



## Introduction

Vibrant Communities Calgary (VCC) is a non-profit organization, guiding the implementation of *Enough for All*, Calgary's community-driven poverty reduction strategy. The 2019 Alberta budget will impact Calgary's efforts to achieve the goals within the Enough for All strategy. The budget's primary focus is on jobs and the economy with a plan to reduce spending by 2.8 per cent over the next four years. VCC has identified which areas of the budget will impact the goals of Enough for All.

## Affordable transportation

Provincial funding for the low-income transit pass sliding scale fare structure will be maintained at the previous level of 4.5 million for Calgary. This however still leaves the City of Calgary with a funding shortfall of 6.5 million based on uptake of the pass. Based on the outcome of the October 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the City of Calgary's Standing Policy Committee on Transit and Transportation it is expected that the fare structure will be changed and the cost of the low-income transit pass will increase.

## Affordable housing

Funding for Housing Management Bodies (HMB) such as Homespace and Calgary Housing Company will be reduced by 3.5 per cent. The Rental Assistance Program otherwise known as the Direct to Tenant Rent Subsidy will also receive a 24 per cent reduction.

The Ministry of Alberta Seniors and Housing will receive a slight increase in their operating budget of \$9 million or 1.4 per cent.

## The Alberta Child and Family Benefit

This new benefit comes into effect in July 2020 and will replace the Alberta Family Employment Tax Credit (AFETC) and the Alberta Child Benefit (ACB). Eligibility requirements have changed however families most in need will receive 15 per cent more in base benefits. The biggest change includes the introduction of a base component and a working component. The working component will be phased in once a family's employment income reaches a certain amount. Base benefits are phased out completely when a family's net income reaches \$41,000, and the working benefit is phased out completely when net income reaches \$61,000. It is unclear if this new program will benefit as many families as the previous Alberta Child Benefit and Family Employment Tax Credit.

## Everyone has sufficient income and assets to thrive

Budget 2019 will put a pause on indexation of AISH, Income Support, and the Alberta Seniors Benefit however benefit rates will be maintained. Under the previous government, benefits were adjusted annually using the Alberta Consumer Price Index.

## Early learning and care

Funding is maintained for the 4,500 Early Learning and Child Care Centre pilot initiative, followed by a rigorous review when the pilot is finished in the spring of 2020. The Ministry of Children's Services will receive an operating budget of \$1.6 billion, an increase of \$94 million compared to 2018-19.

### **All Indigenous People are equal participants**

The Ministry of Indigenous Relations' operating budget is at \$190 million for 2019-20, going down to \$176 million by 2022-23 representing a 7.3 per cent decrease over four years, however this budget introduces the newly created Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation to encourage participation in major resource projects.

### **Physical and mental health**

The Ministry of Health received a 1 per cent increase for 2019-20, however a comprehensive review of Alberta Health Services is due to the government on December 31st, 2019, with the goal of identifying ways to reduce costs and improve performance. There are also changes to the Alberta Seniors Drug Benefit Program including an end to drug coverage for non-senior dependants, and income testing for seniors will be explored. The Mental Health and Addiction Strategy will receive \$100 million in funding and the Opioid Response Strategy will receive \$40 million.

### **Adult literacy and foundational learning**

Spending is maintained for Kindergarten-12 education with a 2.2 per cent increase for enrolment growth. There are several changes to the Ministry of Advanced Education including a new funding model, the end of the tuition freeze, and the elimination of education and tuition tax credits. The Women Building Futures program for women pursuing skilled trades, received additional funding of 10 million.

### **Justice**

The Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General will receive a decrease of 6.6 per cent in their operating budget over four years. The newly created Indigenous Litigation Fund was developed to support Indigenous voices in legal actions that affect responsible resource development in Alberta. This budget provides funding for 50 new Crown prosecutors.

### **For more information, please contact:**

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