



2019/20 -
2021/22



**BUDGET
SUBMISSION**



The Office of the

ombudsperson

B.C.'s Independent Voice For Fairness

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Overview of Operations

The Office of the Ombudsperson (originally “Ombudsman”) was established in British Columbia in 1979. The *Ombudsperson Act* mandates the Ombudsperson to investigate complaints about the actions, inactions, decisions, policies and procedures of provincial and local public agencies in British Columbia including ministries, provincial boards and commissions, Crown corporations, health authorities, local governments, school boards, colleges, universities and governing bodies of various regulated professions and occupations.

The core operational work of the office can be divided into three main areas: intake and early resolution; individual investigations; and systemic investigations. Each of these areas also contributes to the office’s ongoing education and outreach initiatives.

The Intake and Early Resolution Team receives inquiries and complaints and provides information, assistance and referral services to complainants. Team members also deal with complaints that can be resolved quickly under our Early Resolution Program.

If a complaint cannot be resolved by the Intake and Early Resolution Team and is identified as requiring further assessment, it is assigned to an Ombudsperson Officer on one of the three individual investigation teams – the Health and Local Services Team, the Regulatory Programs Team or the Social Programs Team. The role of the Ombudsperson Officer is to impartially investigate and, where an administrative

unfairness is identified, to work to achieve a fair resolution.

In addition to investigating concerns of unfair government action and, where warranted, seeking redress of those concerns, the work done by the Intake and Early Resolution Team and the three Investigative Teams contributes to decisions about where a systemic approach would be appropriate and likely to produce useful and positive outcomes.

In addition to receiving and investigating individual concerns and complaints, the Office of the Ombudsperson also delivers on its mandate to oversee the fairness of administrative actions of government authorities by conducting in-depth systemic investigations and reporting the results typically conducted by the Systemic Investigations Team. Recent systemic reports have addressed a range of issues related to fairness in public administration including openness and transparency in local government, private career training oversight, bylaw enforcement, the inspection of correctional facilities, crown land allocation and income assistance call centre wait times.

From 2017/18 the Ombudsperson is also carrying out a pilot project on Preventative Ombudship. The program applies the Ombudsperson’s expertise in administrative fairness to proactively assist authorities to design and operate processes in a fair and reasonable manner, thereby preventing problems from occurring in the first place.

In the fall of 2018 the office began preparation for the 2019/20 implementation of the *Public Interest*

Disclosure Act (PIDA). Under the Act the Ombudsperson is responsible for providing advice to prospective disclosers of wrongdoing, investigating disclosures of wrongdoing and investigating allegations of reprisal.

Budget Request

The Office of the Ombudsperson prepared this budget using a bottom-up approach. Any operational or capital funds unexpended in a fiscal year are returned to the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

The Office of the Ombudsperson budget is divided into two parts: Core Ombudsperson Operations and Corporate Shared Services:

- **Core Ombudsperson Operations** includes activities relating to the office's intake, early resolution, investigative, systemic, advisory, education and preventative, and public interest disclosure implementation activities.
- **Corporate Shared Services** includes activities relating to finance, administration, building operations, human resources and information technology. These corporate shared services are provided by Ombudsperson employees not only to the Office of the Ombudsperson but also to three other co-located Officers of the Legislature. The costs of these services are allocated on a proportional basis between the four supported offices. The contribution of the other supported offices to these costs are reflected under STOB 88 Internal Recoveries in the Statement of Operations tables in this submission.

Budget Request for 2019/20

The 2019/20 budget request provides for the implementation of new statutory responsibilities under the *Public Interest*

Disclosure Act (PIDA), the continuation of operations and a reduction related to the completion of a time-limited project.

There is also a minor increase requested in this budget to cover known inflationary costs of wages and facilities.

Prevention Initiatives

The Statement of Operations budget for 2019/20 includes the continuation of the Prevention Initiatives pilot project.

A Preventative Ombudship initiative commenced in 2017/18 with a three year plan to conclude with a full assessment and future recommendations. Funding in 2019/20 is included for year three of the pilot project.

Files Awaiting Assignment

Not included for 2019/20 is the time-limited Files Awaiting Assignment project, the funding for which expires on March 31, 2019.

A three-year project to reduce the Files Awaiting Assignment backlog commenced in 2016/17. Part of the project involved one additional Ombudsperson Officer for three years, for which funding was approved as part of the 2016/17 budget through 2018/19.

