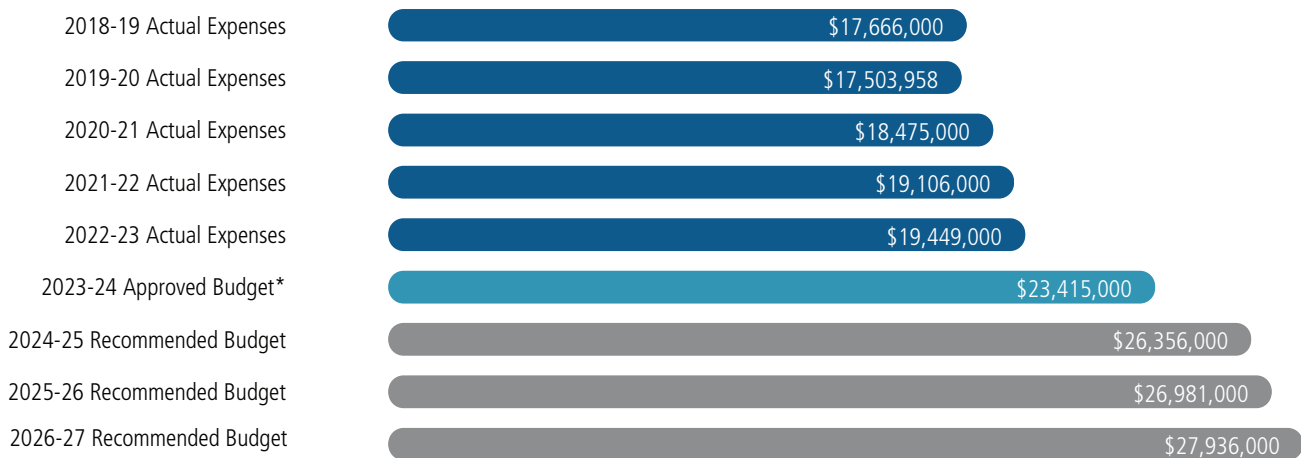
decided to recommend a salary of \$323,000 for the Auditor General for the next three fiscal years in alignment with other statutory officers whose salaries are also equal to that of the chief judge. This resulted in a reduction in the operating budget of \$17,000 in 2024-25, \$27,000 in 2025-26, and \$37,000 in 2026-27.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that:

1. The Office of the Auditor General be granted access to supplementary funding up to \$1.2 million for capital expenditures in 2023-24 to purchase hardware in preparation for a server migration.
2. The Office of the Auditor General be granted access to supplementary funding up to \$100,000 for capital expenditures in 2023-24 to replace fluorescent-tube lighting with LED lighting as part of the office redesign project.
3. The appropriation for the operating expenditures for the Office of the Auditor General be \$26.356 million in 2024-25; \$26.981 million in 2025-26; and \$27.936 million in 2026-27.
4. The appropriation for the capital expenditures for the Office of the Auditor General be \$263,000 in 2024-25; \$450,000 in 2025-26; and \$380,000 in 2026-27.

## Office of the Auditor General Operating Budget



\*Includes supplementary funding of \$500,000 related to delays in the office redesign project, approved by the Committee in April 2023; and \$640,000 for salaries and benefits approved by the Committee in June 2023.





# OFFICE OF THE CONFLICT OF INTEREST COMMISSIONER

The Conflict of Interest Commissioner is an Independent Officer of the Legislative Assembly responsible for ensuring that Members of the Legislative Assembly comply with their obligations under the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act*. The Commissioner meets annually with all Members to review the disclosure of Members' financial interests and the general obligations imposed by the Act. The Commissioner also responds to requests from Members of the Legislative Assembly and the public respecting compliance with or alleged contraventions of the Act. Vote 3 of the annual provincial Estimates provides for the Office's operating expenses and capital expenditures.

## Budget Submission for 2024-25 to 2026-27

The Committee considered the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner's budget request for 2024-25 to 2026-27 on October 27, 2023.

Victoria Gray, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, began her presentation with a brief summary of her mandate and an overview of her budget request. The Office requested an operating budget of \$900,000 for 2024-25, a 14.5 percent (\$114,000) increase from the total operating budget for 2023-24 and a 12 percent (\$99,000) increase from the previously approved budget for 2024-25. For 2025-26 and 2026-27, the Office has requested \$895,000 and \$910,000 respectively. For the capital budget, the Office requested \$25,000 for 2024-25 which is unchanged from the previously approved budgets. For 2025-26 and 2026-27, the Office requested \$10,000 each year for capital funding.

Regarding the budget request, the Commissioner shared that her Office has been asked by the Legislative Assembly to relocate from its office space on the Legislative Precinct. She noted that

the current budget request represents only an estimate of the costs for a new office space, as the Office has yet to find a new location. Key requests related to the anticipated office relocation in 2024-25 are \$72,000 for building occupancy costs; \$15,000 for moving expenses; \$20,000 for furniture and equipment expenses outside of the capital budget; and \$10,000 for annual utilities, materials, and supplies.

The Office requested a cost-of-living increase of 3.5 percent (\$9,000) for staff salaries for 2024-25, including similar increases in 2025-26 and 2026-26. The Commissioner shared that to retain staff she aims to maintain parity with BCEGU salaries for her staff and has anticipated a 3.5 percent cost-of-living increase for the next three fiscal years. The Commissioner also requested a 3.5 percent (\$9,000) increase for her salary to maintain parity with the Office's staff. She noted that this would be an increase over the annual cost of living adjustment of two percent provided for in the Order in Council which sets her remuneration.

Turning to the budget for fiscal year 2025-26, the Commissioner requested \$10,000 in one time funding to host the annual conference of the Canadian Conflict of Interest Network. The Commissioner noted that members rotate hosting the annual conference and explained that the requested funding is for unrecoverable costs such as renting a facility.

## Committee Inquiry

Members inquired about opportunities for the Office to adopt a remote work model rather than search for a new office space. The Commissioner explained that moving to a remote model was discussed but the Office requires a secure space to handle and store confidential information including Members' financial disclosure documents. She added that the Office is also unable to rent temporary space for the annual disclosure of Members'

financial interests as the timing of elections, and therefore the disclosure process, can vary.

The budget for the new office space was another area of interest for Committee Members. The Commissioner shared that the Office arrived at these cost estimates after contacting government space planners, as well as receiving quotes from local property managers. The Commissioner expressed a preference for staying close to the Legislative Precinct and noted potential facilities that are within the area.

The Committee inquired about the annual conference of the Canadian Conflict of Interest Network. The Commissioner noted that BC last hosted the conference in 2010. She clarified that members pay a registration fee that covers many of the conference costs and that members pay for their own accommodation and travel expenses. She added that a large cost of hosting the event is related to translation services.

## Recommendations

Committee Members were appreciative of the work of the Commissioner and the role her Office plays in assuring the public that Members of the Legislative Assembly are not acting in a conflict of interest. Members discussed the fragility of public trust and the importance of the public's perception that Members are acting in good faith. The Committee thanked the Commissioner for all the support and guidance she provides to them in ensuring

public trust is maintained. Due to the nature of the Office's work, the Committee expressed a desire for the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner to find a new location near the Legislative Precinct. Committee Members emphasized the importance of forecasting inflationary costs and anticipated needs in the outer years of the budget requests and appreciated that the Office incorporated forecasting for wage inflation for staff salaries in its budget submission.

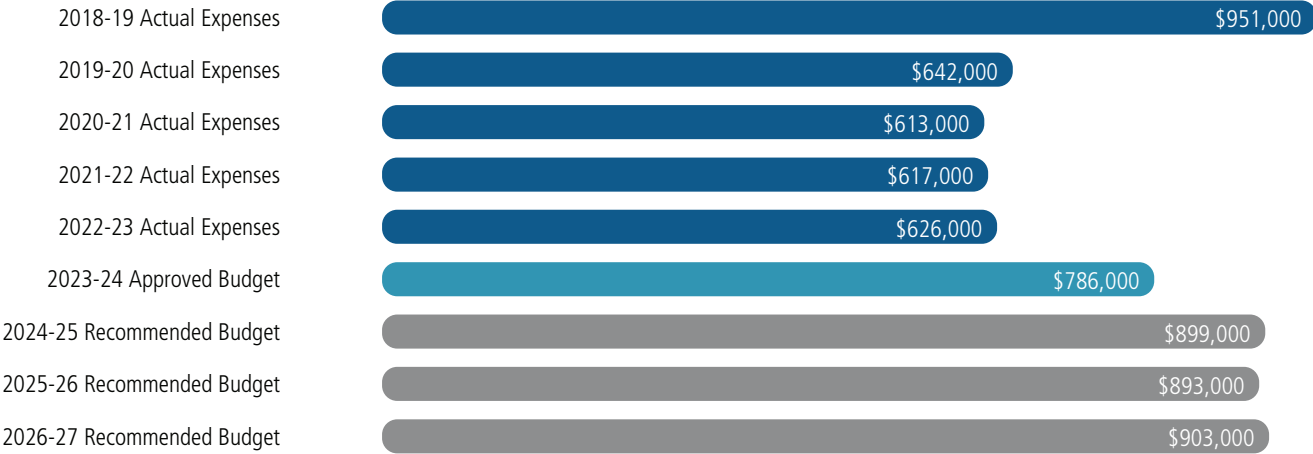
Regarding the request to increase the Commissioner's salary, while the Committee appreciates forecasting in general, it is of the view that the salary budget for statutory officers (STOB 54: Legislative Salaries and Indemnities) should reflect the statutory officer's current compensation and known increases only. As such, the Committee requested that the Office provide an updated budget submission to reflect the Commissioner's salary as set by Lieutenant Governor in Council in Order in Council 002/2020. On November 17, 2023, the Office provided a revised operating funding request for 2024-25 to 2026-27 incorporating the requested changes. The revised funding request provides for a two percent increase in each of the fiscal years to the Commissioner's salary. Given these changes, the Office requested revised operating funding of \$899,000 for 2024-25; 893,000 for 2025-26; and \$903,000 for 2026/27. Committee Members appreciated the Commissioner's willingness to provide an updated budget submission and agreed to recommend the revised requests.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that:

5. The appropriation for the operating expenditures for the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner be \$899,000 in 2024-25; \$893,000 in 2025-26; and \$903,000 in 2026-27.
6. The appropriation for the capital expenditures for the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner be \$25,000 in 2024-25; \$10,000 in 2025-26; and \$10,000 in 2026-27.

# Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner Operating Budget





# ELECTIONS BC

Elections BC is a statutory office that administers provincial general elections, by-elections, recall petitions, initiative petitions, initiative votes, referenda, and plebiscites. The Office also oversees campaign financing and advertising rules. The Office's mandate, including that of the Chief Electoral Officer, is set out in legislation including the *Election Act*, *Recall and Initiative Act*, *Referendum Act*, and *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*. Vote 4 of the annual provincial Estimates provides for the Office's operating expenses and capital expenditures.

## Supplementary Funding Requests for 2023-24

### Langford-Juan de Fuca and Vancouver-Mount Pleasant By-elections (June 12, 2023)

On June 12, 2023, the Committee considered the Chief Electoral Officer's supplementary funding request for \$1.808 million for additional operating expenses for the 2023-24 fiscal year. The request included \$776,000 to administer the Langford-Juan de Fuca by-election, \$812,000 to administer the Vancouver-Mount Pleasant by-election, and \$220,000 to fund election expense reimbursements for candidates and political parties in each of these electoral districts. The Committee considered the request, asking questions about electronic voting, the counting of absentee ballots, and the difference in proposed salaries and benefits in the two by-elections, and agreed that Elections BC be granted access to the funding.

#### Summary of Previous Committee Decision

June 12, 2023: The Committee recommended that Elections BC be granted access to supplementary funding up to \$1.808 million in operating expenditures for the 2023-24 fiscal year for the administration of the by-elections in

Langford-Juan de Fuca and Vancouver-Mount Pleasant and paying election expense reimbursement claims to eligible candidates and political parties.

