

# BUDGET SUBMISSION

2018/2019 – 2020/2021

*Presented to the*

**Select Standing Committee on  
Finance and Government Services**

November 22, 2017



The Office of the

**mbudsperson**

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 investigates complaints about the actions, inactions, decisions, policies and procedures of more than 2,800 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.

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. 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 and the inspection of correctional facilities.

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 placed on a Files Awaiting Assignment List. These files are assigned from that list to an Ombudsperson Officer on one of the three individual investigation teams – the Health and Local Services Team, the Regulatory Programs Team and 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.

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. Such a systemic approach could arise in the context of an individual complaint investigation conducted by an Ombudsperson Officer or a systemic investigation carried out by the Systemic Investigations Team.

From 2017/18 through 2019/20 the Ombudsperson is carrying out a three-year pilot project on Preventative Ombudship. The program applies the Ombudsperson’s expertise in administrative fairness to proactively assist authorities to operate in a fair and reasonable manner, thereby preventing problems from occurring in the first place. The program will be evaluated in 2019/20.

# 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 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 and 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 2018/19

The 2018/19 budget request provides for the continuation of operations, an increase to the capacity of one existing service, an initiative to better serve Indigenous people, and a minor adjustment to cover inflation and related costs.

### *Budget Request to Increase Systemic Investigation Capacity*

Funding is requested to normalize the Systemic Investigation Team to the same size as the three complaint investigation teams. In our experience, investigation teams comprised of six investigators represent an optimal team size, will reduce the cost ratio of management to investigators (investigators would be added but no increase to management complement) and will materially improve our capacity to produce systemic investigation reports from our current rate of 1-2 per year to 5-6 per year depending on scale and complexity of the individual reports. This would allow the Ombudsperson to address systemic issues arising in various public authorities that, to date, have not been investigated, to monitor prior systemic investigations more actively and in a more timely manner (and thus ensure improvements to public administration actually occur) and better leverage our expertise and experience derived from our complaint-driven investigatory work by conducting systemic investigations on emerging issues in a more timely manner.

### *Budget Request to Liaise with Aboriginal Communities*

Improving service to underserved communities is a strategic priority as set out in our 2016-2021 Strategic Plan. Addressing service to Aboriginal people is the most significant and pressing matter to address under this strategic priority.

The Ombudsperson intends to address this priority in a collaborative, respectful manner in partnership with Indigenous communities. Developing a plan in partnership will take some time and the Ombudsperson anticipates returning as part of the 2020/21 budget planning process with an Aboriginal Communities Service Plan and accompanying budget.

In the meantime the office requires funding to establish appropriate links with First Nations and other Indigenous communities and to develop a plan over the next 24 months. Requested funding for 2018/19 and 2019/20 will allow for one Aboriginal Liaison Officer and associated planning and liaison costs.

#### *Budget Request to Cover Inflationary Costs*

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

### **Budget Impact of Two Time-Limited Projects Funded in Prior Years**

The Statement of Operations budget includes two items that were presented this time last year. The first is a continuation of the three-year funding to assist with Files Awaiting Assignment reduction. The second is the continuation of the three-year Prevention Initiatives pilot project.

#### *Files Awaiting Assignment*

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 and continued in 2017/18.

2018/19 is the final year of the three-year funded project. Results as of October 31, 2017 show that the backlog reduction is on track with the three-year plan presented in November 2015.

#### *Prevention Initiatives*

A three-year preventative Ombudship initiative commenced in 2017/18. Funding in 2018/19 is included for year two of the pilot project. An interim report on the pilot will inform the 2019/20 budget request.

### **Net Impact 2017/18 to 2020/21**

The net impact of the above adjustments from the current year (2017/18) compared to the final year of this three-year service plan (2020/21) is an operating budget increase of \$122,000. This represents an increase of 1.6% in comparing the operating budget of the current year to that of the final year of this three-year service plan.

In the intermediate years, there are greater budget fluctuations (one year of increase followed by two years of decreases) which arise from the timing of the commencement and completion of time-limited initiatives previously approved by the Select Standing Committee.

# STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

*Fiscal Years 2016/17 and 2017/18*

	Fiscal 2016/17 (previous)		Fiscal 2017/18 (current)
	Budget	Actual	Budget
<b>Funding</b>			
Voted Appropriation	7,117,000	7,082,294	6,653,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,117,000</b>	<b>7,082,294</b>	<b>6,653,000</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Salaries	4,813,000	4,799,521	4,795,000
Employee Benefits	1,196,000	1,153,890	1,198,000
Travel	55,000	61,998	60,000
Professional Services	265,000	382,249	73,000
Information Systems	235,000	258,320	214,000
Office and Business Expenses	260,000	248,016	247,000
Informational Advertising and Publications	85,000	103,868	60,000
Statutory Advertising and Publications	22,000	16,377	22,000
Utilities, Materials and Supplies	48,000	41,689	41,000
Amortization	115,000	110,974	50,000
Building Occupancy	837,000	794,613	774,000
Other	14,000	-	-
Internal Recoveries	(763,000)	(823,000)	(816,000)
External Recoveries	(65,000)	(66,221)	(65,000)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>7,117,000</b>	<b>7,082,294</b>	<b>6,653,000</b>
<b>Capital Budget</b>			
Information Systems, Furniture & Equipment	75,000	26,696	75,000
<b>Total Capital</b>	<b>75,000</b>	<b>26,696</b>	<b>75,000</b>

# BUDGET REQUEST BY STOB

*Fiscal Years 2018/19-2020/21*

STOB	Expense Type	2017/18 (current) Approved Budget	2018/19 Proposed Estimates	Change From Previous Year	Fiscal 2019/20 Planned	Fiscal 2020/21 Planned
50	Salaries	4,465,000	4,992,000	527,000	4,927,000	4,560,000
51	Supplemental Salary	57,000	57,000	-	57,000	57,000
52	Employee Benefits	1,198,000	1,324,000	126,000	1,308,000	1,216,000
54	Officer of the Leg. Salary	273,000	273,000	-	273,000	273,000
57	Travel	60,000	71,000	11,000	71,000	66,000
60	Professional Services	73,000	146,000	73,000	146,000	63,000
63	Information Systems	214,000	221,000	7,000	221,000	221,000
65	Office and Business Expenses	247,000	275,000	28,000	275,000	259,000
67	Info., Advertising & Publications	60,000	69,000	9,000	69,000	65,000
68	Statutory Adv. & Publications	22,000	22,000	-	22,000	22,000
69	Utilities, Materials and Supplies	41,000	45,000	4,000	45,000	45,000
73	Amortization Expense	50,000	50,000	-	50,000	50,000
75	Building Occupancy	774,000	820,000	46,000	820,000	774,000
85	Other	-	-	-	-	-
88	Internal Recoveries	(816,000)	(826,000)	(10,000)	(831,000)	(831,000)
90	External Recoveries	(65,000)	(65,000)	-	(65,000)	(65,000)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6,653,000</b>	<b>7,474,000</b>	<b>821,000</b>	<b>7,388,000</b>	<b>6,775,000</b>
<b>Capital Budget</b>						
	Info. Systems, Furniture & Equipment	75,000	75,000	-	75,000	75,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>75,000</b>	<b>75,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>75,000</b>	<b>75,000</b>



**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. The impacts of the new Management Classification and Compensation Framework established by central government last fiscal year are included for future years.
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 85 (Other Expenses) is the amount contributed toward the operations of Corporate Shared Services which include information technology, finance, human resources, facilities and reception.
9. CAPITAL BUDGET is for the purchase of information systems hardware and software, and office furniture, and is consistent with the Capital budget in prior fiscal years. Capital amounts are repaid through amortization expense in STOB 73.

