

*THE BEST PLACE ON EARTH* >>  
*FOR PEOPLE IN NEED*



## WE WANT YOUR INPUT



With a strong economy and a prosperous future ahead for B.C., we have the resources and the responsibility to ensure all British Columbians share in the rewards and opportunities of living in the best place on Earth.

We've taken decisive steps to improve and expand services for B.C. seniors, persons with disabilities, and children and families in need, to ensure every British Columbian can make the most of the opportunities opening up across our province.

We're increasing income supports for those in greatest financial need, particularly seniors and families who require help in obtaining affordable housing. Persons with disabilities will benefit from employment programs designed to assist them in accessing the job market. For children at risk, we're investing in programs to encourage positive parenting and counselling to help women and children in abusive living situations. And a major program, BC Healthy Kids, is providing free basic dental and optical care to children in eligible families.

I welcome your input on how we can work together to build the best systems of support in Canada.

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Gordon Campbell". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

*Honourable Gordon Campbell  
Premier of British Columbia*



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## **HELPING MORE PEOPLE ACHIEVE INDEPENDENCE**

To help British Columbians in need achieve the confidence and rewards of greater independence, while ensuring they have the support they require, the Province:

- » Is investing more than \$70 million in employment programs and services to help those on income assistance find and keep good jobs.
- » Provided \$250 million for the Housing Endowment Fund, which will generate an estimated \$10 million each year toward innovative housing proposals.
- » Raised the shelter portion for all income assistance recipients by a maximum of \$50 – the first shelter increase since 1992 – giving employable singles, couples and one-parent families Canada’s highest shelter rate.
- » Increased assistance rates for families with children by between \$97 and well over \$200.
- » Increased rates for employable singles by \$100 or 20% to \$610 a month – giving them the second-highest rate in Canada.
- » Boosted income assistance payments for Persons with Disabilities by \$120 since 2005 to \$906 a month – B.C.’s highest support level and the third-highest rate in Canada.
- » Invested \$40 million to buy 11 single-room occupancy hotels in Vancouver and Victoria that will be converted to provide 623 supportive housing units.



- » Has committed to provide more than 4,000 affordable, assisted living apartments for seniors and persons with disabilities, with more than 3,900 allocated to date.

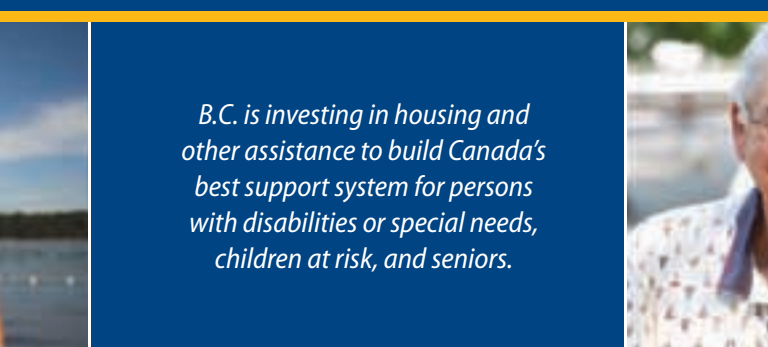
## **IMPROVING SUPPORTS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

To ensure British Columbians with disabilities are well supported by services that create healthy, accessible and welcoming communities, the Province:

- » Issued the 10 by 10 Challenge to businesses and municipalities, with the goal of increasing the number of working persons with disabilities by 10% by 2010.
- » Provided \$2 million in grants to support community projects aligned with the 10 by 10 Challenge.
- » Invests \$20 million a year in the enhanced Employment Programs for Persons with Disabilities and has assisted 17,000 people since 2002.
- » Increased the Community Volunteer Supplement's budget to \$5.3 million – allowing an additional 2,700 persons with disabilities to receive up to \$100 a month for clothing and expenses related to volunteering.