2018/19 is the final year of the three-year funded project. Results as of October 31, 2018 show that the Files Awaiting Assignment list will, by completion of the project on March 31, 2019, be near the target of 50 investigation files established in 2015. Business process changes being implemented in 2018/19 will further reduce the Files Awaiting Assignment to the target in 2019/20. The completion of

this project results in the reduction of one position in 2019/20 per the commitment made to this committee three years ago.

Public Interest Disclosure

Implementation of *PIDA* represents the most substantial change to the statutory mandate of the Ombudsperson in its nearly 40 year history. *PIDA* imposes new obligations on the Ombudsperson as part of the new statutory scheme to encourage ethical conduct and allow for safe conduits for the disclosure of possible wrongdoing by public bodies in the province. The Ombudsperson will have mandatory duties with respect to providing advice to prospective disclosers of wrongdoing, receiving and investigating disclosures to determine whether allegations of wrongdoing are substantiated and investigating allegations that persons who disclose wrongdoing or cooperate with an investigation are the subject of reprisal.

Following the passage of *PIDA*, a supplementary budget allocation in 2018/19 was provided to allow the Ombudsperson to initiate internal readiness tasks (e.g. operational policy, IT changes, regulations support). Those five positions are carried forward and in 2019/20 will continue to work on external facing implementation (e.g. law enforcement and Provincial Health Officer protocol development, communication to public servants and others on the role of the Ombudsperson). Following Phase One of *PIDA*'s coming into force those staff will provide support to each successive phase of public bodies coming under the Act so that within five years *PIDA* coverage will be similar to coverage under the *Ombudsperson Act*.

In addition, starting in 2019/20 a six-person investigation team is required to carry out the statutory functions under the Act. Workload estimates have been developed following assessment of other jurisdictions, the particular provisions in B.C. legislation and awareness of existing and proposed wrongdoing disclosure pathways. Annual workload updates will be provided to the committee as the legislation is implemented across the broader public sector so that resourcing and workload are in balance.

Statement of Operations

Fiscal Years 2017/18 and 2018/19

	Fiscal 2017/18 (previous)		Fiscal 2018/19 (current)
	Budget	Actual	Budget
Funding			
Voted Appropriation	6,684,000	6,464,405	7,637,000
Total	6,684,000	6,464,405	7,637,000
Expenses			
Salaries	4,820,000	4,603,170	5,224,000
Employee Benefits	1,204,000	1,106,280	1,299,000
Travel	60,000	35,778	79,000
Professional Services	73,000	150,464	289,000
Information Systems	214,000	256,961	279,000
Office and Business Expenses	247,000	249,461	271,000
Informational Advertising and Publications	60,000	88,360	64,000
Statutory Advertising and Publications	22,000	14,686	22,000
Utilities, Materials and Supplies	41,000	48,296	47,000
Amortization	50,000	55,816	60,000
Building Occupancy	774,000	804,321	894,000
Other	-	-	-
Internal Recoveries	(816,000)	(874,550)	(826,000)
External Recoveries	(65,000)	(74,638)	(65,000)
Total Expenses	6,684,000	6,464,405	7,637,000
Capital Budget			
Information Systems, Furniture & Equipment	75,000	68,159	150,000
Total Capital	75,000	68,159	150,000

Budget Request by STOB

Fiscal Years 2019/20 – 2021/22

STOB	Expense Type	2018/19 (current) Approved Budget	2019/209 Proposed Estimates	Change From Previous Year	Fiscal 2020/21 Planned	Fiscal 2021/22 Planned
50	Salaries	4,869,000	5,670,000	801,000	5,681,000	5,862,000
51	Supplemental Salary	57,000	57,000	-	57,000	57,000
52	Employee Benefits	1,299,000	1,501,000	202,000	1,504,000	1,550,000
54	Officer of the Leg. Salary	298,000	304,000	6,000	304,000	304,000
57	Travel	79,000	94,000	15,000	94,000	94,000
60	Professional Services	289,000	320,000	31,000	320,000	320,000
63	Information Systems	279,000	271,000	(8,000)	271,000	271,000
65	Office and Business Expenses	271,000	308,000	37,000	308,000	317,000
67	Info., Advertising & Publications	64,000	106,000	42,000	106,000	106,000
68	Statutory Adv. & Publications	22,000	33,000	11,000	33,000	33,000
69	Utilities, Materials and Supplies	47,000	50,000	3,000	50,000	52,000
73	Amortization Expense	60,000	134,000	74,000	138,000	138,000
75	Building Occupancy	894,000	986,000	92,000	1,011,000	1,086,000
85	Other	-	-	-	-	-
88	Internal Recoveries	(826,000)	(896,000)	(70,000)	(910,000)	(922,000)
90	External Recoveries	(65,000)	(65,000)	-	(65,000)	(65,000)
	Total	7,637,000	8,873,000	1,236,000	8,902,000	9,203,000
Capital Budget						
	Info. Systems, Furniture & Equipment	150,000	138,000	(12,000)	43,000	43,000
	Total	150,000	138,000	(12,000)	43,000	43,000

