



TACKLING THE COST OF LIVING

Life's expenses have increased over the last year. Increased interest rates, inflation, food costs, mortgage and rent costs, add-up and can chisel away at individual and family earnings. The NDP government is tackling this issue from every angle to help British Columbians achieve financial stability. Whether increasing housing supply, increasing minimum wage, providing financial supports for people in care, funding infrastructure projects, or flat out putting money in your bank account, the Province of BC is working hard to keep money in people's pockets and provide the best services and care for everyone. Read on to learn more about how our government is working to help with the cost of living.

1. Day-to-day costs
2. More Housing supply = more affordable housing
3. Supporting Youth and Children

DAY-TO-DAY COSTS

BC Affordability Credit in Spring

Did you notice extra cash in your bank in April? Up to 85% of British Columbians were eligible for the third Affordability credit to help curb the struggles of global inflation. Up to \$164 per individual and up to \$410 for a family with 2 kids was deposited directly to eligible residents.

The B.C. climate action tax credit

This is a quarterly payment that helps offset the impact of the carbon taxes paid by individuals and families. We are increasing the B.C. climate action tax credit amounts effective July 1, 2023 and increase the eligibility of income threshold so that more people can benefit. For the July 2023, October 2023, January 2024 and April 2024 payments, the maximum annual amounts will increase to: \$447 for you / \$223.50 for your spouse or common-law partner (or for the first child in a single parent family) \$111.50 for each child (except the first child in a single parent family)



**Extra money this
spring with the
BC Affordability Credit**

Shelter Rate for people on Income Assistance and Disability Assistance

As per the 2023 Budget, the shelter rates for people on income assistance and disability assistance will see an increase. The shelter rate, which hadn't changed since 2007, will increase this year from \$375 per month to \$500 per month for single individuals. For a single person on PWD (the disability assistance program for people designated as Persons With Disabilities), this means their rate will go from \$1,358 to \$1,483 per month.

To learn more about the increase, please see the following links:

<https://disabilityalliancebc.org/dabcs-response-to-2023-bc-budget/>

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/income-assistance/on-assistance>



The people who serve their communities deserve more

On June 1st minimum wage increased again. The NDP tied minimum wage to inflation and so British Columbians have seen a number of increases since 2019. Tying minimum wage to inflation ensures that wage increases will not be lost in periods when inflation erode real salaries.

Affordable and accessible Taxi Service

More people with accessibility challenges throughout the province will soon have better access to wheelchair-accessible taxis, reducing wait times and allowing them to get around their communities with ease. Since the launch of the Passenger Transportation Accessibility Program Maintenance Rebate in January 2023, the Province has provided \$2.6 million in grants to 51 taxi companies through its Passenger Transportation Accessibility Program Maintenance Rebate. The funding is helping reduce the financial effects of necessary maintenance work on nearly 400 wheelchair-accessible taxis.

BC ferries will remain affordable

BC Ferries are a critical piece of infrastructure for our province. This is why the BC ferries Commissioner will incorporate an extra \$500 million from the Province of BC into decisions regarding ferry pricing caps for the next 4 year.

No costs over a whole lifetime pays off

As you know on April 1st, our BC NDP Government made history by officially becoming the first province to provide free prescription contraceptives to British Columbians. Did you know that for a person who previously paid \$25 per month on birth control, this could save them up to \$10,000 in their lifetime?

REMINDER : no ICBC increase until 2025

MORE HOUSING SUPPLY ALSO MEANS ACCESS TO MORE AFFORDABLE HOMES AND RENT



Following on the heels of the opening of 40 units of Comox Valley Transition Society second stage housing, in Early May we celebrated the ground-breaking announcement in Courtenay for 40 units of housing for Indigenous elders and those with low to moderate incomes. Thank you to the Wachiay Friendship Centre for partnering to build Naut'sa mawt (meaning "together as one") with federal, provincial and local governments. It shows what we can do when we all work together as a community! [You can read more here.](#)



Our housing projects so far in Courtenay-Comox

Did you know that when the new Premier, David Eby, announced his new cabinet he, created a new stand-alone Ministry of Housing? Housing projects are big undertakings and that is why it's very rewarding to witness housing that the that this riding has gained since 2017. I wanted to share the details of the 650 units that Courtenay-Comox has gained.

Funding Program	Project	No. of Units
Rapid Response to Homelessness	The Junction	46
Deepening Affordability of Existing Projects	Braidwood project with M'akola	35
Community Housing Fund	Naut'samawt / Cypress Gardens	40 / 52
Women's Transition Housing Fund	Duplexes built in 2019 and Darry's Place	48
Housing Hub	Residences at the Boulevard (Crown Isle) / Dementia Village	56 / 156
Student Housing	North Island College (in progress)	217
Total	Courtenay/ Comox	650

In addition, there are 67 temporary units of hotel housing currently at the Travelodge - soon to transfer to the newly acquired Super 8. See the link for the minister's statement around the purchase. There is more info to come as we work with local governments to provide permanent supporting housing to meet the needs of all residents of The Comox Valley.