## Budget Submission for 2024-25 to 2026-27

The Committee reviewed Elections BC's 2024-25 to 2026-27 budget submission on October 27, 2023. Chief Electoral Officer Anton Boegman was joined by: Yvonne Koehn, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Corporate Services; Charles Porter, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Electoral Operations; Andrew Watson, Senior Director, Communications; and Jodi Cooke, Executive Director, Electoral Finance.

The Chief Electoral Officer began his presentation by highlighting the significance of this budget request for the 43rd provincial general election, scheduled for October 19, 2024. During a general election, the Office employs almost 18,000 temporary staff across the province, compared to its 79 regular full-time staff. The Chief Electoral Officer emphasized the Office's role in upholding British Columbians' democratic right to a free election. He described how changes in voter participation, amendments to the *Election Act*, the need to safeguard the integrity of elections and promote public trust, and other emerging issues have changed the context of the Office's work and influenced its budget submission. The Chief Electoral Officer explained how amendments to the *Election Act* in 2019 enabled the use of proven technology in voting places, such as networked electronic voting books and paper ballot tabulators. He shared that these changes will improve voters' experiences and allow for a more efficient staffing model. The Office indicated that the resulting investments in technology have impacted the current budget but will also support future elections.



The Office's budget is divided into four parts: core operating expenditures; capital expenditures; event spending requirements; and public funding of political financing activities.

## Core Operating Expenditures

Elections BC requested core operating funding of \$13.948 million for 2024-25, a 0.5 percent (\$75,000) increase from the 2023-24 core operating budget and a 0.7 percent (\$93,000) increase over the previously approved budget for 2024-25. For 2025-26 and 2026-27, the Office requested \$14.802 million and \$15.086 million respectively. The Chief Electoral Officer stated that the proposed increase from 2023-24 is due to the need to procure professional audit services to conduct the audits of the annual financial reports filed by elector organizations.

The Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Corporate Services explained that the core services budget supports the ongoing work the Office does between elections. This work includes maintaining voter registration information, managing political entity registration and reporting, and educating voters. This budget also enables the work of the corporate services team. Regarding the specific requests for operating funding, the Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Corporate Services noted that increases to staff salaries and benefits were higher than projected due to certain key positions being reclassified; however, the Office was able to cover some of these increases through savings and amortization. The Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Corporate Services added that 90 percent of the core services budget is comprised of salaries and benefits for permanent staff, building occupancy charges, and information systems, which limits flexibility in other areas. Additionally, the Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Corporate Services noted that the projected increase in spending on corporate information systems in 2025-26 is due to a required refresh of computer workstations.

## Capital Expenditures

The capital funding requested by the Office for 2024-25 is \$92,000, a 77 percent reduction (\$308,000) from the total capital budget for 2023-24 and \$233,000 less than the previously approved budget for 2024-25. The reduction is due to increased internal capacity for information technology projects, which has decreased reliance on contractors. The Chief Electoral Officer indicated that the capital budget will fund two main projects: a system to communicate voting place wait-

time information to voters and work to replace the geographic information system, a custom system developed in the 1990s that has become difficult to maintain. The Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Corporate Services indicated that this project will require capital funding in future years but it is too early to estimate the cost. The Office indicated that its capital requests for 2025-26 and 2026-27 are yet to be determined.

## Event Spending Requirements

For its event budget, the Office requested \$75.079 million. This includes \$69.422 million to administer the 43rd provincial general election and \$5.657 million for the 2024 enumeration. The request for the provincial general election is a 34 percent increase over the actual administrative costs of the 2020 provincial general election. The Chief Electoral Officer attributed this increase to factors including: an expected 400,000 additional voters, increased mailing costs, higher rates of pay for election officials, more technology in voting places and district electoral offices, and most significantly, the addition of six electoral districts. The Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Electoral Operations highlighted that the main categories of expenses for the general election include staff, professional services, information systems, office expenses, building occupancy costs, printing and distribution of where-to-vote cards, and printing of ballots. Additionally, the Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Electoral Operations indicated that some aspects of the election budget are estimates, as district electoral officers are still completing their general election readiness planning assignment.

The enumeration budget is approximately \$1.1 million less than the budget requested for the 2017 enumeration. The Chief Electoral Officer stated that the Office has increased use of public data sources, which means it does not need to develop custom enumeration software or hire as many enumerators. The Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Electoral Operations highlighted the benefits of an enumeration: improving the quality of the voter list; increasing awareness of the upcoming election; and improving accessibility and inclusivity. The enumeration will include a provincewide advertising campaign, a mailout of personalized voter registration notices, and in-person activities in priority areas such as facilities serving individuals who have typically experienced barriers to participation.

The Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Corporate Services noted that the proposed budgets for 2025-26 and 2026-27 do not include

event funding. This is because the budget for electoral events is developed based on specific plans finalized in the preceding year.

## Public Funding of Political Financing Activities

The Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Electoral Operations explained that the *Election Act* requires the Chief Electoral Officer to pay \$1.75 per vote to registered political parties whose candidates receive a specified portion of the vote. For the July 2024 payment to eligible political parties, the Office requested \$1.722 million. The Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Electoral Operations added the January 2025 payment will be based on the 2024 provincial general election results. The Office plans to submit a supplementary funding request for that payment.

Elections BC also requested \$4 million for election expense reimbursements for candidates and political parties who are eligible to be reimbursed for 50 percent of qualifying expenses. The Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Electoral Operations indicated that the request is an estimate based on past elections, since the number of eligible candidates is determined by the election results. The Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Electoral Operations noted that only the first of the two installments will be paid in 2024-25; a similar amount will be included in next year's event funding request.

## Committee Inquiry

In response to a question about the increased budget for the 2024 provincial general election compared to the 2020 provincial general election, the Chief Electoral Officer emphasized that the six new electoral districts are the primary reason for increased costs. He also highlighted the 400,000 new voters, inflation, and legislative changes enabling increased use of technology at voting places as other contributing factors. The Chief Electoral Officer added that technology comprises about 15 percent of the general election budget, compared to five percent in 2020. Members also inquired how electoral boundaries changes have affected the number of polling places. The Chief Electoral Officer indicated that new boundaries will not necessarily mean a new polling place; however, some previously used polling places will not work for the new technological requirements.

Regarding the seven percent of the provincial general election budget allocated to public awareness and advertising, the Committee asked how this number has changed from previous

years and what forms of public awareness are included. The Chief Electoral Officer indicated that this is a higher proportion of the budget than in past elections, to communicate how voting will be different given the changes to the *Election Act* in 2019 and to cultivate integrity and trust into the Office's communications. The Senior Director, Communications described that the advertising campaign includes different types of media such as television, radio, newspapers, and social media. The Senior Director, Communications added that the Office has also launched an advertising campaign that focuses on advertising rules for third-party sponsors which is new since 2020.

Members inquired why the Office's budget for auditing political parties has increased from \$50,000 to \$150,000. The Executive Director, Electoral Finance said that the Office initially tried to recruit auditing staff to conduct this work internally, but due to recruitment challenges is paying an external auditing firm, which has increased the cost.

## Recommendations

Committee Members thanked the Chief Electoral Officer and his staff for their work to support democracy and ensure that BC has a strong electoral process. Members commented on the importance of using technology to improve the voter experience and recognized that some of the Office's technology spending will be investments for future years and elections. The Committee appreciated the clarity and comprehensiveness of the Office's budget submission for the provincial general election. Members also recognized that, in the context of the provincial general election, the Office's education and awareness work is particularly important. Additionally, Members appreciated the Office's efforts to find efficiencies by increasing internal IT capacity. Regarding the budget requests for the outer years, Members emphasized the importance of forecasting inflationary costs and anticipated needs in the outer years of the budget requests, noting that the Committee has clearly set out its expectations in this area on several occasions.

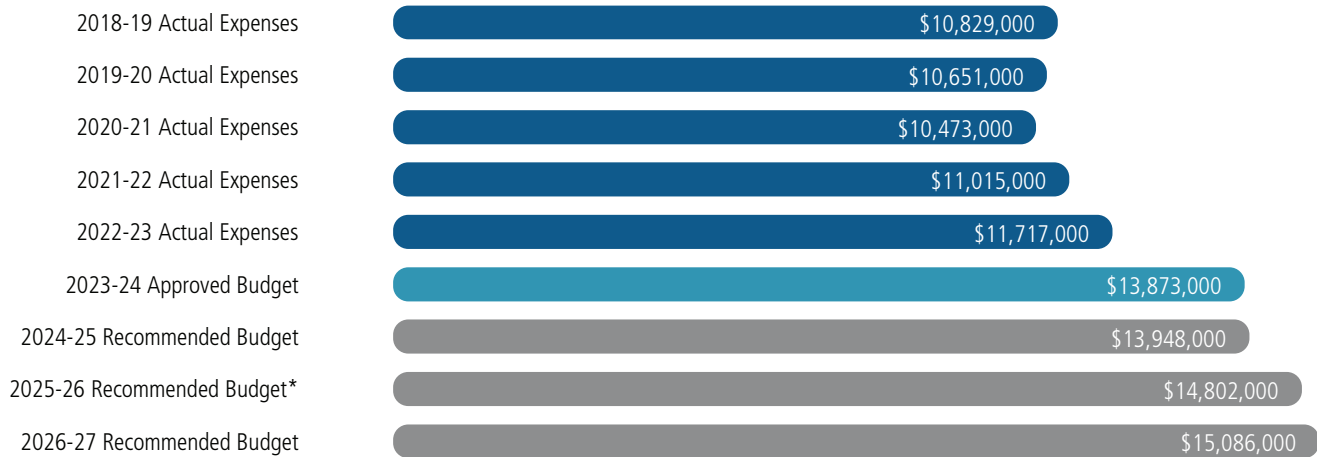
The Committee agreed to recommend the requested appropriations for core operating expenditures, event-related expenditures, and capital expenditures, along with the annual allowance for political parties and election expense reimbursements.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that:

7. The appropriation for the operating expenditures of Elections BC be \$13.948 million in 2024-25; \$14.802 million in 2025-26; and \$15.086 million in 2026-27.
8. The appropriation for event-related operating expenditures for Elections BC be \$75.079 million in 2024-25.
9. Elections BC be granted \$1.722 million in 2024-25 to fund the annual allowance for political parties.
10. Elections BC be granted \$4 million in 2024-25 for to fund election expense reimbursements.
11. The appropriation for the capital expenditures of Elections BC be \$92,000 in 2024-25.

### Elections BC Operating Budget



\*Core operating expenses only.



# OFFICE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER

In 2018, amendments to the *Human Rights Code* established the Human Rights Commissioner as an Independent Officer of the Legislature. The Commissioner's mandate includes: promoting the elimination of discriminatory practices, policies, and programs; educating the public about human rights; conducting research related to human rights; examining the human rights implications of any policy, program, or piece of legislation; promoting compliance with international human rights obligations; and intervening in human rights proceedings before courts and tribunals. Vote 5 of the annual provincial Estimates provides for the Office's operating expenses and capital expenditures.

## Budget Submission for 2024-25 to 2026-27

The Committee reviewed the 2024-25 to 2026-27 budget submission from the Office on October 27, 2023. Human Rights Commissioner Kasari Govender was joined by Deputy Commissioner Stephanie Garrett and Chief Financial Officer Dianne Buljat.

The Commissioner began her presentation by providing an update on the Office's work. Since the spring, the Office has worked to make its resources more accessible, piloted a workshop on systemic discrimination, conducted engagement in different communities about its inquiry into hate, raised awareness of local governments' human rights obligations toward encampment residents, and launched an investigation into adult guardianship. Regarding the Office's corporate shared services agreement with the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth, the Commissioner shared that some of these services will be transferring to her Office, but this is not expected to affect the budget. Additionally, she noted that her first term ends in September, and while this is not expected to have

financial implications, a possible change in leadership would be a significant shift for the organization.

The Office's operating budget request for 2024-25 was \$7.668 million, a 2.2 percent (\$163,000) increase from the operating budget for 2023-24 and a 0.8 percent (\$60,000) increase over the previously approved budget for 2024-25. The Office requested \$7.668 million for 2025-26 and 2026-27. The capital budget request was \$35,000 for all three fiscal years, the same as approved last year.

