

BUDGET SUBMISSION

2017/2018 – 2019/2020

Presented to the

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

November 1, 2016



The Office of the

ombudsperson

B.C.'s Independent Voice For Fairness

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Overview of Operations 1
- Budget Request 2
- Statement of Operations 4
- Budget Request by STOB..... 5
- Budget Request by Business Area 7
- Budget Request by Ombudsperson Operations, Corporate Shared Services,
& Committee Referral 8
- Chart: Budget Request 9
- Chart: Budget Request by Expenditure Area 10
- Chart: Budget Request by Expenditure Type 11
- Chart: Corporate Shared Services Allocated Budget Request by Officer of the Legislature 12
- Appendix 1: Three Year Budget Plan, by STOB..... 13
- Appendix 2: Budget versus Actual Results for Prior Fiscal Year, by STOB..... 14
- Appendix 3: Three Year Actual Financial Results, by STOB..... 15

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.

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, 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 2017/18

The 2017/18 budget request provides for the continuation of our existing operations, a minor adjustment to cover inflation and related costs, and one significant pilot initiative. The proposed initiative, a cornerstone of our Strategic Plan and supported by public authorities, is a new three-year pilot project to deliver a preventative ombudship program. The associated costs for the pilot project and inflation adjustment are both contained in the Operating request.

Budget Request to Implement Preventative Ombudship Initiative

Funding is requested to commence a three-year pilot project to deliver a preventative ombudship program to build on and utilize our capacity to take proactive measures to reduce administrative unfairness by public authorities. This request is for \$693,000 for each of the next three years to implement this initiative which was sought by public stakeholders consulted on the 2016-21 Strategic Plan. The initiative will proactively work individually and collectively with public authorities to make administration more fair and transparent. Through this initiative the office will issue best practices guides, develop and deliver fairness training for public servants, host problem-solving workshops and assist authorities with program change.

The three-year pilot project will be constructed with evaluation criteria developed at the outset of the three-year project and evaluated during the course of and upon completion of the project.

Budget Request to Cover Inflationary Costs

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

Treatment of Incremental 2016/17 Budget in 2017/18

The Statement of Operations budget includes two aspects 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 elimination of the Committee referral investigation budget.

Budget Request to Reduce Files Awaiting Assignment Backlog

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

2017/18 is year two of the three-year funded project. Results as of October 31, 2016 show that the backlog reduction is on track with the forecast presented in November 2015.

Elimination of Budget to Fund Committee Referral Investigation

Amounts related to the July 29, 2015 Committee referral which represented time limited allocations in 2015/16 and 2016/17 are shown as a segregated amount and have been removed from the budget as of March 31, 2017.

This reflects the intention to complete the Committee referral investigation and report during 2016/17.

Net Impact 2016/17 to 2019/20

The net impact of the above adjustments is an operating budget reduction in 2017/18 of \$464,000. In addition, a further operating budget reduction of \$98,000 is forecast for 2019/20.

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

FISCAL YEARS 2015/16 AND 2016/17

	2015/16		2016/17
	(previous)		(current)
	Budget	Actual	Budget
Funding			
Voted Appropriation	6,575,000	6,321,000	7,117,000
Total	6,575,000	6,321,000	7,117,000
Expenses			
Salaries	4,433,000	4,197,000	4,813,000
Employee Benefits	1,095,000	1,076,000	1,196,000
Travel	55,000	36,000	55,000
Professional Services	166,000	391,000	265,000
Information Systems	249,000	250,000	235,000
Office and Business Expenses	300,000	237,000	260,000
Informational Advertising and Publications	60,000	38,000	85,000
Statutory Advertising and Publications	22,000	17,000	22,000
Utilities, Materials and Supplies	42,000	43,000	48,000
Amortization	193,000	170,000	115,000
Building Occupancy	786,000	716,000	837,000
Other	-	-	14,000
Internal Recoveries	(761,000)	(782,000)	(763,000)
External Recoveries	(65,000)	(68,000)	(65,000)
Total Expenses	6,575,000	6,321,000	7,117,000
Capital Budget			
Information Systems, Furniture & Equipment	187,000	146,000	75,000
Total Capital	187,000	146,000	75,000

