



Office of the **Merit Commissioner**

**Budget Submission
Fiscal Years
2012/13 – 2014/15**

**Presented to
The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services
Legislative Assembly of British Columbia**

November 15, 2011



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Overview

This budget submission for the Office of the Merit Commissioner is accompanied by the Service Plan for 2012/13 to 2014/15 which describes the broad direction for the Office over the same three-year time horizon. This budget request to the Committee is mindful that government delivers services from a limited public purse. The Office's budget request of \$1,024,000 represents a 4% reduction to the overall budget allocation.

In the past fiscal year, the Office made effective use of the existing budget allocation and fulfilled commitments as outlined to the Committee in our Service Plan last year. All four staff positions within the organization remained filled for most of the year; five external auditors continued to be engaged on a contract basis; an Audit Advisory Committee continued and was consulted as appropriate; and substantial progress was made on implementation of the audit plan. For the coming years, a number of special studies and initiatives are planned in addition to the ongoing audit work.

Fiscal 2011/12 was the Office's first full year of occupancy in shared accommodations at 947 Fort Street. The budget included costs for the new space, in addition to funds to meet the Office's obligations for the remaining lease at the Office's previous location at 1070 Douglas Street. Shared Services BC, the province's lease manager, was successful in sub-leasing this space at a discounted rate, thereby reducing the Office's costs by \$39,000. These funds will remain unspent in the current fiscal year.

The Office's fiscal 2012/13 budget request includes \$11,000 for the balance of the lease obligations, pending expiry of the lease in November 2012.

The request for operating funds in the amount of \$1,024,000 is considered sufficient and necessary to allow an efficient office with four staff to carry out an ambitious work plan, to respond promptly and appropriately to requests from employees for reviews of appointment decisions, and to communicate the value of merit and its impact on employee engagement and productivity.



Mandate

The Merit Commissioner’s Office provides independent oversight and insight into merit-based hiring in the BC Public Service.

All appointments to and within the Public Service must be made on the principle of merit. Merit means that appointments are made on the basis of an assessment of competence and ability to do the job, and are not influenced by patronage. To carry out this mandate we focus on our core services: annual and special audits; independent staffing reviews; and education about the requirements of merit-based staffing.

The Office provides credible and relevant information about staffing on which the employer will act to produce positive changes. These outputs all support the long-term goal of building public confidence and a strong consensus that the Public Service is qualified, and hired fairly according to the principle of merit.



Priorities for Fiscal 2012/13

The Service Plan provides details that support each of the following priorities.

- Conclude the full-year 2011 Merit Performance Audit designed to examine appointments made under changed hiring practices introduced by the BC Public Service Agency.
- Conduct a modified audit of 2012 appointments potentially focused on specific aspects of the appointment process, specific organizations, or specific occupational categories.
- Include a special stratification of appointments audited to allow a focus on the Administrative Support group, an occupational group where merit-based hiring is considered at higher risk. (This group was selected as the BC Public Service Work Environment Survey (WES) results have continued to indicate low confidence that hiring is based on merit in their work-unit, and as the pooled staffing approach is being used for this group.)
- As a follow up to the audit undertaken in 2009/10, conduct a special audit of temporary appointments originally intended to be under seven months but which have continued significantly beyond that timeframe.
- Carry out a special study related to recourse and redress procedures currently in place to determine if they are sufficient to ensure employees have easy access to timely and accurate information about their performance in competitive processes.
- Undertake a study on the impact on merit-based hiring of the trend toward restricted competitive processes.