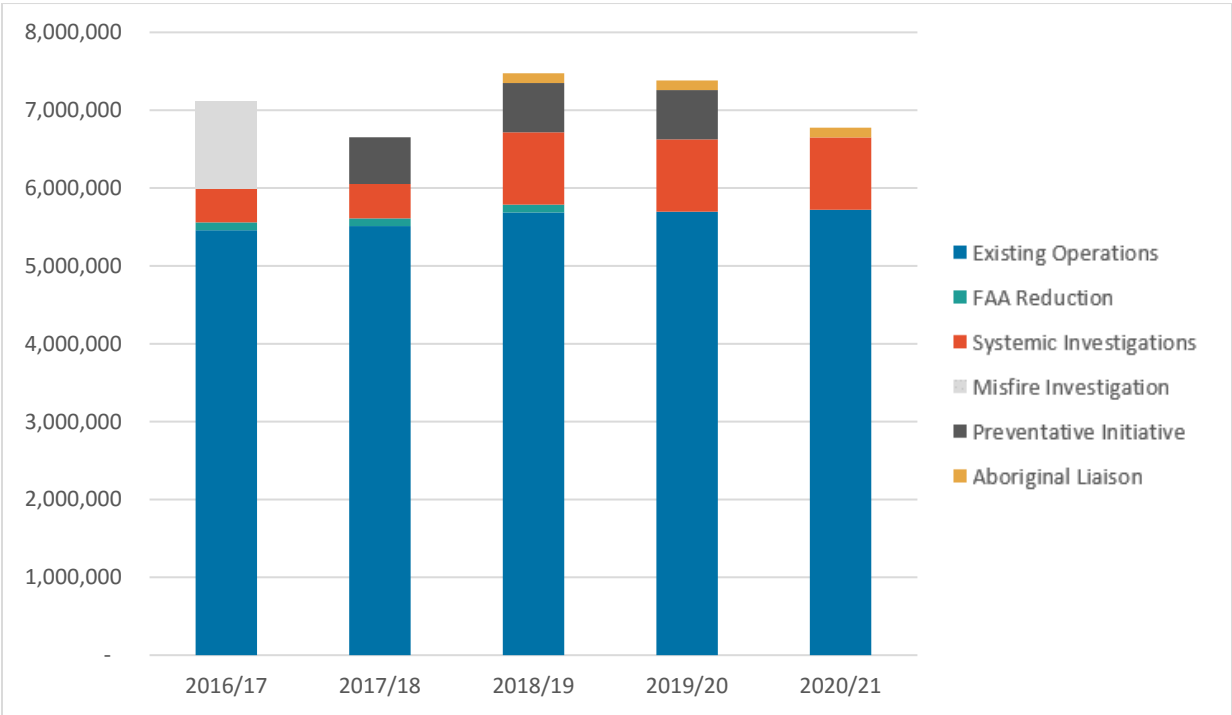
# BUDGET REQUEST BY OMBUDSPERSON OPERATIONS AND CORPORATE SHARED SERVICES

*Fiscal Years 2017/18 & 2018/19*

STOB		Ombudsperson Operations			Corporate Shared Services			Total		
		Fiscal 2017/18 Budget (Current Year)	Fiscal 2018/19 Budget Request	Change	Fiscal 2017/18 Budget (Current Year)	Fiscal 2018/19 Budget Request	Change	Fiscal 2017/18 Budget (Current Year)	Fiscal 2018/19 Budget Request	Change
50	Salaries	3,459,000	<b>3,977,000</b>	518,000	1,006,000	<b>1,015,000</b>	9,000	4,465,000	<b>4,992,000</b>	527,000
51	Supplemental Salary	57,000	<b>57,000</b>	-	-	-	-	57,000	<b>57,000</b>	-
52	Benefits	946,000	<b>1,070,000</b>	124,000	252,000	<b>254,000</b>	2,000	1,198,000	<b>1,324,000</b>	126,000
54	Officer Salary	273,000	<b>273,000</b>	-	-	-	-	273,000	<b>273,000</b>	-
57	Travel	55,000	<b>64,000</b>	9,000	5,000	<b>7,000</b>	2,000	60,000	<b>71,000</b>	11,000
60	Professional Serv.	60,000	<b>133,000</b>	73,000	13,000	<b>13,000</b>	-	73,000	<b>146,000</b>	73,000
63	Info. Systems	145,000	<b>150,000</b>	5,000	69,000	<b>71,000</b>	2,000	214,000	<b>221,000</b>	7,000
65	Office & Business	204,000	<b>230,000</b>	26,000	43,000	<b>45,000</b>	2,000	247,000	<b>275,000</b>	28,000
67	Info, Adv.& Public'ns	60,000	<b>69,000</b>	9,000	-	-	-	60,000	<b>69,000</b>	9,000
68	Statutory Public	22,000	<b>22,000</b>	-	-	-	-	22,000	<b>22,000</b>	-
69	Utilities, Materials	39,000	<b>43,000</b>	4,000	2,000	<b>2,000</b>	-	41,000	<b>45,000</b>	4,000
73	Amortization	50,000	<b>50,000</b>	-	-	-	-	50,000	<b>50,000</b>	-
75	Building Occupancy	774,000	<b>820,000</b>	46,000	-	-	-	774,000	<b>820,000</b>	46,000
85	Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>Subtotal</b>	6,144,000	<b>6,958,000</b>	814,000	1,390,000	<b>1,407,000</b>	17,000	7,534,000	<b>8,365,000</b>	<b>831,000</b>
88	Internal Recoveries	-	-	-	(816,000)	<b>(826,000)</b>	(10,000)	(816,000)	<b>(826,000)</b>	(10,000)
90	External Recoveries	(65,000)	<b>(65,000)</b>	-	-	-	-	(65,000)	<b>(65,000)</b>	-
	<b>Total</b>	6,079,000	<b>6,893,000</b>	814,000	574,000	<b>581,000</b>	7,000	6,653,000	<b>7,474,000</b>	821,000