[Minister Ravi Kahlon's Statement here.](#)

Projects like these are happening all throughout the province and are part of a \$19-billion housing investment by the B.C. government. Since 2017, the Province has delivered more than 74,000 new homes that have been completed or are underway. Many projects have mixed income rents that can range between \$375 to \$2900 or where a percentage of their income goes to rent. Want to see some other housing projects around the province? Click on the location to learn more.

[Abbotsford](#) / [Cranbrook](#) / [Vernon](#) / [Nanaimo](#) / [Victoria](#)

SUPPORTING YOUTH AND CHILDREN

More money per child

Families with children will see an increase in the Family Benefit above and beyond the temporary top-ups that were seen earlier in the year to help with inflation. Budget 2023 includes a new permanent 10% increase to the BC Family Benefit. Starting July 2023, parents will receive as much as \$1,750 for their first child, \$1,100 for the second and \$900 for each subsequent child per year. Single parents can get as much as an additional \$500 on top of the 10% increase.

Learn more about the BC Family Benefit (a benefit for families with children):

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/affordability/family-benefit>

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2023FIN0021-000352>



Childcare

The Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative will be expanded to include children enrolled in licensed preschools and children in Grade 1 to age 12. Beginning September 1, 2023, families at participating licensed preschools and school-age child care facilities will receive fee reductions of up to \$145 per month per child. Child care providers can apply to the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative starting on January 31, 2023. Facilities offering licensed preschool and child care for children in Grade 1 and up are encouraged to apply early so that by September 2023, even more families will see meaningful reductions in their child care fees.

Starting in December 2022, parents in British Columbia also began to save as much as an additional \$550 per month for each child they have in participating licensed child care centres. [Learn more here.](#)

There are a number of programs to help parents with childcare. [To learn about all of them click here.](#)

B.C. boosts payments for children in foster, kinship, out-of-care placements

Foster parents and others who support vulnerable children and youth now have more assistance with monthly costs, with an increase to payments, as much as 47%, that will help cover food, clothing and transportation costs for children and youth in care. The per-day rate for caregivers providing respite and relief care is also increasing by as much as 36%. Boosting payments for kinship, out-of-care and foster caregivers is crucial to making sure they can continue to deliver the safe and caring homes children and youth need to develop, thrive and lay the foundation for healthy development.



Increased support for children, youth and their caregivers

StrongerBC
FOR ALL

B.C. renter's tax credit

We introduced an income-tested renter's tax credit that gives \$400 to low- and moderate-income renter households with an adjusted income of \$60,000 or less. Those with an income that is more than \$60,000 and less than \$80,000 may receive a reduced amount. You can start claiming the renter's tax credit on the 2023 T1 Income Tax and Benefit Return when you file your income taxes in spring 2024.

School food programs get historic investment to help feed kids

More children and youth will have access to healthy meals and snacks at school through the Province's new Feeding Futures funding, which invests in building and expanding local school food programs. Through Budget 2023, the Province is investing \$214 million over three years so school districts can create or expand local food programs in schools throughout B.C. The funds will be used for purchasing food and hiring dedicated staff to co-ordinate providing meals and snacks to students. This is the largest investment in school food programs in the Province's history. This program aims to reduce financial and nutrition challenges for busy parents.

Affordability for all family types

People in 55+ strata buildings can now stay in their homes even if their family structure changes. Starting right away, future children, and partners of current residents are exempt from 55+ strata bylaws. Adult children can now also move back home with their parents.

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES

Is someone in your life, your workplace, or your church celebrating a Milestone birthday or anniversary? Make sure to put in a request for a letter from your MLA.

B.C. makes it easier to get money awarded through the courts

New legislation will make it easier for people to get money owed to them following a civil court decision. The proposed money judgment enforcement act will streamline the process for people collecting money owed to them through the courts or tribunals such as the Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) or Civil Resolution Tribunal. This will reduce the need for people to involve the courts in the collection process. Under the new act, employers will receive a single notice to garnish a percentage of wages that will remain valid indefinitely.

LET THE GOVERNMENT KNOW ABOUT SYSTEMIC RACISM

We want to make sure that no one is left behind in getting the equitable services that they need. So we are encouraging everyone living in BC to take the BC Demographic Survey to help identify systemic racism in government services.

The survey is online and available in 15 languages at:

<https://antiracism.gov.bc.ca/bcdemographicsurvey>

People without access to a computer or smartphone can take the survey by calling toll-free: 1 833 376-2452

Fill in the GAPS



Get in touch

As always, if you have any questions or concerns about any provincial issue, please don't hesitate to reach out. We are here to help you. My office can be reached at 250.703.2410 or Ronna-Rae.Leonard.MLA@leg.bc.ca Our office hours are Monday to Thursday 10am-4pm. If the door is locked, simply knock or call 250.703.2410 to get our attention. Fridays are by appointment only.

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