The Commissioner stated that the \$60,000 increase over the previously approved 2024-25 budget was to account for a wage increase shortfall. The Commissioner explained that her Office seeks to align its compensation with the public service and as such, in its fall 2022 budget submission, it estimated how much money it would need for wage increases based on the information available at the time; however, there was limited information on the impact of wage inflation on management as well as the costing related to other changes in the overall compensation package. More detailed information about public service wage inflation increases in 2022-23 and 2023-24 has become available since fall 2022, resulting in a budgetary difference between the estimated and actual amount required. The Commissioner's budget request includes \$55,000 to make up the shortfall between the wage increases estimated by the Office and the actual increases for 2022-23 and 2023-24. The additional \$5,000 is for increased vehicle allowance rates for certain employees.

Regarding the impact of the Office's budget, the Commissioner shared that her Office's video series introducing human rights in BC has received nearly 40,000 views. She added that four million people viewed the Office's campaign to address ableism, and the campaign's resources have been downloaded over 15,000 times. The Commissioner shared that the Office's employment equity



toolkit received positive feedback and noted that the inquiry into hate was the subject of over 1,200 media articles.

## Committee Inquiry

The Committee noted that in 2022-23, the Office spent \$92,000 less than expected on professional services and \$302,000 more than planned on grants. Members sought confirmation that grants to post-secondary institutions and non-profits replaced professional services by third-party contractors. The Commissioner confirmed that her Office used grants to offset professional services and that this consists of partnerships with post-secondary institutions, subject matter experts, and community-embedded research organizations. Committee Members asked whether the Commissioner expected to continue overspending on grants. The Chief Financial Officer indicated that the \$5,000 budget line for grants is a placeholder. If the Office is receiving third-party services from a for-profit organization, the funding comes out of the professional services budget; if it is receiving research services from a non-profit society, the funding comes from the grant category. The Chief Financial Officer emphasized that all these services are for subject matter expertise that the Office does not have. Regarding whether the Office plans to continue seeking out post-secondary research, the Commissioner confirmed this is necessary for the Office to work on a breadth of projects. She indicated that the breakdown between grants and professional services is hard to predict.

Following the Commissioner's presentation, the Committee requested in writing a list of grant recipients for the 2022-23 fiscal year, including the name and type of organization, the amount of grant funding awarded, and the purpose of the grant. The list provided by the Commissioner included 17 not-for-profits that received grants between \$2,500 and \$10,000 for community-engaged research and two post-secondary institutions that received grants between \$15,000 and \$190,000 for research assistance and literature reviews. The Committee also asked the Commissioner to provide the criteria the Office uses for awarding grants. The Office indicated that grant recipients are selected for the quality of their proposals, evidence of their past work, alignment with the guiding principles of the Commissioner's Office, and relationship to the Office's key stakeholders and strategic priorities.

Additionally, in its request, the Committee noted that it expects statutory officers to budget as accurately as possible for each

line item, rather than reallocating funds. The Committee offered the Office the opportunity to adjust its budget requests by reallocating a portion of the proposed amount for professional services to grants. The Commissioner's Office accepted this offer and proposed reallocating \$36,000 from base salaries, \$9,000 from employee benefits, and \$50,000 from professional services to the grants line item. This reallocation resulted in a request for \$100,000 for grants in 2024-25, up from the placeholder amount of \$5,000 which was initially requested.

Members asked for details of the Office's capital budget, noting that the Office consistently requests \$35,000 in funding. The Chief Financial Officer explained that government accounting practices require certain transactions, like any software over \$1,000, to come from a capital budget based on certain thresholds. Therefore, statutory offices have an ongoing capital budget for items that need repairs or replacement or occasional new acquisitions. The Chief Financial Officer added that the two categories of the Office's capital budget request are office furniture and equipment, and information management and information technology. Additionally, the Chief Financial Officer noted that capital budgets typically have larger underspends than operating budgets, because organizations need to have money allocated for unexpected purchases.

The Committee inquired how many employees are covered by the \$5,000 vehicle allowance and the Chief Financial Officer stated that it is one employee. The Chief Financial Officer further explained that that request is the result of a change in the Terms and Conditions for Excluded Employees and Appointees and is not something over which the Office has control.

In response to a question about forecasting in the outer years, the Chief Financial Officer indicated that the Office has not forecasted increases to salaries in those years as the approach has been to align with government on salary increases and it does not yet have enough information to predict government's direction in this regard.

In response to questions about remote work, the Commissioner shared that staff working in Vancouver have the option of working in-person, but the Office has staff based in Victoria, Prince George, Kamloops, and Kelowna, all of whom work remotely. Members inquired whether this means there is surplus space in the Commissioner's Vancouver office. The Commissioner

said the usage of the Vancouver office is still being assessed, but that the Office has relinquished its permanent space in Victoria.

## Recommendations

The Committee thanked the Commissioner and her staff for their work upholding human rights in BC. Members remarked on the measurable impact of the Office’s work on the province, the reach of its materials, and the Office’s growth. They also commented on the Commissioner’s prudent status quo budget and its consistency with previous requests. The Committee appreciated that the Office forecasted wage inflation in its previous budget, resulting in only a small shortfall this year. They emphasized the importance of forecasting inflationary costs and anticipated needs in the outer years of the budget requests,

noting that the Committee has clearly set out its expectations in this area on several occasions.

Regarding the Office’s budget for grants, Members recognized the value of subject matter experts, but highlighted the need for accountability regarding the significant reallocation of budgeted funds between different line items. Additionally, Members discussed opportunities for collaboration with other statutory officers including the possibility of the Office sharing space with the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner, which is looking to establish an office in the Lower Mainland. Committee Members appreciated the Commissioner’s willingness to reallocate funding to grants in its updated budget submission and agreed that the Office should proceed with this approach.

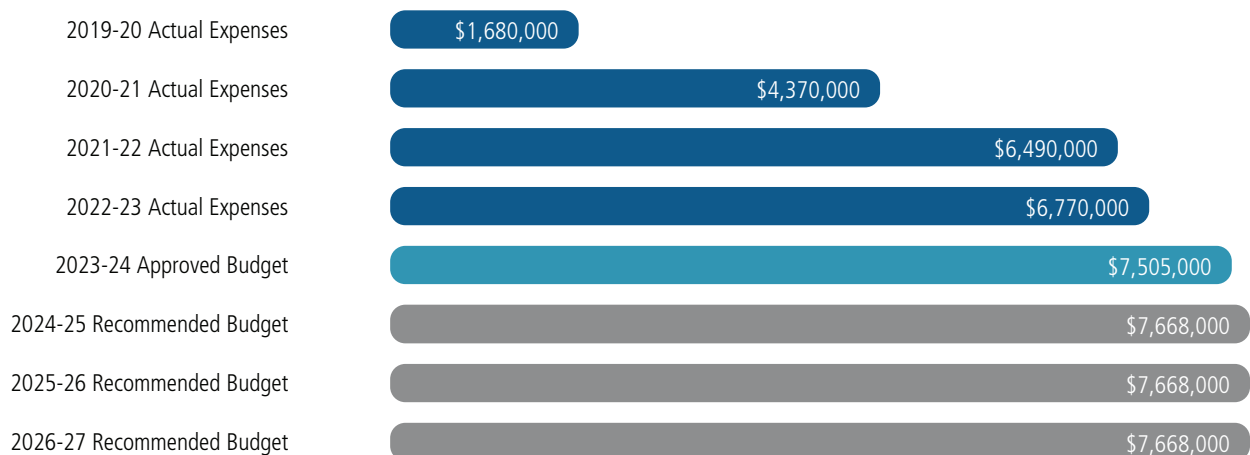
The Committee agreed to recommend the requested appropriations for operating and capital expenditures.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that:

12. The appropriation for the operating expenditures of the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner be \$7.668 million in 2024-25; \$7.668 million in 2025-26; and \$7.668 million in 2026-27.
13. The appropriation for the capital expenditures of the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner be \$35,000 in each of the next three fiscal years.

## Office of the Human Rights Commissioner Operating Budget





# OFFICE OF THE INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSIONER AND REGISTRAR OF LOBBYISTS

The Information and Privacy Commissioner is an Independent Officer of the Legislature responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *Personal Information Protection Act*. The former applies to more than 2,900 public bodies in BC and the latter sets the rules for approximately one million private sector organizations in the province. The Office investigates and mediates access appeals and privacy complaints, adjudicates disputes, initiates investigations or audits in the public interest, comments on the access and privacy implications of proposed legislation or policy, and promotes freedom of information and protection of privacy principles through public education and outreach. The Commissioner is also designated as the Registrar of Lobbyists and is responsible for enforcing the *Lobbyists Transparency Act* and overseeing BC's Registry of Lobbyists. Vote 6 of the annual Estimates provides for the Office's operating and capital expenditures.

## Supplementary Funding Requests for 2023-24

### Amendments to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (February 27, 2023)

On February 27, 2023, the Committee considered the Information and Privacy Commissioner's supplementary funding request for additional expenses for the 2023-24 fiscal year, including \$890,000 for operating costs and \$16,000 for capital costs to hire 7.5 FTEs to meet the expected increase in demand for services resulting from amendments to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. The amendments

require public bodies to notify the Office and affected parties of privacy breaches, as well as develop privacy management programs. Noting that the amendments came into force on February 1, 2023, Committee Members asked about the impact on the Office to date. The Commissioner shared that in a typical month, the Office would receive eight breach reports, but as of February 27, it had received nearly double that amount at 15. Members also inquired about comparisons with other jurisdictions implementing similar requirements, funding for education about the new requirements, and overreporting of privacy breaches. The Committee agreed that the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and Registrar of Lobbyists be granted access to the requested funding.

### Salaries and Benefits (April 28, 2023)

On April 28, 2023, the Information and Privacy Commissioner presented a supplementary funding request of \$270,000 for additional operating expenses for 2023-24 to address the impact of wage inflation that was unknown at the time of the fall budget submission process. This included wage increases for the Office's management staff, in line with those provided to BC public service employees who fall under the Management Compensation and Classification Framework (MCCF). The Committee considered this request, asking about the number of FTEs in the Office and the Office's approach to aligning with public sector compensation increases for its staff. Committee Members agreed to recommend that the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and Registrar of Lobbyists be provided access to the proposed supplementary funding.

## Summary of Previous Committee Decisions

February 27, 2023: The Committee recommended that the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and Registrar of Lobbyists be granted access to supplementary funding up to \$890,000 for operating expenditures and \$16,000 for capital expenditures in 2023-24 to support the Office in implementing amendments to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

April 28, 2023: The Committee recommended that the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and Registrar of Lobbyists be granted access to supplementary funding up to \$270,000 for operating expenditures in 2023-24 for salaries and benefits.

## Salaries and Benefits (October 27, 2023)

During its meeting with the Committee on October 27, 2023, the Office made a supplementary funding request for 2023-24 for \$402,000 in operating funding to provide a 7.15 percent salary increase to management staff, to reflect increases provided to public service management employees in July 2023 for fiscal year 2023-24. Further details about this request are included in the next section.

## Budget Submission for 2024-25 to 2026-27

The Committee considered the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and Registrar of Lobbyists's budget request for 2024-25 to 2026-27 on October 27, 2023. Michael McEvoy, Information and Privacy Commissioner and Registrar of Lobbyists was accompanied by oline Twiss, Deputy Commissioner and Deputy Registrar; Jeanette Van Den Bulk, Deputy Commissioner, Policy, Adjudication, and Audit; and Dave Van Swieten, Deputy, Corporate Shared Services.

The Commissioner began his presentation by providing an outlook on the changing environment of privacy and data protection. He spoke to the development of technologies like artificial intelligence and their impact on privacy protection, particularly for young people. As it relates to the work of the Office, the Commissioner shared that he has begun a joint investigation with federal and provincial counterparts into OpenAI, the company that owns ChatGPT. The Commissioner

noted that while there is existing privacy legislation in BC that provides some measures to protect personal information from collection and use by artificial intelligence, the province should align with other jurisdictions and introduce privacy legislation specific to the protection of children and youth.