Notes

Notes:

1. STOB 50 (Salaries) and STOB 52 (Employee Benefits) includes salaries for existing staff positions and the known financial impact of the salary increases.
2. STOB 63 (Information Systems) includes data lines, IDIR accounts, voice services, software licensing, data communication, network security and supplies.
3. STOB 65 (Office & Business Expenses) includes costs for office stationery and supplies, offsite file storage, postal and courier charges, printing expenses (other than reports), news subscriptions, staff training, photocopier leases, and business meeting expenses.
4. STOB 68 (Statutory Advertising & Publications) includes costs for preparing and printing the Annual Report to the Legislature.
5. STOB 69 (Utilities, Materials & Supplies) includes costs for utilities, recycling, books and supplies.
6. STOB 73 (Amortization) is the cost of repaying the Capital budget expenditures for information systems hardware and software and office furniture. Expenditures for information systems are amortized over three or five years depending on nature of the purchase. Expenditures for office furniture are amortized over five years.
7. STOB 75 (Building Occupancy) is the proportionate share of the costs associated with the office space of the four Independent Offices located at 947 Fort Street. Operating costs (e.g., building insurance, hydro, property taxes and maintenance) are anticipated to increase in subsequent years.
8. STOB 88 (Internal recoveries) is the amount contributed toward the operations of Corporate Shared Services (CSS) by the 3 other offices participating in this funding model. Services for CSS include information technology, finance, human resources, facilities and reception.
9. CAPITAL BUDGET is for the purchase of information systems hardware and software, office furniture and tenant improvements over \$50,000, and is consistent with the Capital budget in prior fiscal years. Capital amounts are repaid through amortization expense in STOB 73.

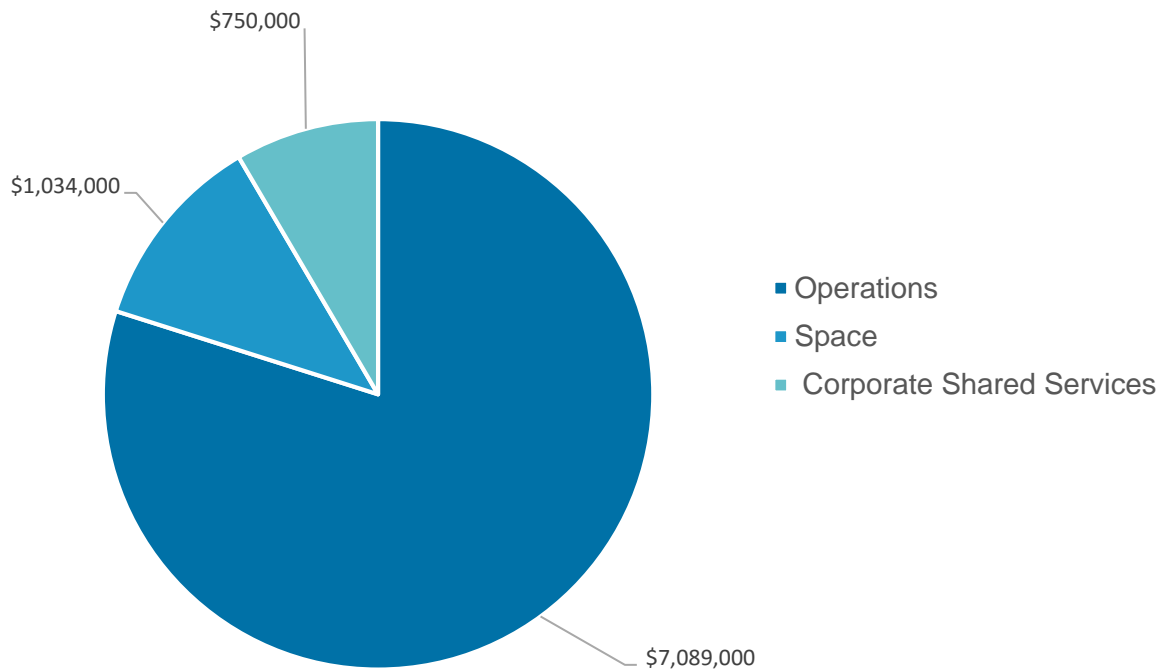
Budget Request by Ombudsperson Operations and Corporate Shared Services