BUDGET REQUEST BY STOB

FISCAL YEARS 2017/18-2019/20

STOB	Expense Type	2016/17 (current) Approved Budget	2017/18 Proposed Estimates	Change From Previous Year	Fiscal 2018/19 Planned	Fiscal 2019/20 Planned
50	Salaries	4,465,000	4,465,000	-	4,483,000	4,406,000
51	Supplemental Salary	75,000	57,000	(18,000)	57,000	57,000
52	Employee Benefits	1,196,000	1,198,000	2,000	1,203,000	1,184,000
54	Officer of the Leg. Salary	273,000	273,000	-	273,000	273,000
57	Travel	55,000	60,000	5,000	60,000	60,000
60	Professional Services	265,000	73,000	(192,000)	73,000	73,000
63	Information Systems	235,000	214,000	(21,000)	214,000	214,000
65	Office and Business Expenses	260,000	247,000	(13,000)	247,000	247,000
67	Info., Advertising & Publications	85,000	60,000	(25,000)	60,000	60,000
68	Statutory Adv. & Publications	22,000	22,000	-	22,000	22,000
69	Utilities, Materials and Supplies	48,000	41,000	(7,000)	43,000	43,000
73	Amortization Expense	115,000	50,000	(65,000)	50,000	50,000
75	Building Occupancy	837,000	774,000	(63,000)	776,000	779,000
85	Other	14,000	-	(14,000)	-	-
88	Internal Recoveries	(763,000)	(816,000)	(53,000)	(823,000)	(828,000)
90	External Recoveries	(65,000)	(65,000)	-	(65,000)	(65,000)
	Total	7,117,000	6,653,000	(464,000)	6,673,000	6,575,000
	Capital Budget					
	Info. Systems, Furniture & Equipment	75,000	75,000	-	75,000	75,000
	Total	75,000	75,000	-	75,000	75,000

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 for Schedule A (union classified). The impact of the PSA management reclassification plan is not known at this time.
2. STOB 54 (Officer of the Legislature Salary) – The salary for the Ombudsperson is set, by statute, as equal to the salary of the Chief Judge of the Provincial Court, new rates for 2017/18 have not been announced.
3. STOB 63 (Information Systems) – Includes data lines, IDIR accounts, voice services, licensing, data communication, network security and supplies.
4. STOB 65 (Office & Business Expenses) – Includes costs for office stationary and supplies, offsite file storage, postal and courier charges, printing expenses (other than reports), news subscriptions, staff training, photocopier leases and business meeting expenses.
5. STOB 67 (Informational Advertising & Publications) – Includes the cost of printing public reports other than the Annual Report to the Legislature.
6. STOB 68 (Statutory Advertising & Publications) – Includes the cost for preparing and printing the Annual Report to the Legislature.
7. STOB 69 (Utilities, Materials & Supplies) – Includes the cost for utilities, recycling, books and supplies.
8. STOB 73 (Amortization) – Is the cost of repaying the Capital budget expenditures for information systems hardware and software, tenant improvements and office furniture. Expenditures for information systems are amortized over three years. Expenditures for tenant improvements and office furniture are amortized over five years.
9. STOB 75 (Building Occupancy) – The Office's share of the costs for the consolidated office space for four Independent Offices of the Legislature at 947 Fort Street.
10. CAPITAL BUDGET – For the purchase of information systems hardware and software and office furniture, and is consistent with the Capital budget in fiscal year 2015/16. Capital amounts are repaid through amortization expense in STOB 73.