The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner requested operating funding of \$10.776 million for 2024-25, a three percent (\$344,000) increase from the 2023-24 operating budget and a 20 percent (\$1.775 million) increase from the previously approved budget for 2024-25. For 2025-26 and 2026-27, the Office requested \$10.507 million and \$10.457 million respectively. The capital funding requested by the Office for 2024-25 is \$105,000, a reduction of 62 percent (\$172,000) from the total capital budget for 2023-24 and \$58,000 more than the previously approved budget for 2024-25. For 2025-26 and 2026-27, the Office requested \$98,000 and \$83,000 respectively.

The Commissioner shared that the increase in the operating budget includes a key request for salaries to address wage inflation. He explained that a 7.15 percent lift was provided to management staff for fiscal year 2023-24 to align with a salary increase provided to management staff in the public service in July 2023, which ranged from 6.75 percent to 8.75 percent. To address this wage inflation, the Office requested \$538,000 for 2024-25 and, as noted above, supplementary funding of \$402,000 for 2023-24. The Office additionally requested \$27,000 in operating funding to address building occupancy costs related to inflation.

The Office also requested \$50,000 in fiscal years 2024-25 and 2025-26 to continue in its role as Secretariat for the Asia Pacific Privacy Authorities, a forum for privacy authorities in the Asia Pacific region. The Commissioner highlighted that data flows seamlessly across borders, particularly when trade is involved, and noted that many of BC's large trade partners are located throughout the Asia-Pacific region. He emphasized the importance of the Office's work as Secretariat in its ability to facilitate cross-border enforcement and cooperation among privacy authorities in these jurisdictions as it enhances the protection of British Columbians' personal information.

For the capital budget, the Commissioner shared that the new case tracker system is expected to go live at the beginning of the next fiscal year. Included in the Office's capital budget request is a contingency fund of \$40,000 to support the case tracker



system in 2024-25. The Commissioner shared that this funding would provide for the possibility of required enhancements after the system goes live. The Office additionally requested \$2,000 in capital funding to refresh aging computers.

## Committee Inquiry

Committee Members asked questions about the security and storage of data. The Commissioner shared that the physical location of data storage is particularly important as it determines the jurisdiction that oversees the data. Each jurisdiction has varying privacy protection laws, with some areas having no protections at all. As a result, the Commissioner emphasized the importance for public bodies and private organizations to ensure their data is stored in a manner that provides strong data and privacy protections, particularly when contracting data storage out to third parties. Members inquired about the storage of data within BC. The Commissioner shared that capacity for data storage has increased within the province but highlighted limiting factors such as the energy usage required to store data which make other areas more attractive for data storage.

Members sought clarity on the nature of the Secretariat role for the Asia Pacific Privacy Authorities and the future of the Office in this role. The Commissioner shared that his Office's continuation in the role is being discussed at the organization's next meeting. He reiterated the importance of the role as it enables the Office to seek joint enforcement actions and advocate for common privacy standards across jurisdictions.

Committee Members asked about plans for office space following the Office's shift to a flexible work model. The Commissioner shared that forty percent of staff work on a hybrid schedule, coming into the office some of the time, and the remaining sixty percent work fully remote. This work model has enabled the Office to grow its number of staff in recent years without acquiring more office space. The Commissioner added that remote work has enabled the Office to hire talent that it otherwise wouldn't have been able to due to the difficulty of finding or affording housing in Victoria.

In the Committee's examination of the budget request, Members noted that the Office requested a decreasing operating budget for fiscal years 2025-26 and 2026-27. Members highlighted that several budgetary line items are static and do not incorporate

inflationary increases or anticipated needs in these outer years. Following the presentation, the Committee requested that the Office provide a revised operating budget request that includes forecasting with respect to inflation and anticipated needs for the years 2025-26 and 2026-27. On November 15, 2023, the Office provided a revised operating funding request for 2024-25 to 2026-27 incorporating the requested changes. The Office requested operating funding of \$11.011 million for 2024-25, a two percent increase over the initial operating budget request for 2024-25. For 2025-26 and 2026-27, the Office has requested \$10.933 million and \$11.078 million respectively, which are increases of four percent and six percent over the operating budgets initially requested for these years.

## Recommendations

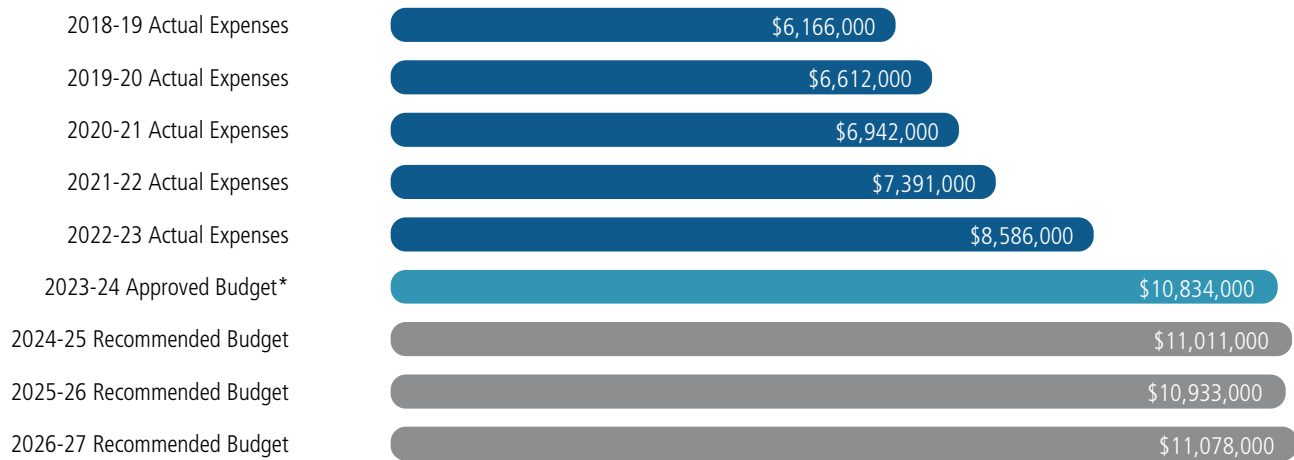
Committee Members thanked the Commissioner for his succinct budget presentation and the work of his Office in protecting British Columbians' data and privacy. Members discussed the recent growth of the Office resulting from legislative changes and appreciated the Office's ability to find cost-savings despite these pressures. Regarding the budget requests for the outer years, Members acknowledged that the Office's approach has been to request only known increments for wage inflation; however, this does not align with the direction previously provided by the Committee. They emphasized the importance of forecasting inflationary costs and anticipated needs in the outer years of the budget requests, noting that the Committee has clearly set out its expectations in this area on several occasions. The Committee appreciated the Office's willingness to provide a revised budget request in line with these expectations and agreed to recommend the revised funding.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that:

14. The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and Registrar of Lobbyists be granted access to supplementary funding up to \$402,000 for operating expenditures in 2023-24 for salaries and benefits.
15. The appropriation for the operating expenditures for the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and Registrar of Lobbyists be \$11.011 million in 2024-25; \$10.933 million in 2025-26; and \$11.078 million in 2026-27.
16. The appropriation for the capital expenditures for the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and Registrar of Lobbyists be \$105,000 in 2024-25; \$98,000 in 2025-26; and \$83,000 in 2026-27.

### Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and Registrar of Lobbyists Operating Budget



\*Includes supplementary funding of \$890,000 approved by the Committee in February 2023 to implement amendments to FIPPA, \$270,000 for salaries and benefits approved by the Committee in April 2023, and \$402,000 for salaries and benefits approved by the Committee in fall 2023.



# OFFICE OF THE MERIT COMMISSIONER

The Merit Commissioner is an Independent Officer of the Legislature mandated to oversee appointments to and within the BC public service to ensure they are merit-based, pursuant to the *Public Service Act*. The Commissioner also monitors and reviews government practices, policies, and standards of just cause dismissals. Vote 7 of the annual Estimates provides for the Office's operating and capital expenditures.

## Supplementary Funding Requests for 2023-24

### Salaries and Benefits (April 28, 2023)

On April 28, 2023, the Merit Commissioner presented a supplementary funding request for \$36,000 in operational funding to address the impacts of wage inflation that were unknown in fall 2022 when the 2023-24 budget was prepared. This included wage increases for management staff, in line with those provided to BC public service employees who fall under the Management Compensation and Classification Framework (MCCF). The Committee considered the request, asking about the number of FTEs and vacancies in the Office and agreed that the Office of the Merit Commissioner be granted access to the requested funding.

### Case Tracker System Replacement Project (April 28, 2023)

On April 28, 2023, the Merit Commissioner presented a supplementary funding request for \$69,000 in capital funding for the case tracker system due to implementation delays. The Commissioner explained that minor delays with the new software system and testing implementation meant that deliverables were not completed in fiscal 2022-23 resulting in an underspend for that year, with payment required in 2023-24. Committee

Members agreed that the Office of the Merit Commissioner be granted access to the requested funding.

### Summary of Previous Committee Decisions

April 28, 2023: The Committee recommended that the Office of the Merit Commissioner be granted access to supplementary funding up to \$36,000 for operating expenditures in 2023-24 for salaries and benefits and up to \$69,000 for capital expenditures in 2023-24 for the case tracker system replacement.

### Salaries and Benefits (October 27, 2023)

During its meeting with the Committee on October 27, 2023, the Office made a supplementary funding request for 2023-24 for \$44,000 in operating funding to provide a 7.15 percent salary increase to management staff, to reflect increases provided to public service management employees in July 2023 for fiscal year 2023-24. Further details about this request are included in the next section.

## Budget Submission for 2024-25 to 2026-27

The Committee considered the Office the Merit Commissioner's budget request for 2024-25 to 2026-27 on October 27, 2023. David McCoy, Merit Commissioner, was accompanied by Elizabeth Maurer, Deputy Commissioner; and Dave Van Swieten, Deputy, Corporate Shared Services.

The Merit Commissioner began his presentation by providing updates on the work of the Office since the spring meeting with the Committee. The Commissioner shared that the Office has started its review of dismissal processes that resulted from the COVID-19 vaccination policy and plans to review additional

eligible files. Regarding staffing, the Commissioner shared that the Office has reached its full staff complement and now aims to reduce the completion time for staffing reviews and resume special studies into specific hiring-related topics. The Commissioner highlighted various outreach initiatives which aim to discover how the Office is perceived and understood, seek out process and communication improvements, and ensure misconceptions around merit-based hiring are addressed. He also noted that the Office's new case tracker system is now operational, with both staff and external auditors using the system for this year's annual audit cycle. The Commissioner highlighted that the replacement project was completed under-budget by approximately \$100,000, which includes the supplemental funding approved in April 2023 for the project, and surplus funding is being returned.

The Office of the Merit Commissioner requested operating funding of \$1.638 million for 2024-25, an 11 percent (\$160,000) increase from the 2023-24 operating budget and a 14 percent (\$196,000) increase from the previously approved budget for 2024-25. This increase in funding is being requested to address wage inflation and the hiring of one new FTE. For 2025-26 and 2026-27, the Office requested \$1.638 million in operating funding for each year. The capital funding requested by the Office for 2024-25 is \$39,000, an 80 percent (\$154,000) reduction from the total capital budget for 2023-24 and \$27,000 more than the previously approved budget for 2024-25. The Commissioner shared that this reduced capital funding request reflects the completion of the case tracker system replacement project but includes \$25,000 for an IT infrastructure refresh. For 2025-26 and 2026-27, the Office requested \$12,000 in capital funding for each year.