Statement of Operations (Previous and Current Fiscal Years)

	Fiscal 2010/11 (previous)		Fiscal 2011/12 (current)
	Budget	Actual	Budget
Funding			
Voted Appropriation	965,000	883,377	1,062,000
Total	965,000	883,377	1,062,000
Expense Type			
Salaries	534,000	477,528	534,000
Employee Benefits	109,000	99,990	109,000
Travel	13,000	9,378	13,000
Centralized Management Support Services	0	0	0
Professional Services	100,000	92,899	100,000
Information Systems	31,000	29,424	31,000
Office and Business Expenses	25,000	26,520	25,000
Information, Advertising and Publications	2,000	0	2,000
Statutory Advertising and Publications	5,000	10,353	5,000
Utilities, Materials and Supplies	2,000	1,035	2,000
Amortization	37,000	21,741	54,000
Building Occupancy	107,000	114,509	187,000
Other Expenses	0	0	0
Internal Recoveries	0	0	0
External Recoveries	0	0	0
Total Expenses	965,000	883,377	1,062,000
Capital Budget			
Info. Systems, & Furniture & Equipment	8,000	9,142	15,000
Tenant Improvements	144,000	142,122	0
Total Capital	152,000	151,264	15,000



Proposed Budget

By Standard Object of Expenditure (STOB)

		Fiscal 2011/12 (current) Budget	Fiscal 2012/13 (proposed) Estimates*	Change	Fiscal 2013/14 Planned	Fiscal 2014/15 Planned
STOB	Expense Type					
50	Salaries	392,000	392,000 ¹	0	392,000	392,000
51	Supplemental Salary	5,000	30,000 ²	25,000	5,000	5,000
52	Employee Benefits	109,000	109,000 ¹	0	109,000	109,000
54	Officer of the Leg. Salary	137,000	137,000 ³	0	137,000	137,000
57	Travel	13,000	13,000	0	13,000	13,000
59	Centralized Mgmt Support	0	0	0	0	0
60	Professional Services	100,000	75,000	(25,000)	100,000	100,000
63	Information Systems	31,000	31,000	0	31,000	31,000
65	Office and Business Expenses	25,000	25,000 ⁴	0	25,000	25,000
67	Info., Advertising & Publications	2,000	2,000 ⁵	0	2,000	2,000
68	Statutory Adv. & Publications	5,000	5,000 ⁶	0	5,000	5,000
69	Utilities , Materials and Supplies	2,000	2,000 ⁷	0	2,000	2,000
73	Amortization Expense	54,000	54,000 ⁸	0	54,000	54,000
75	Building Occupancy	187,000	149,000 ⁹	(38,000)	143,000	149,000
85	Other Expenses	0	0	0	0	0
88	Internal Recoveries	0	0	0	0	0
90	External Recoveries	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	1,062,000	1,024,000	(38,000)	1,018,000	1,024,000
Capital Budget						
	Info. Systems, Furniture & Equipment	15,000	15,000 ¹⁰	0	15,000	15,000
	Total	15,000	15,000	0	15,000	15,000
Full Time Equivalents						
	Total	4	4	0	4	4

* Fiscal 2012/13 Proposed Estimates reflect expiry of lease at former location on Nov. 30, 2012.



Notes:

1. STOB 50 (Salaries) and STOB 52 (Employee Benefits) include funds for four positions in Fiscal 2012/13 (no change) and the Office's portion of Shared Services costs.
2. STOB 51 (Supplemental Salary) includes costs for maternity leave in Fiscal 2012/13.
3. STOB 54 (Officer of the Legislature Salary) the salary for the Merit Commissioner is set by Order in Council.
4. STOB 65 (Office and Business Expenses) includes costs for office supplies, offsite file storage, postal and courier charges, printing and photocopying expenses (other than reports), newspaper subscriptions, staff training (including Pacific Leaders charges), and business meeting expenses.
5. STOB 67 (Information, Advertising and Publications) includes costs for printing public reports other than the Annual Report to the Legislature.
6. STOB 68 (Statutory Advertising and Publications) includes costs for preparation and printing of the Annual Report to the Legislature.
7. STOB 69 (Utilities, Materials, and Supplies) includes costs for utilities such as hydro and cablevision and recycling, books, and supplies.
8. STOB 73 (Amortization) is the cost of repaying the Capital Budget expenditures for tenant improvements, furniture and information systems hardware and software. Tenant improvements and furniture expenditures are amortized on a monthly basis over five years, whereas information systems expenditures are amortized over 3 years.
9. STOB 75 (Building Occupancy) is the Merit Commissioner's share of the consolidated office space for the four independent offices at 947 Fort Street. The Fiscal 2012/13 Proposed Estimates includes eight months partial rent for the Office's leased space at 1070 Douglas Street. The lease expires on Nov. 30, 2012.
10. CAPITAL BUDGET is for the purchase of Information Systems Hardware and Software and Furniture and is consistent with the 2011/12 budget. Capital amounts are repaid through amortization in STOB 73.