BUDGET REQUEST BY BUSINESS AREA

FISCAL YEARS 2017/18-2019/20

Business Area	Current Year	Plan		
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19*	2019/20*
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Ombudsperson Operations				
- Early Resolution	451	453	455	447
- Intake	651	654	658	645
- Investigations	3,877	3,892	3,906	3,837
- Systemic Investigations	440	442	444	436
- Referral Investigation	1,188	-	-	-
- Preventative Pilot Project	-	693	693	693
Total Ombudsperson Operations	6,608	6,134	6,156	6,058
Total cost of Shared Services	1,312	1,335	1,340	1,345
Less Recovery from Other Offices	(803)	(816)	(823)	(828)
Total Budget	7,117	6,653	6,673	6,575
Capital Expenses (\$000)				
Info. Systems, furniture & equipment	75	75	75	75
Total	75	75	75	75
*18/19 and 19/20 have minimal increases for inflation (known wage lifts and anticipated facilities cost increases).				

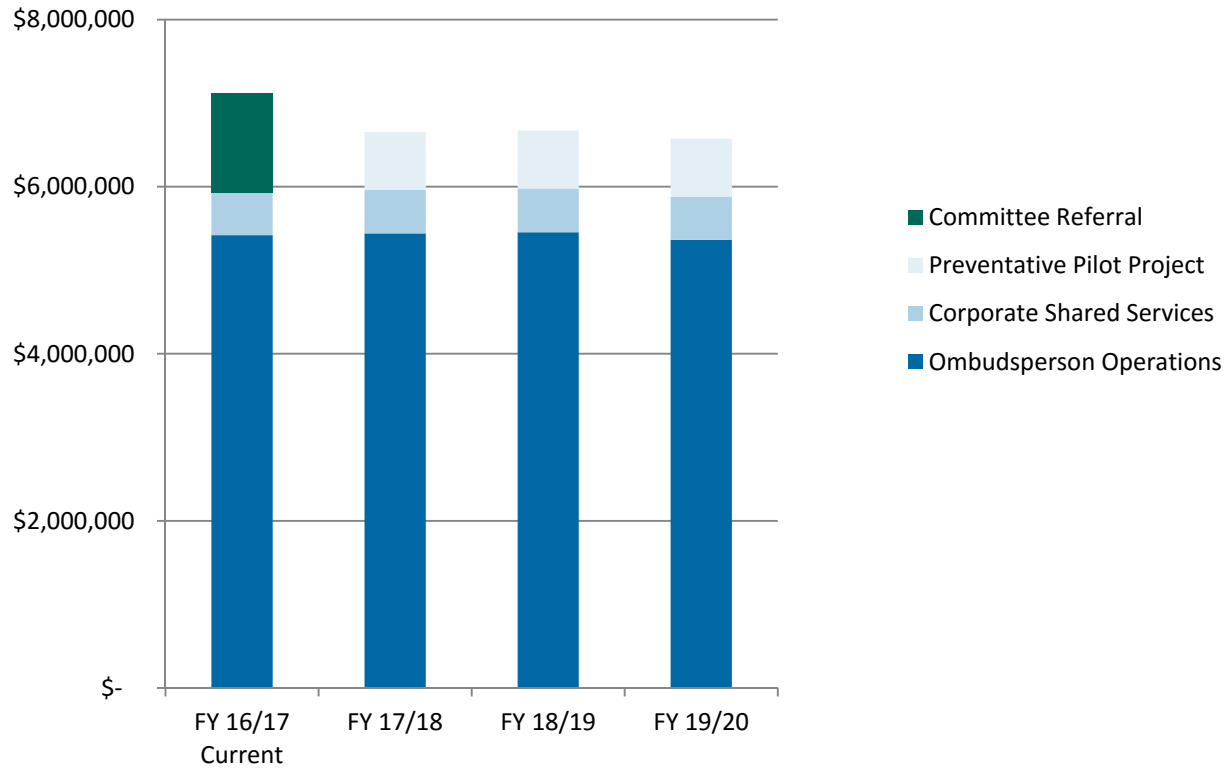
BUDGET REQUEST BY OMBUDSPERSON OPERATIONS, CORPORATE SHARED SERVICES, & COMMITTEE REFERRAL