Regarding the budget submission, the Commissioner shared that the requested operating funding includes an increase for salaries. He explained that a 7.15 percent lift was provided to management staff for fiscal year 2023-24 to align with a salary increase provided to management staff in the public service in July 2023, which ranged from 6.75 percent to 8.75 percent. To address this wage inflation, the Office requested \$82,000 for 2024-25 and, as noted above, supplemental funding of \$44,000 for 2023-24. Regarding the request for a new FTE, the Commissioner shared that a new Program Audit Analyst would help the Office to reduce reliance on external contract auditors, retain corporate knowledge, and provide capacity for research,

data analysis, and potential special studies. The Office requested \$76,000 in operating funding and \$2,000 in capital funding for the position in each of the three fiscal years, noting cost savings through a reduction in the use of professional services.

## Committee Inquiry

Committee Members asked several questions about staffing. The Commissioner shared that there was an underspend for salaries in 2022-23 due to vacancies and funding for a temporary position related to the case tracker system replacement project that was not needed. In response to questions about the new Program Audit Analyst position, the Commissioner shared that the cost of the position would be partially offset by a reduction in the use of external auditing services. He further added that the new role would act as a talent pipeline for the program manager position within the Office to help address future staffing needs.

Members inquired about the staff who conduct research and special studies. The Commissioner shared that the Office has one analyst who works on special studies in addition to their other responsibilities which limits the production of these reports. Members asked about the benefits of these special studies and how they help employers ensure merit-based hiring. The Commissioner referenced the Office's 2023 special study on lessened qualifications which found screening criteria for qualifications were being lowered after a competition has been posted. He explained that these types of studies were positively received by organizational leaders, who have shared with him that the studies help raise awareness of merit-based hiring practices and have expressed a desire for additional studies. The Commissioner clarified that under his mandate he cannot provide advice or training on these issues, only raise awareness by producing these special studies.

Committee Members sought clarity on the nature of the IT infrastructure refresh and shared IT assets among the statutory offices which share corporate services. The Deputy, Corporate Shared Services explained that IT assets are replaced before they become outdated and become increasingly at-risk of cyberattacks, adding that these replacements happen on three-to-five-year cycles. He further noted that several IT assets are shared among the statutory offices and each year the Offices alternate the purchasing of shared equipment to prevent having to make multiple requests to the Committee.



Members noted that the Office has requested a static operating budget for 2024-25 to 2026-27 and discussed the importance of forecasting in the outer years. Following the presentation, the Committee requested that the Office provide a revised operating budget request that includes forecasting with respect to inflation and anticipated needs for the years 2025-26 and 2026-27. On November 16, 2023, the Office provided a revised operating funding request for 2024-25 to 2026-27 incorporating the requested changes. The Office requested operating funding of \$1.667 million for 2024-25, a two percent increase over the initial operating budget request for 2024-25. For 2025-26 and 2026-27, the Office has requested \$1.697 million and \$1.729 million respectively, which are increases of four percent and six percent over the operating budgets initially requested for these years. The revised budget also applies to the operating portion of the request regarding the Program Audit Analyst. The revised operating request for this FTE is \$79,000 in 2024-25, an increase of four percent (\$3,000) from the initial request. This increases to \$81,000 in 2025-26 and \$83,000 in 2026-27.

## Recommendations

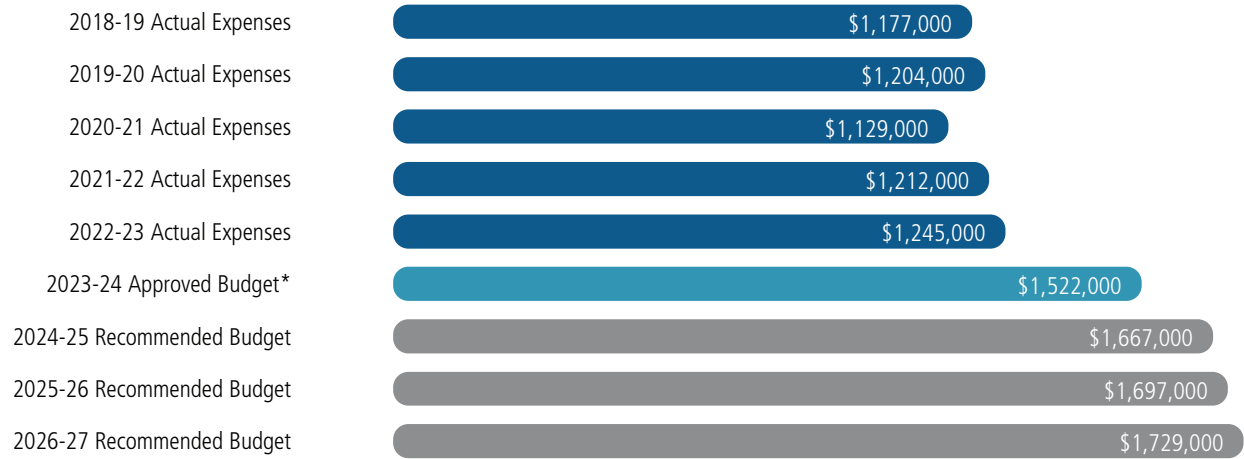
The Committee thanked the Commissioner for his pragmatic approach to his first fall budget submission after being appointed in March 2023. Committee Members similarly appreciated the Commissioner’s ability to quickly adapt to his new role and continue the important work of ensuring merit-based hiring in BC’s public service. Regarding the budget requests for the outer years, Members noted that the Office’s approach has been to request only known increments for wage inflation; however, this does not align with the direction previously provided by the Committee. They emphasized the importance of forecasting inflationary costs and anticipated needs in the outer years of the budget requests, noting that the Committee has clearly set out its expectations in this area on several occasions. The Committee appreciated the Office’s willingness to provide a revised budget request in line with these expectations and agreed to recommend the revised funding.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that:

17. The Office of the Merit Commissioner be granted access to supplementary funding up to \$44,000 for operating expenditures in 2023-24 for salaries and benefits.
18. The appropriation for the operating expenditures for the Office of the Merit Commissioner be \$1.667 million in 2024-25; \$1.697 million in 2025-26; and \$1.729 million in 2026-27.
19. The appropriation for the capital expenditures for the Office of the Merit Commissioner be \$39,000 in 2024-25; \$12,000 in 2025-26; and \$12,000 in 2026-27.

## Office of the Merit Commissioner Operating Budget



\*Includes supplementary funding of \$36,000 for salaries and benefits approved by the Committee in April 2023 and \$44,000 for salaries and benefits approved by the Committee in fall 2023.



# OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON

As set out in the *Ombudsperson Act*, the Ombudsperson is an Independent Officer of the Legislature responsible for responding to individual concerns and complaints about administrative fairness with respect to BC's provincial and local public authorities. Under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act* (PIDA), the Ombudsperson also provides advice, and receives and investigates allegations of wrongdoing and reprisals brought forward by current and former public sector employees. Vote 8 of the annual provincial Estimates provides for the Office's operating expenses and capital expenditures.

## Supplementary Funding Requests for 2023-24

### Building Occupancy Costs (February 27, 2023)

On February 27, 2023, the Ombudsperson presented a supplementary funding request for \$130,000 in additional operating expenses for the 2023-24 fiscal year for building occupancy costs related to a collaborative space plan developed by the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner, the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth, and his Office. The Ombudsperson stated that while the collaborative space plan was included in the requests of these Offices in the previous fall, the interdependent nature of the plan was not clear, and the Committee did not approve his Office's request at that time. He explained that the plan is for the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner to move from the fifth floor of 947 Fort Street to 1019 Wharf Street, which is underutilized by the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth. The Office of the Ombudsperson would then occupy the space on Fort Street vacated by the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner. The Police Complaint Commissioner and Representative for Children and Youth also spoke to the interconnected nature of the

plan. The Committee considered the request, asking questions about the number of staff working remotely or in hybrid situations within each Office, and agreed that the Office of the Ombudsperson be granted access to the funding.

### Salaries and Benefits (April 27, 2023)

On April 27, 2023, the Ombudsperson presented a supplementary funding request for \$463,000 in operational funding to address the impacts of wage inflation that were unknown at the time of the October 2022 budget process. The request reflected wage increases for management staff, in line with those provided to BC public service employees who fall under the Management Compensation and Classification Framework (MCCF), as well as for Schedule A staff, in line with the BCGEU collective agreement. The Committee considered the request, asking questions about the number of FTEs and vacancies in the Office, and about performance management. On April 28, 2023, Committee Members agreed that the Office of the Ombudsperson be granted access to the funding.

### Summary of Previous Committee Decisions

February 27, 2023: The Committee recommended that the Office of the Ombudsperson be granted access to supplementary funding up to \$130,000 for operating expenditures in 2023-24 for building occupancy costs.

April 28, 2023: The Committee recommended that the Office of the Ombudsperson be granted access to supplementary funding up to \$463,000 for operating expenditures in 2023-24 for salaries and benefits.

## Salaries and Benefits (October 25, 2023)

During its meeting with the Committee on October 25, 2023, the Office made a supplementary funding request for 2023-24 for \$513,000 in operating funding to provide a 7.15 percent salary to management staff, to reflect increases provided to public service management employees in July 2023 for fiscal year 2023-24. Further details about this request are included in the next section.

## Budget Submission for 2024-25 to 2026-27

The Committee considered the Office of the Ombudsperson's 2024-25 to 2026-27 budget request on October 25, 2023. In attendance were: Jay Chalke, Ombudsperson; John Greschner, Deputy Ombudsperson, Public Interest Disclosure and Public Authority Consultation and Training; David Paradiso, Deputy Ombudsperson, Investigations, Intake and Early Resolution; and Dave Van Swieten, Deputy, Corporate Shared Services.

The Ombudsperson began his presentation with an update on the reports released by the Office since his last appearance before the Committee including *Time to Right the Wrong*, *Misinformed*, *Fairness in a Changing Climate*, and the Office's *Annual Report 2022-23*. He noted that highlights from the Annual Report include the Office's focus on diversity, inclusion, equity, and accessibility, as well as the initiation of Ombudsperson Pathfinders, contracted engagement specialists who work to build trust and raise awareness of the Office's services in Indigenous communities across BC.

Turning to the budget submission, the Ombudsperson provided context for the request noting that the Office has seen a partial return to pre-pandemic volumes and patterns; however, the complaints now span a broader range of public authorities with more complaints regarding local governments, Crown Corporations, health authorities, and other government organizations. He also referenced the growing complexity of complaints and a shift in complainants who are increasingly adversarial and exhibiting signs of stress. Regarding workload, the Ombudsperson stated that in 2022-23 the Office closed its highest number of investigations in the past five years. Further, while a complaint checker tool has helped to divert non-jurisdictional complaints and queries, it has not reduced

the pressure on the Office's resources as it has replaced some nonproductive complaints with more intensive, higher value jurisdictional issues that involve more time and work. The Ombudsperson also highlighted that because of the work of the Pathfinders over the past year, inquiries to the Office from Indigenous people have increased from a negligible amount to 268 between May 1, 2022, and September 30, 2023.

Regarding the budget, the Ombudsperson requested operating funding of \$14.775 million in each of the next three fiscal years. This is a 10.5 percent (\$1.409 million) increase from the 2023-24 operating budget and a 13 percent (\$1.699 million) increase over the previously approved budget for 2024-25. In terms of capital funding, the Office requested \$102,000 in 2024-25, a 15.9 percent (\$14,000) increase from the 2023-24 capital budget and a 9.7 percent (\$9,000) increase over the previously approved budget for 2024-25. The Office requested capital funding of \$163,000 in 2025-26 and \$81,000 in 2026-27.

The Ombudsperson noted that there are three key aspects of the budget request: salary adjustments, strategic outreach, and the Indigenous Communities Service Plan. On salaries, he explained that there was an increase provided to excluded management staff in the public service in July 2023 ranging from 6.75 percent to 8.75 percent for fiscal year 2023-24. To align with this increase, the Office determined that a 7.15 percent lift would be appropriate. As such, the Office requested \$692,000 for 2024-25 and, as noted above, supplementary funding of \$513,000 for 2023-24. The Ombudsperson also clarified that the supplementary funding request approved by the Committee in April 2023 to cover the impacts of wage inflation in 2023-24 has been included in the current request as permanent funding as those rates carry forward. He stated that a portion of the overall salary request is related to three FTEs approved last fiscal year to start April 1, 2024, to coincide with the continued rollout of PIDA. He explained that the workload associated with the rollout of the first four phases of PIDA has not resulted in the projected increase, so the Office is requesting to reallocate two of these FTEs to the Indigenous Communities Service Plan.