Fiscal Years 2018/19 and 2019/20

STOB		Ombudsperson Operations			Corporate Shared Services			Total		
		Fiscal 2018/19 Budget (Current Year)	Fiscal 2019/20 Budget Request	Change	Fiscal 2018/19 Budget (Current Year)	Fiscal 2019/20 Budget Request	Change	Fiscal 2018/19 Budget (Current Year)	Fiscal 2019/20 Budget Request	Change
50	Salaries	3,825,000	4,482,000	657,000	1,044,000	1,188,000	144,000	4,869,000	5,670,000	801,000
51	Supplemental Salary	57,000	57,000	-	-	-	-	57,000	57,000	-
52	Benefits	1,038,000	1,203,000	165,000	261,000	298,000	37,000	1,299,000	1,501,000	202,000
54	Officer Salary	298,000	304,000	6,000	-	-	-	298,000	304,000	6,000
57	Travel	72,000	87,000	15,000	7,000	7,000	-	79,000	94,000	15,000
60	Professional Serv.	276,000	307,000	31,000	13,000	13,000	-	289,000	320,000	31,000
63	Info. Systems	162,000	179,000	17,000	117,000	92,000	(25,000)	279,000	271,000	(8,000)
65	Office & Business	226,000	262,000	36,000	45,000	46,000	1,000	271,000	308,000	37,000
67	Info, Adv.& Public'ns	64,000	106,000	42,000	-	-	-	64,000	106,000	42,000
68	Statutory Public	22,000	33,000	11,000	-	-	-	22,000	33,000	11,000
69	Utilities, Materials	45,000	48,000	3,000	2,000	2,000	-	47,000	50,000	3,000
73	Amortization	60,000	134,000	74,000	-	-	-	60,000	134,000	74,000
75	Building Occupancy	894,000	986,000	92,000	-	-	-	894,000	986,000	92,000
85	Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Subtotal	7,039,000	8,188,000	1,149,000	1,489,000	1,646,000	157,000	8,528,000	9,834,000	1,306,000
88	Internal Recoveries	-	-	-	(826,000)	(896,000)	(70,000)	(826,000)	(896,000)	(70,000)
90	External Recoveries	(65,000)	(65,000)	-	-	-	-	(65,000)	(65,000)	-
	Total	6,974,000	8,123,000	1,149,000	663,000	750,000	87,000	7,637,000	8,873,000	1,236,000