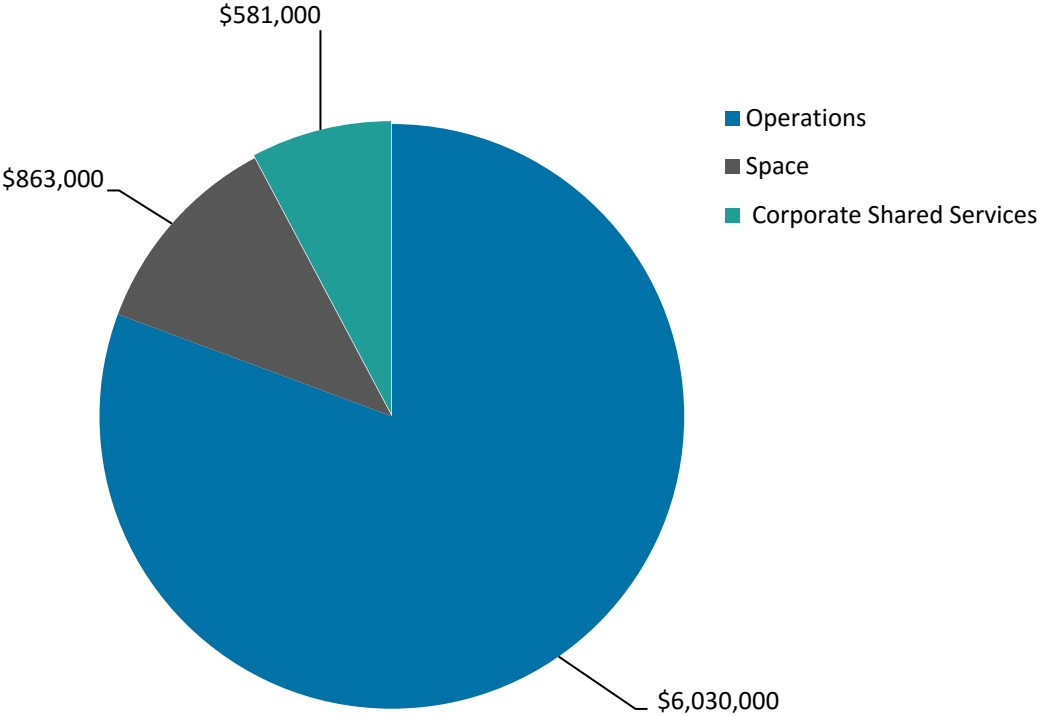
# BUDGET ALLOCATION BY CATEGORY

*Fiscal Years 2016/17 to 2019/20*



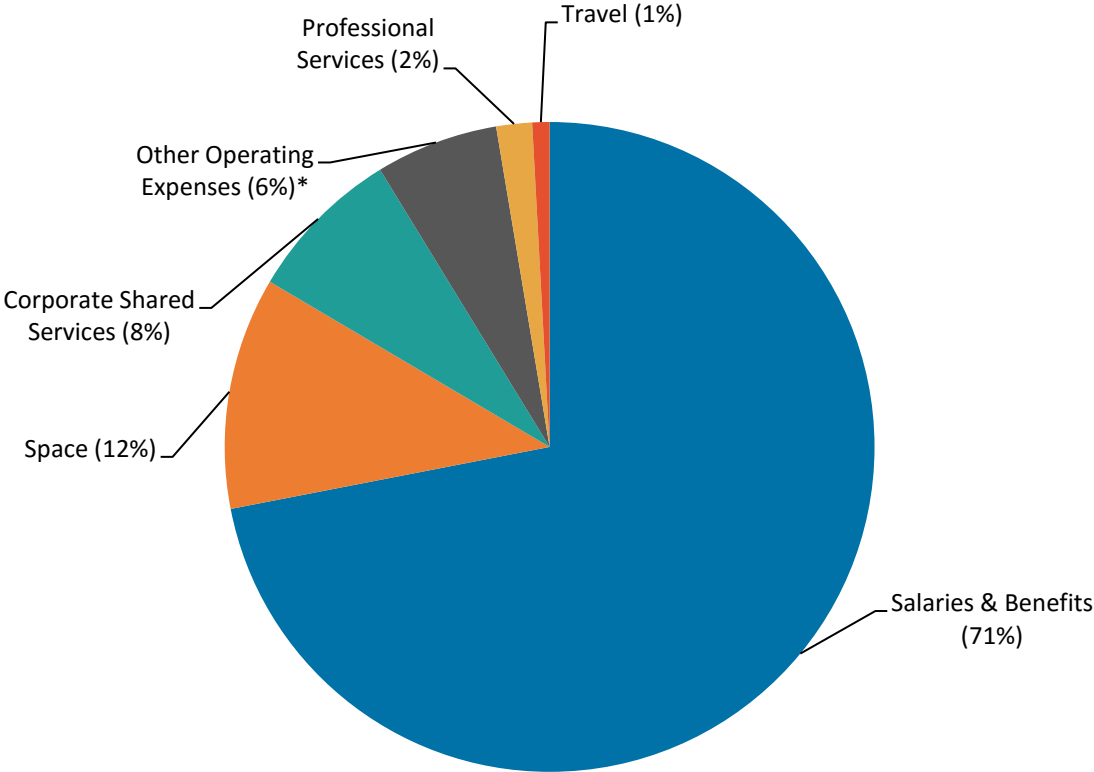
# BUDGET REQUEST BY EXPENDITURE AREA

*Fiscal Year 2018/19*



# BUDGET REQUEST BY EXPENDITURE TYPE

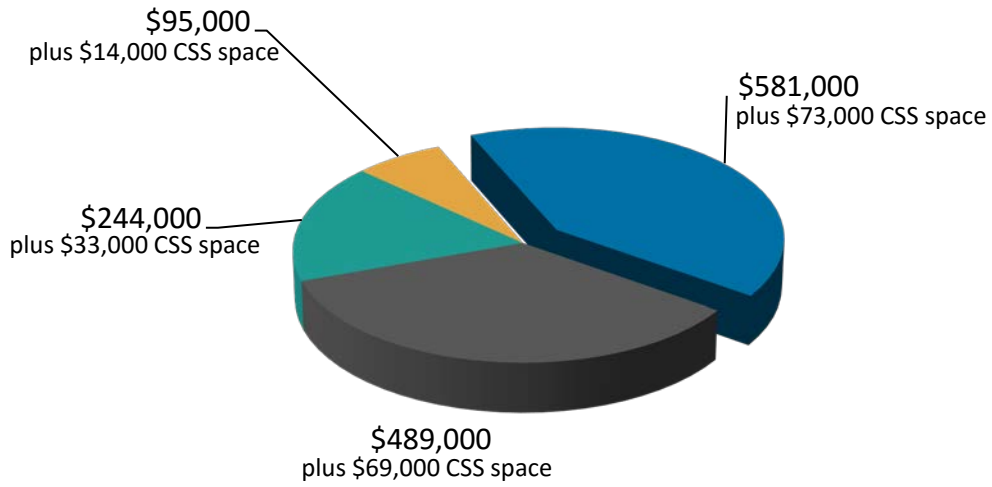
Fiscal Year 2018/19



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

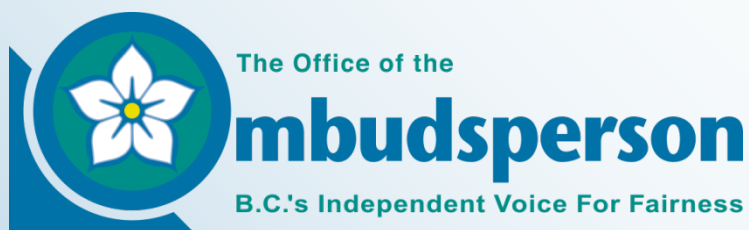
# CORPORATE SHARED SERVICES ALLOCATED BUDGET REQUEST

*by Officer of the Legislature*



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





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