On strategic outreach, the Ombudsperson explained that a 2022 public awareness survey highlighted a lack of awareness about the Office and its services. As such, the Office is requesting \$146,000 in operating funding and \$2,000 in capital funding for strategic outreach. This includes funding to increase the



accessibility of the Office’s public-facing materials as well as two part-time auxiliary Outreach Specialists to raise awareness of the Office among six targeted demographics: people living with disabilities; low-income earners; youth; newcomers to BC; people residing in rural and remote areas; and LGBTQ2S+ people. The Ombudsperson explained that this request is a modification of the proposal submitted last year, which was not supported by the Committee, with a more focused model and the reduction of one FTE.

With respect to Indigenous services, the Ombudsperson noted that Indigenous people are underrepresented among the complaints and inquiries the Office receives each year. The Office is requesting \$244,000 in operating funding and \$2,000 in capital funding to sustain and continue developing a comprehensive Indigenous Communities Service Plan. This includes transitioning the piloted Indigenous Liaison Officer to a permanent position, Manager of Indigenous Initiatives, to lead and coordinate initiatives; adding one Ombudsperson Officer to address workload; and adding one Fairness Specialist to respond to requests from Indigenous governments for consultation and training. With respect to the Fairness Specialist, the Ombudsperson explained that this would extend the Office’s public authority consultation and training team, which supports public authorities under the Office’s investigatory authority, to Indigenous governments. While Indigenous governments are not under the Office’s investigatory authority, the Ombudsperson stated that they have an increasingly important role in public administration in BC. He added that the Fairness Specialist will also provide advice to public authorities on alignments with key rights and reconciliation documents. Further, the Ombudsperson shared that the Nisga’a Lisims Government invited the Office to be part of the review of the *Nisga’a Administrative Decisions Review Act* and to work with their government officials to support capacity building in administrative fairness. He noted that approval of this funding request would enable the Office to accept this invitation and respond to similar requests in the future. The request also includes a 25 percent increase to Pathfinder funding to enable approximately 100 additional Pathfinder days across the province, spread among the four contractors. The Ombudsperson added that an external firm is leading an evaluation of the Pathfinder program and preliminary results show that the Office’s efforts to connect with Indigenous people are on the right track.

## Committee Inquiry

Committee Members asked several questions about the Office’s strategic outreach plan and related budget request. The Ombudsperson explained that the plan is to develop six strategies that focus on what the Office perceives as six underserved demographics. Depending on the strategies developed, there may be a need for additional funding. In response to a question about outreach to people who have low levels of fluency in English, the Ombudsperson stated that the strategy focused on newcomers to BC will likely involve outreach to organizations that support people with minority languages. Members also asked how the current strategic outreach request differs from the one submitted last year. The Ombudsperson explained that last year the budget request also included a Digital Engagement Specialist who would focus on outreach through social media. He added that there is greater value in developing the six strategies for underserved communities rather than being more active on social media, so that position is not included in the current request. Committee Members asked if raising awareness through strategic outreach would increase the Office’s workload. The Ombudsperson stated that increased volume could increase workload pressure, but strategic outreach focused on the six demographics, rather than broad public advertising, will likely lead to higher quality and a wider range of complaints which will help in determining which investigations to undertake. Members also inquired about opportunities to collaborate with other statutory officers on outreach. The Deputy Ombudsperson, Public Interest Disclosure and Public Authority Consultation and Training highlighted the corporate shared services arrangement between the Offices of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, Merit Commissioner, Ombudsperson, and Police Complaint Commissioner as an example of collaboration. He also shared that in the past a few statutory offices explored the idea of joint outreach, but they concluded that it wouldn’t work due to the difficulty in explaining the distinct statutes and responsibilities of each office.

Regarding Indigenous services and outreach, Members asked if the Office uses different strategies for different Indigenous communities. The Ombudsperson noted that the Pathfinders are focused on building relationships of trust, and they practice a distinctions-based approach in reaching out to different communities. He added that the evaluation underway will likely provide more information about different approaches

that may be helpful. Committee Members followed up to ask if in doing this outreach, some people may think that the Office has jurisdiction over Indigenous governing bodies. The Ombudsperson stated that the Pathfinders are clear about the Office's jurisdiction and try to connect people with those who can help when the Office cannot. In response to questions about the process for contracting the Pathfinders, the Ombudsperson explained that the Office sought advice from an Indigenous advisory committee and then conducted a procurement process in the winter of 2021-22 to select five contractors. He added that the Office now has four contractors who work across the province.

The Committee also had questions about recruitment and retention, noting that many statutory offices have had difficulties in this area recently. The Ombudsperson stated that the Office has over 100 FTEs with many staff on parental leave. He added that investigators serve on multiple teams during their time with the Office, so they are always learning which makes them better investigators and makes their work more rewarding, thereby helping with retention.

Turning to the budget for the outer years, Members noted that the operating request is static and asked why inflationary pressures were not included in these years. The Ombudsperson stated that a significant part of the budget is salaries, and that the Office historically has not attempted to forecast wage inflation. The Deputy, Corporate Shared Services noted that by not requesting funding until wage inflation is known there is an opportunity to look inside the budget for savings or to absorb cost pressures. The Ombudsperson added that with respect to growth, the Office projects how many FTEs are needed in the outer years, referencing staffing requests related to the rollout of PIDA as an example.

Following the presentation, the Committee requested that the Office provide a revised operating budget request that includes forecasting with respect to inflation and anticipated needs for the years 2025-26 and 2026-27. On November 17, 2023, the Office provided a revised request of \$15.081 million for 2024-25, a two percent increase over the initial operating budget request for 2024-25. For 2025-26 and 2026-27, the Office requested \$15.332 million and \$15.588 million respectively, which are increases of 3.8 and 5.5 percent over the operating budgets initially requested for these years. The revised budgets

also apply to the operating portions of the requests related to strategic outreach and the Indigenous Communities Service Plan. On strategic outreach, the revised operating request is \$149,000 for 2024-25, an increase of \$3,000 from the initial request. For 2025-26 and 2026-27, the revised requests are \$151,000 and \$153,000 respectively, which are increases of \$5,000 and \$7,000 from the initial requests. Regarding the Indigenous Communities Service Plan, the revised request for 2024-25 is \$246,000, an increase of \$2,000 from the initial request. For 2025-26 and 2026-27 the revised requests are \$249,000 and \$252,000 respectively, which are increases of \$5,000 and \$8,000 from the initial requests for these years.

## Recommendations

Committee Members expressed their appreciation for the work of the Ombudsperson and his staff to ensure people are treated fairly with respect to government programs and services. Regarding the budget requests for the outer years, Members acknowledged that the Office's approach has been to request only known increments for wage inflation; however, this does not align with the direction previously provided by the Committee. They emphasized the importance of forecasting inflationary costs and anticipated needs in the outer years of the budget requests, noting that the Committee has clearly set out its expectations in this area on several occasions. The Committee appreciated the Office's willingness to provide a revised budget request in line with these expectations and agreed to recommend the revised funding.

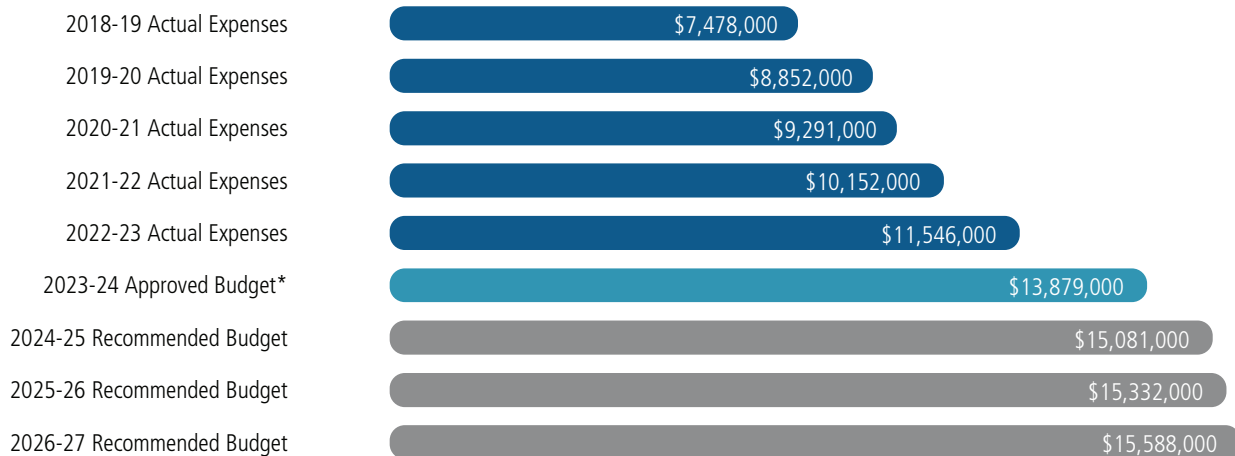
In light of the lack of awareness and understanding about the role of the Office, Members agreed that strategic outreach is important, especially for low-income or vulnerable British Columbians and those who face language barriers. The Committee recognized the importance of the Indigenous Communities Service Plan to raise awareness of the Office amongst Indigenous peoples in BC and build trust. Members also discussed how increasing diversity within the Office itself might assist with these outreach initiatives and expressed interest in seeing measurement of their success. They look forward to meeting with the Office in the spring to receive updates on these areas.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that:

20. The Office of the Ombudsperson be granted access to supplementary funding up to \$513,000 for operating expenditures in 2023-24 for salaries and benefits.
21. The appropriation for the operating expenditures for the Office of the Ombudsperson be \$15.081 million in 2024-25; \$15.332 million in 2025-26; and \$15.588 million in 2026-27.
22. The appropriation for the capital expenditures for the Office of the Ombudsperson be \$102,000 in 2024-25; \$163,000 in 2025-26; and \$81,000 in 2026-27.

### Office of the Ombudsperson Operating Budget



\*Includes supplementary funding of \$463,000 for salaries and benefits approved by the Committee in April 2023, \$130,000 for building occupancy approved by the Committee in February 2023, and \$513,000 for salaries and benefits approved by the Committee in fall 2023.



# OFFICE OF THE POLICE COMPLAINT COMMISSIONER

The *Police Act* establishes the Police Complaint Commissioner as an Independent Officer of the Legislature responsible for providing civilian oversight and monitoring of complaints and investigations involving municipal police in BC, as well as the administration of discipline and proceedings. Vote 9 of the annual provincial Estimates provides for the Office's operating expenses and capital expenditures.

## Supplementary Funding Requests for 2023-24

### Salaries and Benefits (April 28, 2023)

On April 28, 2023, the Police Complaint Commissioner presented a supplementary funding request for \$184,000 for additional operating expenses for 2023-24 to address the impact of wage inflation that was unknown at the time of the fall budget submission process. This included wage increases for the Office's management staff, in line with those provided to BC public service employees who fall under the Management Compensation and Classification Framework (MCCF). The Committee considered the request and agreed that the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner be granted access to the requested funding.

### Summary of Previous Committee Decision

April 28, 2023: The Committee recommended that the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner be granted access to supplementary funding up to \$184,000 for operating expenditures in 2023-24 for salaries and benefits.

### Salaries and Benefits (October 26, 2023)

During its meeting with the Committee on October 26, 2023, the Office made a supplementary funding request for 2023-24 for \$223,000 in operating funding to provide a 7.15 percent salary increase to management staff, to reflect increases provided to public service management employees in July 2023 for fiscal year 2023-24. Further details about this request are included in the next section.

## Budget Submission for 2024-25 to 2026-27

The Committee considered the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner's budget request for 2024-25 to 2026-27 on October 26, 2023. Clayton Pecknold, Police Complaint Commissioner was joined by Andrea Spindler, Deputy Commissioner; and Dave Van Swieten, Deputy, Corporate Shared Services.