## **IMPROVING SUPPORT FOR B.C. SENIORS**

To ensure B.C. seniors have the support and services they need to thrive in their communities, the Province has:



*B.C. is investing in housing and other assistance to build Canada's best support system for persons with disabilities or special needs, children at risk, and seniors.*

- » Provided \$242 million in seniors' support over three years, including funding to renew the Seniors Supplement, a monthly benefit for 47,000 low-income seniors.
- » Increased the refundable sales tax credit for low-income seniors by 50%.
- » Improved eligibility requirements for the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters program, including reducing the 10-year Canadian residency requirement to one year.
- » Committed to renovating subsidized housing units to ensure they are accessible and safe for older residents, so they can retain their independence longer.
- » Reduced prescription drug costs for 280,000 low-income B.C. families through the Fair PharmaCare program.
- » Eliminated mandatory retirement at 65, effective Jan. 1, 2008.

## ***INCREASING SUPPORT AND RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES***

The Province is working to ensure women, children and families in need have the resources and support they require to build healthy, prosperous futures, by:

- » Nearly tripling the budget for shelters and affordable housing since 2001, to \$328 million.
- » Investing \$6 million more over three years to strengthen support for transition houses.



- » Providing \$40 million a year through the Rental Assistance Program to help up to 20,000 low-income, working families choose suitable housing.
- » Devoting \$91 million in new funding over three years to support caregivers of adults with developmental disabilities.
- » Dedicating \$76 million over four years to provide universal access to early diagnostic screening of children's hearing, vision and dental health.
- » Spending \$17 million on BC Healthy Kids, a program that provides free, basic dental treatment and optical care for eligible children in low- and moderate-income families.
- » Providing \$1.2 million in Partners in Prevention grants to prevent violence against women and girls by changing behaviours and attitudes that lead to violence.
- » Doubling the school start-up supplement to help families of about 29,000 school-aged children and on income assistance meet the costs of a new school year.
- » Committing \$1.5 million to healthy pregnancy initiatives, including enhanced outreach and programs that counsel women about alcohol use during pregnancy.
- » Partnering to create more than 100 licensed child care spaces in social housing developments in New Westminster, Kamloops and Port Alberni.



## **IMPROVING SERVICES TO CHILDREN AT RISK**

To help give vulnerable children and youth a better start in life, the Province is:

- » Dedicating \$93 million between 2007/08 and 2009/10 to enhance supports for children and youth with special needs and to maintain services for children at risk.
- » Adding \$31 million over those three years to boost monthly payments and other supports for foster parents. This follows last year's new training opportunities, recruitment campaign and mileage rate increase.

## **REDUCING TAXES TO SUPPORT SENIORS AND FAMILIES**

To help B.C. families, individuals and seniors get ahead, the Province has:

- » Cut provincial income taxes, on lower and middle incomes, by a further 10% in 2007.
- » Reduced or eliminated MSP premiums for 215,000 lower-income people.
- » Provided \$309 million over four years to improve the Home Owner Grant Program.
- » Reduced the eligibility age for property tax deferment to 55 from 60, and expanded eligibility for the Home Owner Grant to include all low-income seniors, regardless of the assessed value of their home.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

### RELATED MINISTRIES

**Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance**

Toll-free: 1 866 866-0800 [www.gov.bc.ca/eia/](http://www.gov.bc.ca/eia/)

**Ministry of Children and Family Development**

In Victoria: 387-7027 • Toll-free: 1 877 387-7027

[www.mcf.gov.bc.ca](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca)

**Ministry of Community Services** [www.gov.bc.ca/cserv](http://www.gov.bc.ca/cserv)

**Ministry of Small Business and Revenue**

[www.gov.bc.ca/sbr](http://www.gov.bc.ca/sbr)

**Office of Housing and Construction Standards**

[www.housing.gov.bc.ca/](http://www.housing.gov.bc.ca/)

### USEFUL LINKS

**Service BC** [www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca](http://www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca)