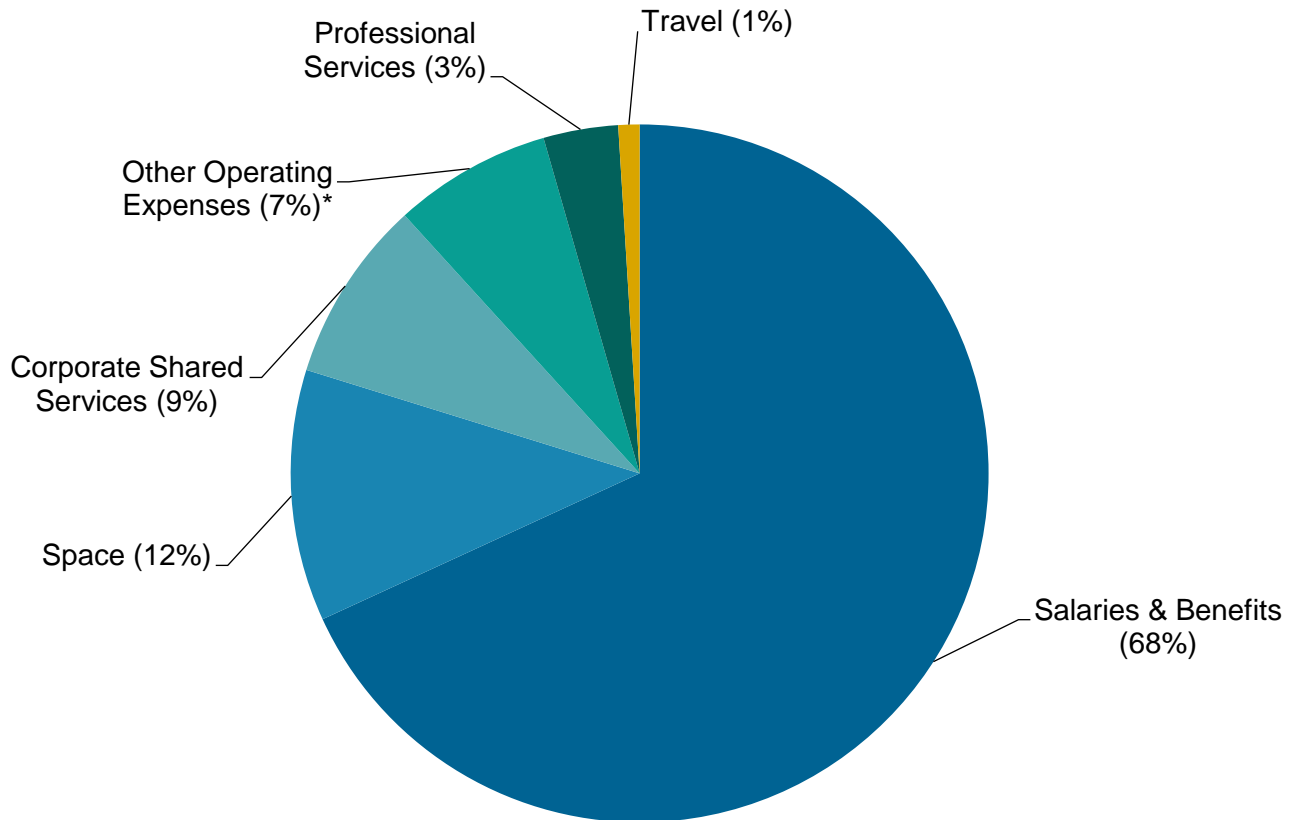
Budget Request by Expenditure Area

Fiscal Year 2019/20



Budget Request by Expenditure Type

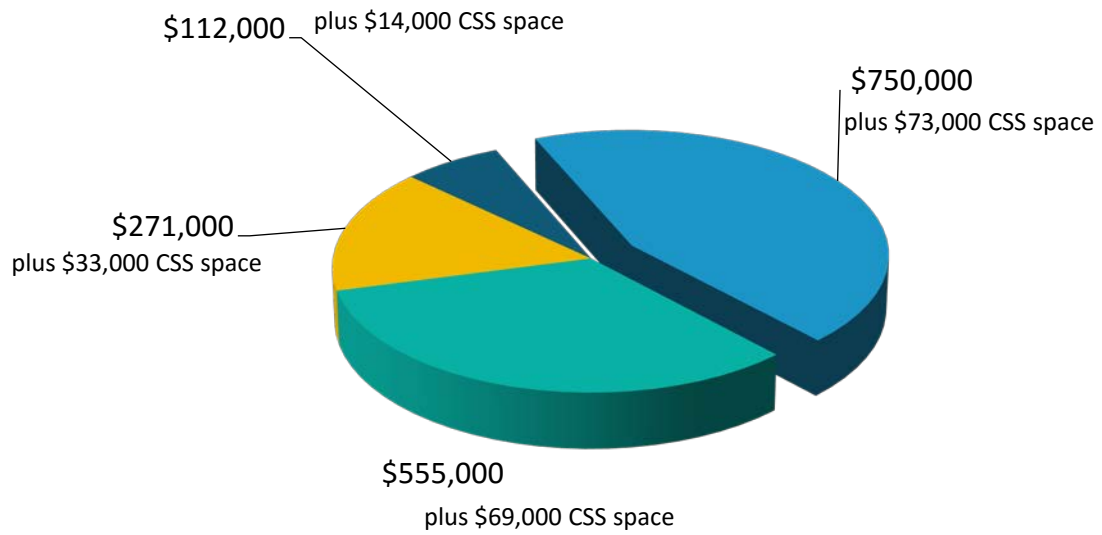
Fiscal Year 2019/20



* Other Operating STOBs includes information Systems (63), Office Expenses (65), reporting (67 and 68), amortization (73) and recoveries (90)

Corporate Shared Services Allocated Budget Request

By Officer of the Legislature



- Ombudsperson
- Information and Privacy Commissioner
- Police Complaint Commissioner
- Merit Commissioner

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