FISCAL YEARS 2016/17 & 2017/18

STOB		Ombudsperson Operations			Corporate Shared Services			Committee Referral			Total		
		2016/17 Budget (Current Year)	2017/18 Budget Request	Change	2016/17 Budget (Current Year)	2017/18 Budget Request	Change	2016/17 Budget (Current Year)	2017/18 Budget Request	Change	2016/17 Budget (Current Year)	2017/18 Budget Request	Change
50	Salaries	2,946,000	3,503,000	557,000	947,000	962,000	15,000	572,000	-	(572,000)	4,465,000	4,465,000	-
51	Supplemental Salary	57,000	57,000	-	-	-	-	18,000	-	(18,000)	75,000	57,000	(18,000)
52	Benefits	816,000	957,000	141,000	237,000	241,000	4,000	143,000	-	(143,000)	1,196,000	1,198,000	2,000
54	Officer Salary	273,000	273,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	273,000	273,000	-
57	Travel	45,000	55,000	10,000	5,000	5,000	-	5,000	-	(5,000)	55,000	60,000	5,000
60	Professional Serv.	50,000	60,000	10,000	13,000	13,000	-	202,000	-	(202,000)	265,000	73,000	(192,000)
63	Info. Systems	130,000	145,000	15,000	67,000	69,000	2,000	38,000	-	(38,000)	235,000	214,000	(21,000)
65	Office & Business	187,000	204,000	17,000	43,000	43,000	-	30,000	-	(30,000)	260,000	247,000	(13,000)
67	Info, Adv.& Public'ns	60,000	60,000	-	-	-	-	25,000	-	(25,000)	85,000	60,000	(25,000)
68	Statutory Public	22,000	22,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22,000	22,000	-
69	Utilities, Materials	39,000	39,000	-	-	2,000	2,000	9,000	-	(9,000)	48,000	41,000	(7,000)
73	Amortization	50,000	50,000	-	-	-	-	65,000	-	(65,000)	115,000	50,000	(65,000)
75	Building Occupancy	756,000	774,000	18,000	-	-	-	81,000	-	(81,000)	837,000	774,000	(63,000)
85	Other	14,000	-	(14,000)	-	-	-	-	-	-	14,000	-	(14,000)
	Subtotal	5,445,000	6,199,000	754,000	1,312,000	1,335,000	23,000	1,188,000	-	(1,188,000)	7,945,000	7,534,000	(411,000)
88	Internal Recoveries	40,000	-	(40,000)	(803,000)	(816,000)	(13,000)	-	-	-	(763,000)	(816,000)	(53,000)
90	External Recoveries	(65,000)	(65,000)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(65,000)	(65,000)	-
	Total	5,420,000	6,134,000	714,000	509,000	519,000	10,000	1,188,000	-	(1,188,000)	7,117,000	6,653,000	(464,000)