Proposed Budget By Business Area

Business Area	Current Year	Proposed		
	Fiscal 2011/12	Fiscal 2012/13 Estimates*	Fiscal 2013/14 Budget	Fiscal 2014/15 Budget

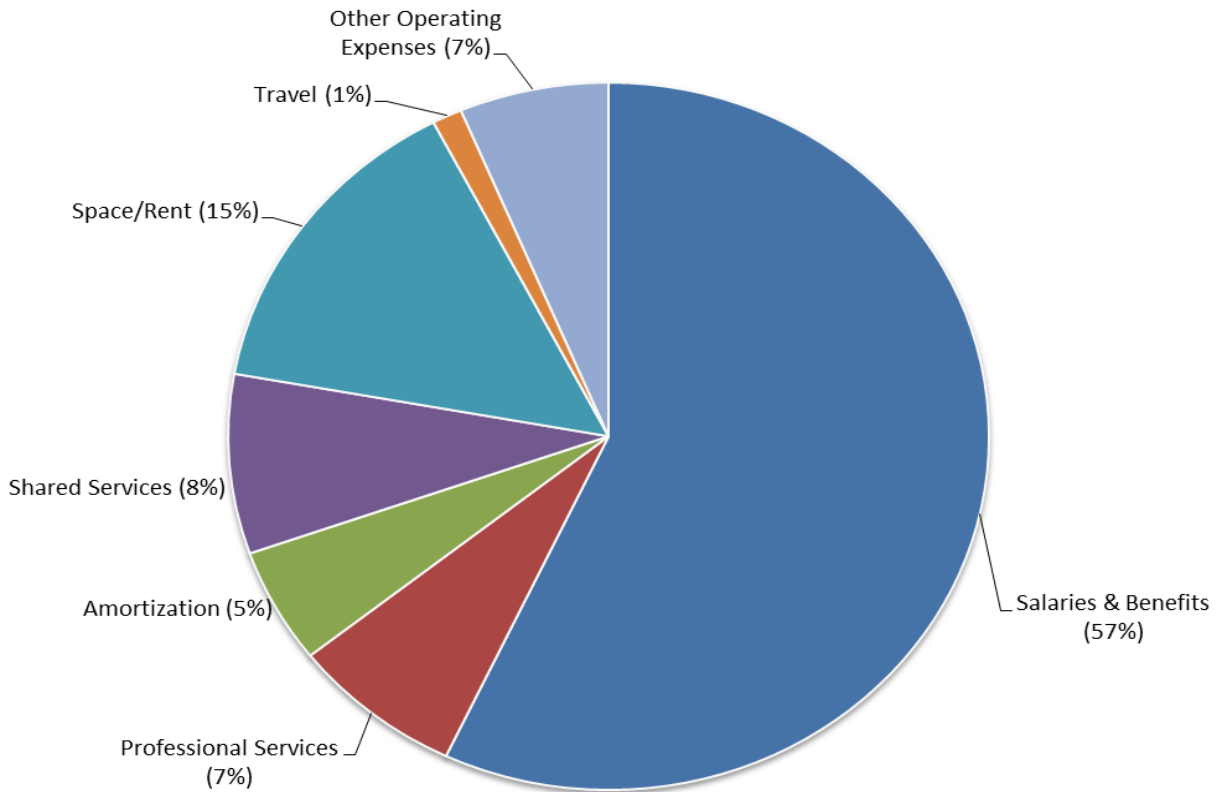
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Core Operating Services	978	940	934	940
Shared Services	84	84	84	84
Total	1,062	1,024	1,018	1,024

Capital Budget (\$000)				
Info. Systems, Furniture & Equipment	15	15	15	15
Total	15	15	15	15

* Fiscal 2012/13 Estimates reflect expiry of lease at former location on November 30, 2012.