The Police Complaint Commissioner began his presentation by providing an overview of the role and mandate of his Office. He shared that the Office is continuing to work on expanding its complaint resolution process and recently held a seminar with the policing community to discuss alternative dispute resolution methods. The Office is also continuing its outreach and engagement initiatives along with improving accessibility of the police complaint process for vulnerable groups. Regarding the case tracker system replacement project, the Commissioner shared that the system is currently under user acceptance testing as the Office adjusts the system to its specific needs.

The Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner requested operating funding of \$8.139 million for 2024-25, a 13 percent (\$942,000) increase from the 2023-24 operating budget and a 10 percent (\$742,000) increase over the previously approved



budget for 2024-25. For 2025-26 and 2026-27, the Office requested \$8.570 million and \$8.849 million respectively. Key requests related to wage inflation and funding to hire additional FTEs to address organizational capacity. In terms of capital funding, the Office requested \$789,000 for 2024-25, a 444 percent (\$644,000) increase from the capital budget for 2023-24 and a one percent (\$6,000) increase from the previously approved budget for 2024-25. For 2025-26 and 2026-27, the Office requested \$75,000 and \$172,000 respectively.

Regarding staff compensation, the Commissioner shared that the requested increase in operating funding includes an increase for staff salaries. The Office noted that a 7.15 percent lift was provided to management staff for fiscal year 2023-24 to align with a salary increase provided to management staff in the public service in July 2023, which ranged from 6.75 percent to 8.75 percent. To address this wage inflation, the Office is requesting \$298,000 for 2024-25 and, as noted above, supplemental funding of \$223,000 for 2023-24.

To address an expected increase in workload, the Office requested \$260,000 in operating funding and \$6,000 in capital funding to hire three new FTEs in 2024-25. The Office aims to hire two Investigative Analysts as well as a Communications and Engagement Lead to oversee education and awareness of the Office within the city of Surrey. The Office also requested an additional \$380,000 for two additional FTEs in 2025-26 and \$279,000 for another two additional FTEs in 2026-27, for a total of seven new FTEs over three years. The Commissioner highlighted many external factors that have the potential to increase the Office's workload including the transition to the Surrey Police Service. He estimated that this transition could generate over 400 additional files for the Office in 2024-25, based on existing complaints related to the Surrey Police Service and the number of files opened for Vancouver Police Department as a comparable. The Commissioner also referenced the Vancouver Police Department's hiring of 100 new officers, the growing use of body-worn cameras by police, and the potential growth in the use of tiered policing as factors that could increase the Office's workload. Further, the Office noted that since 2018 it has seen a 45 percent increase in police complaints and a 14.7 percent increase in files opened across all types.

Another key request for the operating budget is \$404,000 to establish a new office in the Lower Mainland. This funding

was previously supported by the Committee in fall 2022. The Commissioner shared that his Office is currently working with the property division of the Ministry of Citizen Services to find a location within Vancouver that suits their space needs. Regarding the capital budget, the significant increase over the previous year's budget is to support the establishment of this new office, as well as \$6,000 related to the three FTE positions requested for 2024-25.

## Committee Inquiry

The Committee inquired about the number of new FTEs being requested. The Commissioner shared that he originally considered requesting more FTEs but revised the estimate in light of inflationary pressures. He explained that the current request should be sufficient to meet the increased workload of the Office, noting that his Office would come back to the Committee with a supplementary funding request if needed. The Commissioner added that the Office has found recent success in managing its workload by hiring Admissibility Analysts who take on the labour-intensive work of screening complaints for legal admissibility. He added that the Admissibility Analyst position additionally provides a talent pipeline for the Investigation Analyst position.

The Office's case tracker replacement project was another area of interest for Committee Members. The Commissioner shared that his Office's implementation of the case tracker system is more complex than other statutory offices involved in the project due to the sensitive nature of the information the Office receives and the prescriptive timelines set out in the *Police Act*. As such, the system is undergoing testing to ensure proper due diligence. The Deputy of Corporate Shared Services highlighted that the Office's case tracker system is expected to be completed early next quarter.

Members sought clarity on the workload of the Office and the number of files opened. The Commissioner shared that files received by the Office can vary in their complexity and the amount of work required to reach a resolution. The Deputy Commissioner added that these files can sometimes carry over from one year to the next as the investigation unfolds. She highlighted that the Office opened 1,500 files last year and had 400 investigations carried over from the previous year.

Committee Members inquired about the Office’s training of staff, including on Indigenous safety and trauma informed practices. The Deputy Commissioner spoke to the importance of training as it enables the Office to be more culturally safe in communications and the handling of complaints. She added that three times a year the Office undergoes professional development to provide staff with training and awareness in various areas such as Indigenous cultural safety, anti-racism, trauma, and others, as well as requiring staff to participate in mandatory courses. She highlighted the importance of this training as it works towards ensuring the Office provides service equitably.

Committee Members were appreciative of the Office’s forecasting related to workload growth in fiscal years 2025-26 and 2026-27. However, regarding the budget requests for these outer years, Members acknowledged that the Office’s approach has been to request only known increments for wage inflation. This approach does not align with the direction previously provided by the Committee. They emphasized the importance of forecasting inflationary costs and anticipated needs in the outer years of the budget requests, noting that the Committee has clearly set out its expectations in this area on several occasions.

Following the presentation, the Committee requested that the Office provide a revised operating budget request that includes forecasting with respect to inflation and anticipated needs for the years 2025-26 and 2026-27. On November 15, 2023, the Office provided a revised operating funding request for the 2024-25 to 2026-27 incorporating the requested changes. The Office requested operating funding of \$8.296 million for 2024-

25, a two percent increase over the initial operating budget request for 2024-25. For 2025-26 and 2026-27, the Office has requested \$8.866 million and \$9.274 million respectively, which are increases of three percent and five percent over the operating budgets initially requested for these years.

The revised budget also applies to the operating portion of the request regarding new FTEs. The revised operating request for three FTEs in 2024-25 is \$269,000, an increase of three percent (\$9,000) from the initial request. In 2025-26, the Office requested \$384,000 for two additional FTEs, an increase of two percent (\$4,000) from the initial request. In 2026-27, the Office requested \$283,000 for an additional two additional FTEs, an increase of one percent (\$4,000) from the initial request.

## Recommendations

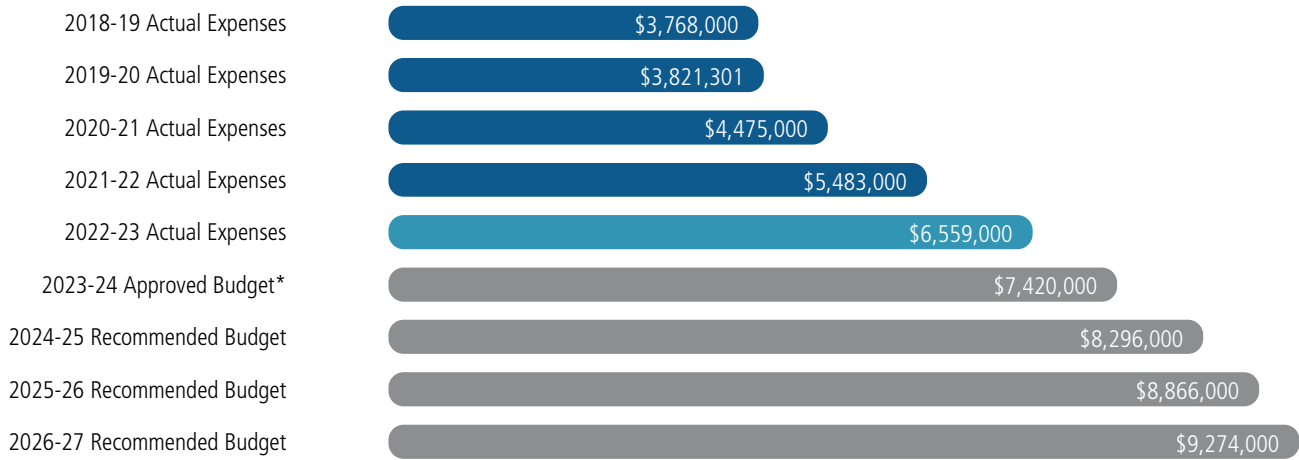
The Committee expressed their appreciation to the Commissioner for his succinct budget submission despite the uncertainty the Office has faced in recent years. Members reflected on previous budget requests related to the Surrey Police Service transition and discussed the need to ensure the Office is properly resourced now that the transition is progressing. Committee Members also discussed the new office space and noted the need to establish a centralized presence in the Lower Mainland for the public and complainants. Regarding the budget requests for the outer years, the Committee appreciated the Office’s willingness to provide a revised budget request in line with its expectations regarding forecasting and agreed to recommend the revised funding.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that:

23. The Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner be granted access to supplementary funding up to \$223,000 for operating expenditures in 2023-24 for salaries and benefits.
24. The appropriation for the operating expenditures for the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner be \$8.296 million in 2024-25; \$8.866 million in 2025-26; and \$9.274 million in 2026-27.
25. The appropriation for the capital expenditures for the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner be \$789,000 in 2024-25; \$75,000 in 2025-26; and \$172,000 in 2026-27.

## Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner Operating Budget



\*Includes supplementary funding of \$184,000 for salaries and benefits approved by the Committee in April 2023 and \$223,000 in salaries and benefits approved by the Committee in fall 2023.



# OFFICE OF THE REPRESENTATIVE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Representative for Children and Youth is an Officer of the Legislature whose mandate is established by the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*. The Representative advocates for children and youth, monitors services, and reviews and investigates critical injuries and deaths. The Act specifies the services included in the Representative's mandate, such as the child welfare system and services for children and youth with support needs. Vote 10 of the annual provincial Estimates provides for the Office's operating expenses and capital expenditures.

## Supplementary Funding Request for 2023-24

### Systemic Review Connected to a Special Investigation and Website Rebuild (October 26, 2023)

During its meeting with the Committee on October 26, 2023, the Office made two supplementary funding requests for 2023-24. The first was for \$248,000 in operating funding to conduct a systemic review of child, youth, and family services connected to an investigation the Office is conducting. The second was for \$18,000 in operating and \$12,000 in capital funding to rebuild the Office website. Further details about both projects are provided in the next section.

## Budget Submission for 2024-25 to 2026-27

The Committee reviewed the Office's budget submission on October 26, 2023. The Representative for Children and Youth, Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth, was joined by Deputy Representative

Pippa Rowcliffe; Deputy Representative Samantha Cocker; and Chief Financial Officer Dianne Buljat.

The Representative began by noting that her second five-year term started on October 1, 2023. She described the challenges facing young people and the programs that serve them, including the toxic drug crisis, worsened mental health issues and difficulties accessing treatment, the colonial and paternalistic nature of the child welfare system, and insufficient supports for children with support needs.

For fiscal year 2024-25, the Office requested \$12.829 million in operating funding, which is a 5.2 percent (\$638,000) increase over the 2023-24 budget and a 2.6 percent (\$329,000) increase over the previously approved budget for 2024-25. For the Office's capital budget, the Representative requested \$68,000 for 2024-25, a 36 percent (\$18,000) increase over both the capital budget for 2023-24 and the previously approved budget for 2024-25. The Representative indicated that both the \$329,000 increase in operating funding and the \$18,000 increase in capital funding are one-time requests, and not a request to increase the Office's base funding. For both 2025-26 and 2026-27, the Office requested \$12.603 million in operating funding and \$50,000 in capital funding.

