

**COMMISSIONER OF LOBBYISTS
ACTIVITY PLAN
2026-29**

Message from the Commissioner

I am pleased to present the Activity Plan for the Commissioner of Lobbyists which outlines the objectives for the fiscal years from April 1, 2026, to March 31, 2029.

The Commissioner of Lobbyists is classified as a Category 3 Government entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act** and is required to prepare a three-year activity plan taking into consideration the strategic directions of the Provincial Government, as communicated by the Minister of Justice and Public Safety. This Activity Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the provisions of the **Transparency and Accountability Act** and I have taken the strategic directions of the Provincial Government into account during the preparation of this document.

As Commissioner of Lobbyists, I am accountable for the preparation of this Activity Plan and the achievement of its objectives.



Hilary Wicks Morrow
Commissioner of Lobbyists

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Overview

The Office of the Commissioner of Lobbyists is located at 120 Conception Bay Highway, Suite 114, Villa Nova Plaza, in Conception Bay South. Administrative support is shared among the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary Public Complaints Commission (RNCPCC), the Criminal Code Mental Disorder Review Board (CCMDRB) and the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbyists and is provided by a manager (RNCPCC) and a secretary (RNCPCC and CCMDRB). The budget of the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbyists is contained within the Administrative Support and Policy Support activity line budget within the Department of Justice and Public Safety's budget and, as a result, the Office is not required to provide separate audited financial statements.

The Registry of Lobbyists is maintained by the Director of Commercial Registrations, employed by the Department of Government Services. This office is located at 59 Elizabeth Avenue, St. John's, and the Registry of Lobbyists is available at the following link:

<https://cado.eservices.gov.nl.ca/Lobbyist/Menu.aspx>

A consultant lobbyist is one who, for remuneration or other gain, reward or benefit, undertakes to lobby on behalf of a client. A consultant lobbyist is not an employee of the client or organization, whereas an "in-house" lobbyist is employed by the organization to lobby on its behalf. An "in-house" lobbyist is defined by section 6(1)(b) of the **Lobbyist Registration Act**, which states: "in-house lobbyist means a person who is employed by an organization: (i) 20 per cent of whose duties as an employee, as assessed in a 3 month period, are to lobby on behalf of that organization; or (ii) a part of whose duties as an employee is to lobby on behalf of that organization if the employee's duties to lobby together with the duties of other employees to lobby would constitute 20 per cent of time at work of one full time employee, assessed in a three month period, were those duties to lobby to be performed by only one employee."

Lobbyists are required to comply with the provisions of the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct is founded on the principles set out in section 3 of the **Lobbyist Registration Act**. The purpose of this Code is to assure the public that lobbying is done ethically and with the highest standards, with a view to maintaining and enhancing public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of government decision-making. The Code of Conduct can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/gs/files/registries-lobby-code-conduct.pdf>.

Mandate

The Mandate of the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbyists is contained in the **Lobbyist Registration Act**. The Commissioner of Lobbyists is responsible for investigating alleged violations of the Act or the Code of Conduct, denying or cancelling a lobbyist's registration where the Act or Code has been breached, and ordering, upon application, that some or

all registration information be kept confidential. The Commissioner may also recommend changes to the Code of Conduct. The Commissioner of Lobbyists does not identify separate Lines of Business, as all functions are encompassed within the Mandate.

Vision

An environment where lobbying of government entities can take place in an open and transparent manner.

Primary Clients

The Office of the Commissioner of Lobbyists serves the citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador by providing an accessible Registry of Lobbyists and a mechanism to ensure that lobbyists act within the confines of the **Lobbyist Registration Act** and the Lobbyists' Code of Conduct.

The office also serves individual and corporate lobbyists by providing information and direction to ensure compliance with the Act and the Code.

Strategic Issues

Issue 1: Investigating Alleged Violations of the Act or Code of Conduct

The Commissioner of Lobbyists is responsible for investigating alleged violations of the **Lobbyist Registration Act** or the Lobbyists' Code of Conduct. Subsection 27(1) of the Act states: "Where the commissioner believes, on reasonable grounds, that a provision of this Act or of the Code of Conduct has been violated, he or she may investigate that violation and where the commissioner believes there is sufficient reason to proceed, may conduct an inquiry into that violation." This provision establishes a two-stage discretionary process. In the first stage, the Commissioner assesses whether the alleged violation is supported by reasonable grounds. Where a complaint does not meet this prima facie threshold (i.e. providing the minimum amount of credible evidence), the Commissioner may decline to investigate. Only where reasonable grounds are established does the Commissioner proceed to the second stage - a full inquiry - and only where there is sufficient reason to do so.

The objective and associated indicators outlined below will be the focus of the Commissioner of Lobbyists over the three years of the plan. The Commissioner of Lobbyists will report on the objective and indicators in the annual reports for fiscal years 2026-27, 2027-28, and 2028-29.

Objective: By March 31 each year, the Commissioner of Lobbyists will assess all alleged violations of the **Lobbyist Registration Act** or the Lobbyists' Code of Conduct received and will investigate those where reasonable

grounds exist and there is sufficient reason to proceed, in accordance with subsection 27(1) of the Act.

- Indicators:**
- All alleged violations meeting the reasonable grounds threshold will be investigated.
 - Reports or written determinations prepared for each alleged violation, whether or not the matter proceeds to a full investigation.

Issue 2: Confidentiality Orders

Pursuant to section 18(1) of the **Lobbyist Registration Act**, a lobbyist may request the Commissioner of Lobbyists to issue a confidentiality order. This is done when the lobbyist believes that the disclosure of some or all the information contained in the registration may seriously prejudice their economic or financial interest or enterprise. Upon receiving a request, the Commissioner assesses whether the statutory test under section 18(1) is met and issues a decision granting or denying the order accordingly.

In smaller jurisdictions like Newfoundland and Labrador, formal requests for Confidentiality Orders can be rare. However, this does not diminish the important function the office serves. Unlike alleged violations under subsection 27(1), there is no preliminary threshold assessment for confidentiality order requests; each application received must be assessed on its merits and decided in accordance with the statutory test. The objective and associated indicators outlined below will be the focus of the Commissioner of Lobbyists over the three years of the plan. The Commissioner of Lobbyists will report on the objectives and indicators in the annual reports for fiscal years 2026-27, 2027-28, and 2028-29.

Objective: By March 31, each year, the Commissioner of Lobbyists will address all requests for Confidentiality Orders.

- Indicators:**
- Merits assessment conducted for each request against the statutory test under section 18(1) of the Act.
 - Decisions granting or denying the confidentiality order rendered for each request.

Location

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