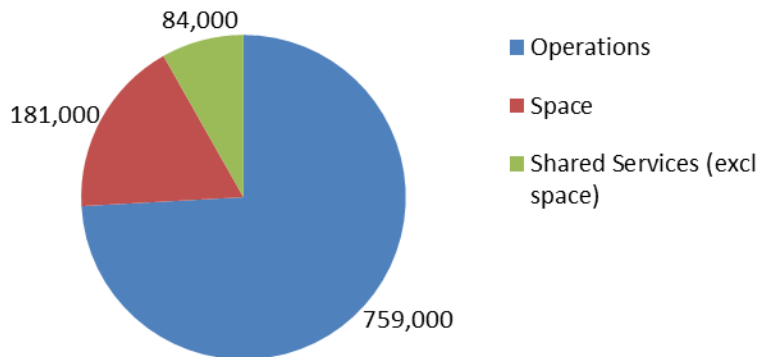
Proposed Operating Budget by Expenditure Type Fiscal 2012/13



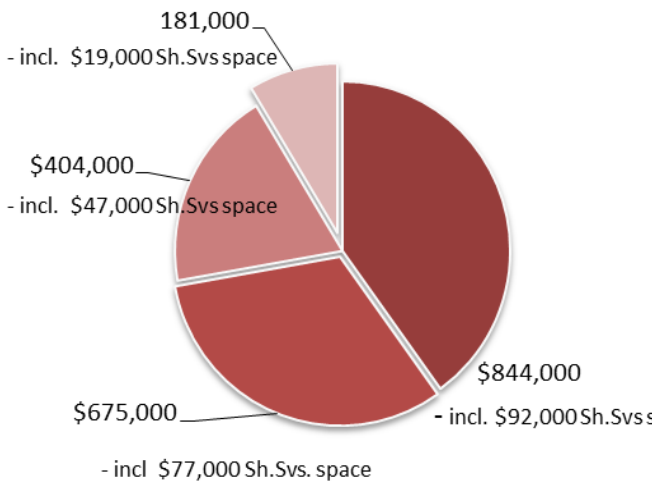


Proposed Space and Shared Services Budgets Fiscal 2012/13

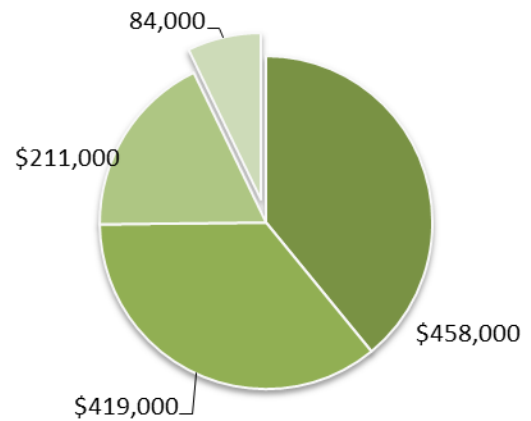
**Operating Budget Request
Office of the Merit Commissioner**
Total: \$1,024,000



Space Budget, All Offices
(incl Amortization of Tenant Improvement Capital Costs)
Total: \$2,104,000



Shared Services Budget, All Offices
(excl. Space for Shared Services)
Total: \$1,172,000



- Ombudsperson
- Info & Privacy Comm.
- Police Complaint Comm.
- Merit Commissioner

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