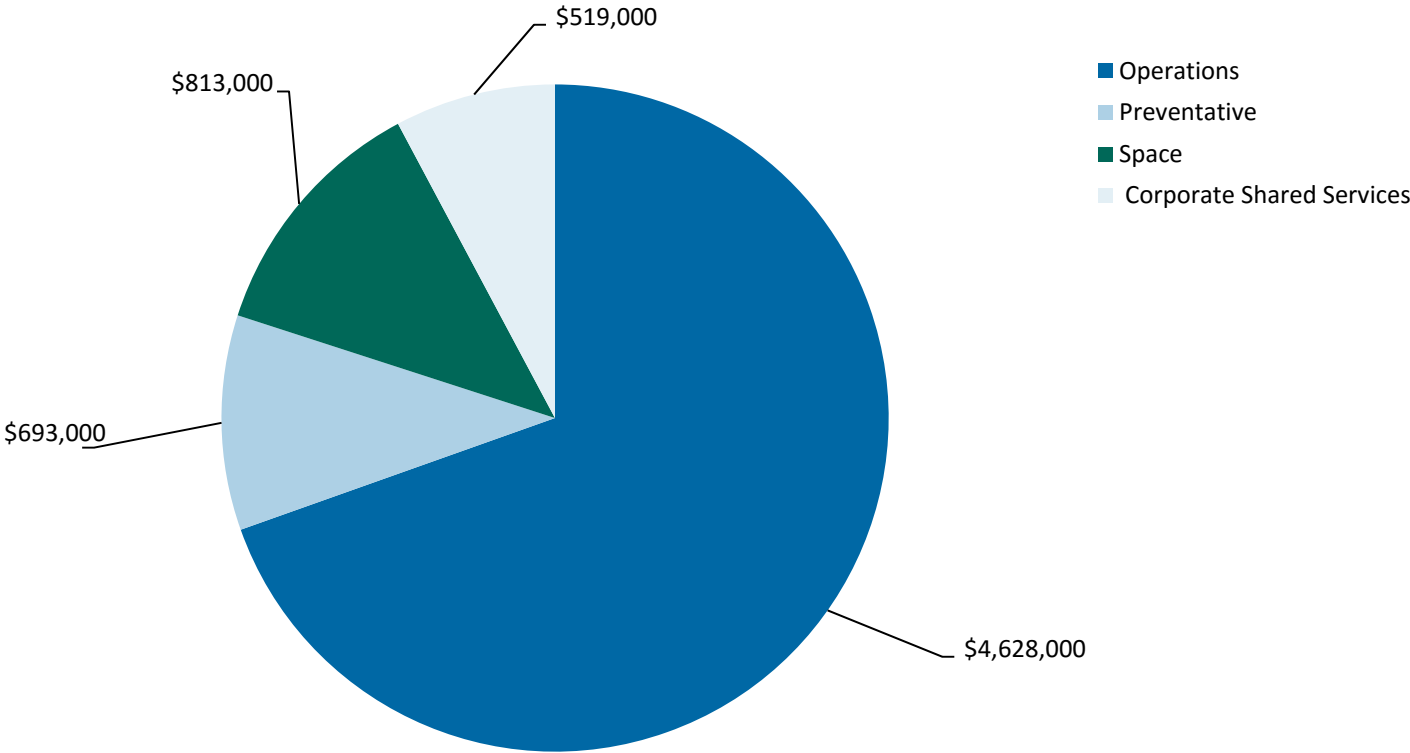
BUDGET REQUEST

FISCAL YEARS 2017/18 TO 2019/20



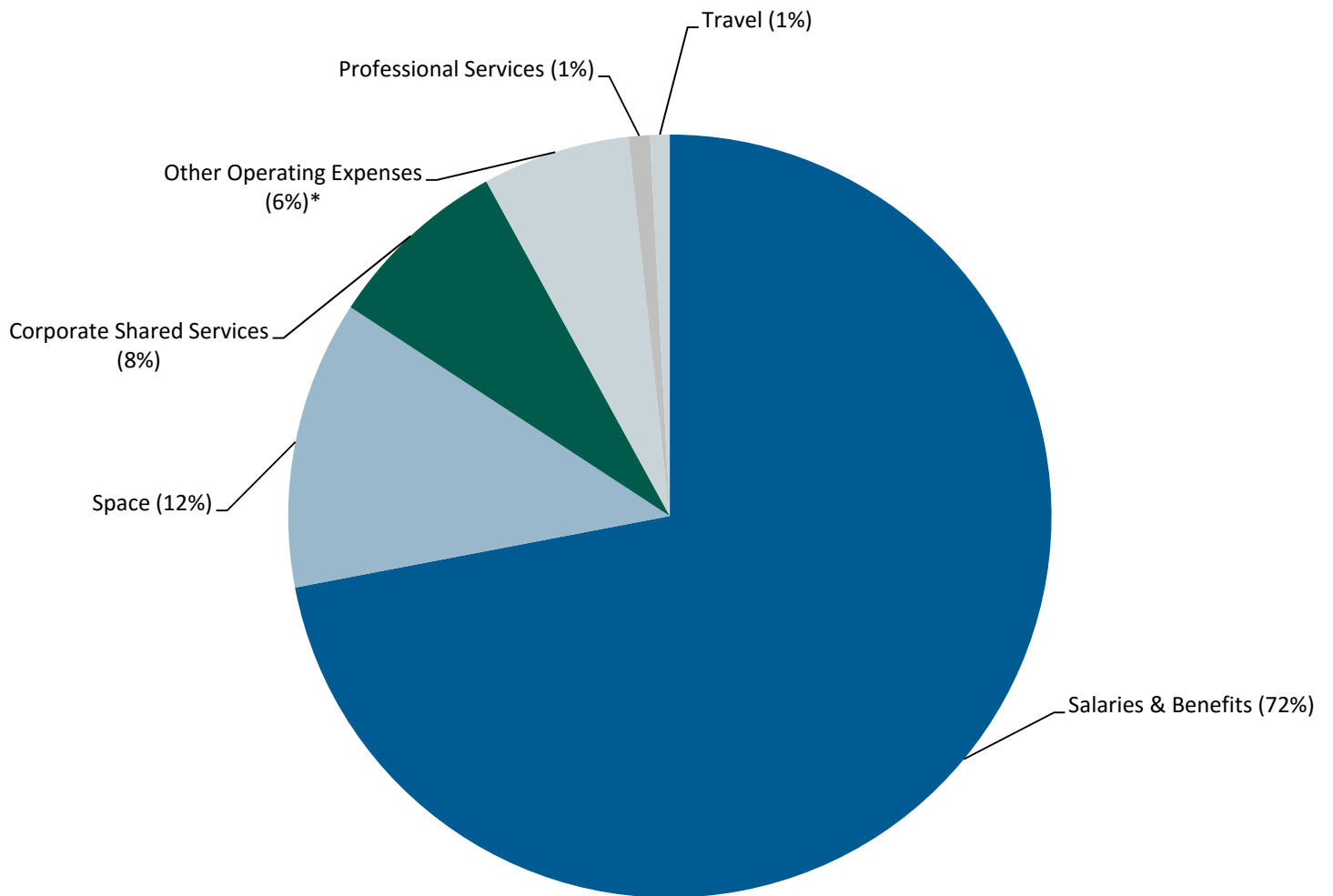
BUDGET REQUEST BY EXPENDITURE AREA

FISCAL YEAR 2017/18



BUDGET REQUEST BY EXPENDITURE TYPE

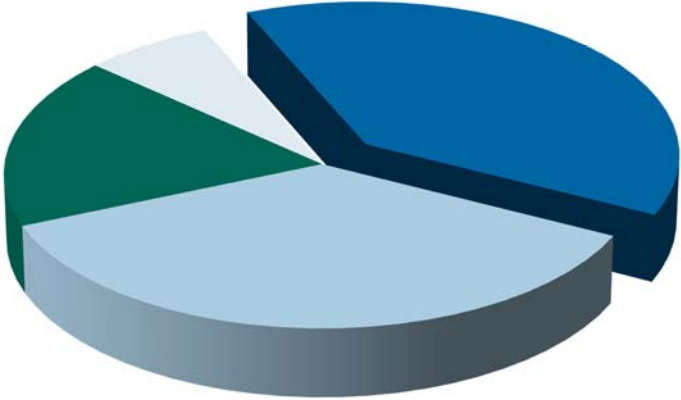
FISCAL YEAR 2017/18



* Other Operating Expenses 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 (\$519,000 plus \$73,000 CSS space)
- Information and Privacy Commissioner (\$482,000 plus \$69,000 CSS space)
- Police Complaint Commissioner (\$241,000 plus \$33,000 CSS space)
- Merit Commissioner (\$93,000 plus \$14,000 CSS space)



MAILING ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE:

FAX:

WEBSITE:

Office of the Ombudsperson | PO BOX 9039 Stn Prov Govt | Victoria BC V8W 9A5

General Inquiries Victoria: 250-387-5855 | Toll Free: 1-800-567-3247

250-387-0198

<http://www.bcombudsperson.ca>