*(For information on provincial government services or programs)*

Monday to Friday: 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Victoria: 250 387-6121 • Vancouver: 604 660-2421

Toll-free provincewide: 1 800 663-7867

Telephone device for the deaf (TDD)

In Vancouver: 604 775-0303

Elsewhere in B.C.: 1 800 661-8773

**Seniors' Services** [www.gov.bc.ca/seniors](http://www.gov.bc.ca/seniors)

Toll-free Health and Seniors Info Line: 1 800 465-4911

**Community Living BC** [www.communitylivingbc.ca](http://www.communitylivingbc.ca)

Lower Mainland: 1 604 664-0101

Toll-free: 1 877 660-2522

**Women's Services Directory**

[www.cserv.gov.bc.ca/women](http://www.cserv.gov.bc.ca/women)

**Women's Enterprise Centre**

*(Helping women start successful businesses)*

Toll-free provincewide: 1 800 643-7014

[www.womensenterprise.ca](http://www.womensenterprise.ca)

**B.C./Yukon Society of Transition Houses**

Vancouver: 604 669-6943 [www.bcesth.ca](http://www.bcesth.ca)

**Adoption** [www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/adoption/index.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/adoption/index.htm)

Toll-free provincewide: 1 877 ADOPT-07

**Child and Youth Mental Health** (250 387-9749)

[www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental\\_health/index.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental_health/index.htm)



## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**Foster Care** [www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/foster/index.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/foster/index.htm)

Fosterline: 1 800 663-9999

Outside B.C. call: 1 604 664-0124

### **Transition Houses**

*In an emergency, call 911 and ask for the police.*

To find the Victim Services nearest you, call:

Toll-free provincewide: 1 800 563-0808

*(24 hours a day, seven days a week)*

[www.cserv.gov.bc.ca/women/transition-houses/](http://www.cserv.gov.bc.ca/women/transition-houses/)

### **Child Care Programs and Support**

*(Including Child Care Subsidy)*

Toll-free provincewide: 1 888 338-6622

[www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/index.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/index.htm)

### **Helpline for Children** *(Child Protection)*

310-1234 (toll-free, no area code needed, open 24/7)

Telephone device for the deaf: 1 866 660-0505

[www.safekidsbc.ca](http://www.safekidsbc.ca)

### **Child Welfare Information and Referrals**

Toll-free provincewide: 1 800 663-9122

Vancouver, North Shore, Richmond: 1 604 660-4927

Rest of Lower Mainland: 1 604 660-8180

### **Youth Against Violence Line**

Toll-free provincewide: 1 800 680-4264 (open 24/7)

### **Representative for Children and Youth, BC**

In Victoria, call: 356-6710 • Toll-free: 1 800 476-3933

### **Independent Living BC**

*(Housing options for seniors and people with disabilities)*

Vancouver: 604 433-2218 • Toll-free: 1 800 257-7756

[www.bchousing.org/programs/independent/](http://www.bchousing.org/programs/independent/)

### **Homeowner's Grant Program** [www.sbr.gov.bc.ca/hog/](http://www.sbr.gov.bc.ca/hog/)

Phone: 250 356-8904, 250 387-8166 or 1 888 355-2700

Fax: 250 356-8994 • E-mail: [hogadmin@gov.bc.ca](mailto:hogadmin@gov.bc.ca)

### **Personal Supports Information Line**

Toll-free: 1 888 818-1211 • TTY: 1 800 661-8773

Email: [PersonalSupportsInformation@gov.bc.ca](mailto:PersonalSupportsInformation@gov.bc.ca)

### **BC Healthy Kids Program** (Toll-free: 1 866 866-0800)

[www.eia.gov.bc.ca/publicat/bcea/HealthyKids.htm](http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/publicat/bcea/HealthyKids.htm)

### **Workable Solutions** [www.workablesolutionsbc.ca](http://www.workablesolutionsbc.ca)

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