The Representative stated that her only requested increase to the Office's base operating funding is to address staff compensation. The Office seeks to align its compensation with the public service and as such, in its fall 2022 budget submission, it estimated how much money it would need for wage increases based on the information available at the time; however, there was limited information on the impact of wage inflation on management as well as the costing related to other changes in the overall compensation package. More detailed information about public service wage inflation increases in 2022-23 and 2023-24 has become available since fall 2022, resulting in a budgetary



difference between the estimated and actual amount required. The Representative requested \$98,000 to cover the difference. The Representative noted that her Office, like other child-serving organizations, is experiencing staff shortages. She indicated that in the 2022-23 fiscal year, her Office spent less than expected on salaries but more than expected on grants and professional services. Additionally, the Office spent less than expected on office space and travel, due to ongoing remote work and lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Representative informed the Committee that her Office, alongside the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, are reforming their shared services agreement to have the latter take on more corporate services functions. She does not expect this change to affect either Office's budget. Additionally, the Representative noted that the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth recommended expanding her mandate in its 2023 review of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*, but her budget proposal does not account for this as the recommended changes have not been implemented by government.

The Representative expanded on a key part of her budget request: a systemic review the Office is conducting alongside its investigation into the 2021 death of an 11-year-old First Nations boy in foster care. She noted that it has been 17 years since the review by the Hon. E.N. (Ted) Hughes that led to the creation of the Representative's Office. The Representative commented that she believes it is time for another, even broader review of the child- and youth-serving system. To conduct the review, the Representative requested a one-time lift of \$214,000 for the 2024-25 fiscal year, which was included in its \$12.829 million request listed above. In addition, as mentioned above, she requested supplemental funding of \$248,000 in operating expenditures for 2023-24 related to this project. The investigation associated with the systemic review is covered under the Representative's existing 2023-24 budget; however, the Representative stated that the systemic review is a much larger endeavor.

The Representative added that the review was called for by the First Nations Leadership Council, Indigenous child and family services agencies, and other Indigenous leaders and experts. The Representative noted that investigations typically take between 18 and 24 months, and the systemic review is bigger in scope. She added that the Office has committed to reporting on both the investigation and the systemic review by June 2024.

The Representative stated that while her Office has significant internal capacity and expertise, staff are already busy with their statutorily required workloads. She said the additional funding for the systemic review will allow the Office to retain a project manager and subject-matter experts, engage meaningfully with First Nations and Indigenous organizations, and engage a circle of advisors to ensure the work is grounded in Indigenous research methodologies and the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

A second key funding request is to begin rebuilding the Office's website and social media presence. For this project, the Representative requested \$12,000 in operating funding and \$18,000 in capital funding for 2024-25, which is included in the Office's overall budget request for that year. Additionally, the Office requested \$18,000 in operating funding and \$12,000 in capital funding for 2023-24 for this project, as mentioned above. The Representative stated that the Office's website was developed in 2015, is not accessible, and is increasingly costly to keep secure. She added that the Office is also updating its identity and branding, which will apply to both the website and the Office's other communications.

## Committee Inquiry

The Committee noted that the Office spent \$888,000 more than budgeted on grants in 2022-23, and that it also overspent in this category in the preceding fiscal year. Members recognized that the overspend was offset by an underspend in salaries and asked for further information from the Representative. The Representative clarified that her Office spent less on staffing last year due to recruitment and retention challenges, so it commissioned support from research institutes to ensure the completion of its statutorily-required work. She added that the Office still returned \$345,000 to general revenue last year. The Representative stated that she does not anticipate needing to do this again this year. Deputy Representative Rowcliffe indicated that so far in 2023-24, the Office is on track with its budget.

Following the Representative's presentation, the Committee requested in writing a list of grant recipients for the 2022-23 fiscal year, including the name and type of organization, the amount of grant funding awarded, and the purpose of the grant. The list provided by the Representative included six not-for-profits that received grants between \$2,500 and \$100,000 and five post-secondary institutions that received

grants between \$15,000 and \$600,000. Many of the grants were issued for research reports; other purposes include hosting a conference alongside the Representative's Office and convening dialogues that will support research. The Committee also asked the Representative to provide the criteria the Office uses for awarding grants. The Representative stated that the criteria include: alignment of the research or activity with the Office's strategic priorities; a recipient that is a post-secondary institution, publicly funded research institute, or non-profit entity; and a recipient that has the necessary expertise and a record of delivering high-quality work.

Additionally, in its request, the Committee noted that it expects statutory officers to budget as accurately as possible for each line item, rather than reallocating funds. The Committee offered the Office the opportunity to adjust its budget requests by reallocating a portion of the proposed amount for salaries to grants. The Representative's Office accepted this offer and proposed reallocating \$109,000 from the funding requested for salaries and \$36,000 from the funding requested for employee benefits to the grants line item. This reallocation resulted in a request for \$150,000 for grants in 2024-25, up from the placeholder amount of \$5,000 which was initially requested.

In response to the Representative's discussion of recruitment and retention issues, Members inquired whether the Office has assessed what pay would be required to better retain staff. The Representative indicated that the workforce challenges her Office is facing are shared by the public service at large, in terms of staff leaving their base roles for temporary assignments with higher pay. The Representative stated that temporary assignments sometimes get extended, making it difficult for her Office to plan because employees' base positions must be held for them. She also cited other challenges including the time required to run hiring competitions, and discrepancies in pay between the BC Public Service and other public services in Canada.

Members inquired about the scope of the systemic review. The Representative explained that she is still determining this, but that there are areas that will not be included, such as youth justice and child care. She noted that the Office is addressing the areas that seem to be the most significant based on the work it has done on the investigation thus far. The Representative added that the systemic review will consider Indigenous reassertion of jurisdiction over child welfare.

Members asked whether, for the systemic review, the Representative's Office is coordinating with other bodies like the First Nations Leadership Council, Indigenous child and family services agencies, or the federal government. The Representative stated that she cannot ask other bodies to participate in the review because her Office is independent, but that she has been checking in with Indigenous groups for strategic guidance. She highlighted the federal government's role in funding on-reserve child welfare services, but noted that she does not have any authority over federal resources. The Representative added that both Indigenous Services Canada and the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates are aware of the systemic review.

Regarding the website funding, the Committee inquired what would happen if the Representative's website were hacked. The Representative said that if the website was breached, the Office would shut it down immediately. She added that a hack has not occurred to date, and that the director of IM/IT carefully monitors these risks, but noted that this would be easier if the Office had a less susceptible website.

## Recommendations

The Committee thanked the Representative and her staff for their commitment to their work. Members recognized the difficult and highly important role that the Office has in supporting vulnerable children, youth, young adults, and their families. The Committee commented that the Representative's only requested increase to her base funding was to account for unexpected increases in staff compensation. They emphasized the importance of forecasting inflationary costs and anticipated needs in the outer years of the budget requests, noting that the Committee has clearly set out its expectations in this area on several occasions. Members appreciated the fiscally prudent approach taken by the Representative, noting that the overall requested increase to base funding was \$103,000 (a 0.8 percent increase) over the previously approved budget for 2024-25. Members recognized the important subject matter and the wide scope of the systemic review and the timelines to which the Representative publicly committed. Committee Members appreciated the Representative's willingness to reallocate funding to grants in its updated budget submission and agreed that the Office should proceed with this approach. The Committee agreed to recommend the requested appropriations for operating and capital expenditures, along with the supplementary funding requested.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that:

- 26. The Office of the Representative for Children and Youth be granted access to supplementary funding up to \$248,000 for operating expenditures in 2023-24 for its systemic review connected to a special investigation.
- 27. The Office of the Representative for Children and Youth be granted access to supplementary funding up to \$12,000 for capital expenditures and \$18,000 for operating expenditures in 2023-24 to rebuild its website.
- 28. The appropriation for the operating expenditures of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth \$12.829 million in 2024-25; \$12.603 million in 2025-26; and \$12.603 million in 2026-27.
- 29. The appropriation for the capital expenditures of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth be \$68,000 in 2024-25; \$50,000 in 2025-26; and \$50,000 in 2026-27.

### Office of the Representative for Children and Youth Operating Budget



\*Includes supplementary funding of \$248,000 for a systemic review and \$18,000 for the website rebuild approved by the Committee in fall 2023.



# APPENDIX A: BUDGET DOCUMENTS

## Office of the Auditor General

*Budget Submission 2024/25 – 2026/27 and Supplementary Funding Request 2023/24*

*Budget Submission Supplementary Tables*

*Business Case, Compensation Framework*

*Business Case, IT Modernization*

*Business Case, LWS LED Lighting and Project Update*

*Annual Report 2022/23*

*Service Plan 2024/25 – 2026/27*

## Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner

*Budget Submission 2024/25 – 2026/27*

*Budget Submission Supplementary Tables*

*2022 Annual Report*

*Members' Conflict of Interest Act*

*Correspondence from the Committee regarding budget submission*

*Revised Budget Submission 2024/25 – 2026/27*

*Revised Budget Submission Supplementary Tables*

## Elections BC

*Budget Submission 2024/25 – 2026/27*

*Budget Proposal 2024/25 – 2026/27*

*Budget Submission Supplementary Tables*

*Summary Financial Outlook*

*Annual Report 2022/23 and Service Plan 2023/24 – 2025/26*

## Office of the Human Rights Commissioner

*Budget Submission 2024/25 – 2026/27*

*Budget Submission Supplementary Tables*

*Program Update - BCOHRC*

*Sparking Change, Annual Report 2022/23 and Service Plan 2023/24 – 2025/26*

*Correspondence from the Committee regarding budget submission*

*Correspondence to the Committee regarding revised budget submission*

*Revised Budget Submission 2024/25 – 2026/27*

*Revised Budget Submission Supplementary Tables*

## Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and Registrar of Lobbyists

*Budget Submission 2024/25 – 2026/27 and Supplementary Funding Request 2023/24*

*Business Case, APPA Secretariat Funding for Additional Two Years*

*Budget Submission Supplementary Tables*

*Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and Office of the Registrar of Lobbyists, Service Plan, Fiscal Years 2024/25 – 2026/27*

*Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, Annual Report 2022/23*

*Office of the Registrar of Lobbyists, Annual Report 2022/23*

*Correspondence from the Committee regarding budget submission*

*Correspondence to the Committee regarding budget submission*

*Revised Budget Submission Supplementary Tables*



## **Office of the Merit Commissioner**

*Budget Submission 2024/25 – 2026/27 and Supplementary Funding Request 2023/24*

*Business Case, New Position Request: "Program Audit Analyst"*

*Budget Submission Supplementary Tables*

*Annual Report 2022/23*

*Service Plan, Fiscal Years 2024/25 – 2026/27*

*Correspondence from the Committee regarding budget submission*

*Correspondence to the Committee regarding budget submission*

*Revised Budget Submission Supplementary Tables*

## **Office of the Ombudsperson**

*Budget Submission 2024/25 – 2026/27 and Supplementary Funding Request 2023/24*

*Indigenous Communities Services Plan, Budget Request 2024/25 – 2026/27*

*Business Case, Indigenous Initiatives*

*Business Case, Strategic Outreach Plan*

*Strategic Outreach Plan, Key Priorities and Approaches 2024 – 2027*

*Budget Submission Supplementary Tables*

*Annual Report 2022/23*

*Service Plan 2024/25 – 2026/27*

*Strategic Plan 2021 – 2026*

*Correspondence from the Committee regarding budget submission*

*Correspondence to the Committee regarding budget submission*

*Revised Budget Submission Supplementary Tables*

## **Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner**

*Budget Submission 2024/25 – 2026/27 and Supplementary Funding Request 2023/24*

*Business Case: Staff Workload and Support*

*Budget Submission Supplementary Tables*

*Annual Report 2021/2022*

*Service Plan 2023/24 – 2025/26*

*Correspondence from the Committee regarding budget submission*

*Correspondence to the Committee regarding budget submission*

*Revised Budget Submission Supplementary Tables*

## **Office of the Representative for Children and Youth**

*Budget Submission 2024/25 – 2026/27 and Supplementary Funding Request 2023/24*

*Supplementary Budget and Budget Request: Systemic Review Connected to a Special Investigation*

*Supplementary Budget and Budget Request: Website Review*

*Budget Submission Supplementary Tables*

*Annual Report 2022/23 and Service Plan 2023/24 to 2025/26*

*Correspondence from the Committee regarding budget submission*

*Correspondence to the Committee regarding budget submission including grant recipients*

*Revised Budget Submission Supplementary Tables*

