

2022-23
Annual Report

Office of the
Executive Council





MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

As Premier and Minister for the Office of the Executive Council, I am pleased to present the 2022-23 Annual Report of the Office of the Executive Council, a Category 3 entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. This report summarizes progress towards the achievement of the objectives outlined in the Office's 2020-23 Activity Plan.

Bookended by the end of the public health emergency in this province in March 2022 and the end of the global health emergency in May 2023, 2022-23 will be remembered as the year we cautiously emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic. While the disease remained a concern in 2022-23, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians began to resume the normal course of their lives free of public health restrictions. In turn, this allowed the Office of the Executive Council, as the central agency responsible for managing the public service, to perform its role in a manner no longer encumbered by the pressures of a provincial pandemic response. However, as those pressures faded, events in 2022-23 that played out on both a global and local scale once again required a strategic, cross-departmental response, led or supported by the Office of the Executive Council. From the welcoming of hundreds of Ukrainians to addressing cost-of-living increases and responding to extreme weather events, such as Hurricane Fiona and a near-record number of forest fires, the Office of the Executive Council was critical in communicating the policy objectives of Government and ensuring departmental efforts were aligned to maximize results. Every day, the Office and its employees lead the public service by example, working with departments to ensure the delivery of timely, responsive programs and services that individuals, families, businesses, and communities rely on.

This report was prepared under my direction in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, and I am accountable for the results reported herein.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Andrew Furey". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Honourable Dr. Andrew Furey
Premier

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Departmental Overview

Organizational Structure

The Office of the Executive Council is the department of the Premier and, as such, it is responsible for the general operations of the Provincial Government. It does this by communicating and coordinating the strategic priorities of the Premier and Government across the public service and providing support to the Cabinet decision-making process.

The Office of the Executive Council is a category 3 entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. This categorization requires it to prepare a three-year Activity Plan and report on its performance annually. For the purposes of this report, the Office of the Executive Council includes:

- Cabinet Secretariat and Provincial Protocol Office;
- Communications and Public Engagement Branch;
- Financial Administration Division; and
- Lieutenant-Governor's Establishment.

From a corporate perspective, other offices and secretariats also fall under the Office of the Executive Council, but are independent for planning and reporting purposes under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. These are:

- Treasury Board Secretariat;
- Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat;
- Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation;
- Office of the Chief Information Officer; and
- Office of Women and Gender Equality.

During the 2022-23 reporting period, the Department of Labrador Affairs also existed under the Office of the Executive Council as the Labrador Affairs Secretariat. However, like the entities listed above, it also plans and reports separately under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. Furthermore, the Premier's Youth Council, the

Newfoundland and Labrador Bravery Award Review Panel, and the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador Advisory Council are also independent in terms of planning and reporting.¹

Staff and Budget

The Office of the Executive Council had a staff complement of 68 employees as of March 31, 2023. The 2022-23 budget for the Office of the Executive Council was \$7,115,700 million (Estimates 2022).

Division	# of Employees	Budget
Cabinet Secretariat and the Provincial Protocol Office	25	\$2,463,900
Communications and Public Engagement Branch	25	\$3,245,400
Financial Administration Division	7	\$749,100
Lieutenant-Governor's Establishment	11	\$657,300
Total	68	\$7,115,700

For more information about the Office of the Executive Council, please visit:

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/exec/>. More information on the Lieutenant-Governor's

Establishment can be found at: <https://www.govhouse.nl.ca/>.

¹ However, this report identifies some activities related to the latter two entities given the role of Cabinet Secretariat and the Provincial Protocol Office in their achievement. See Issue 3 below.

Highlights and Partnerships

Cabinet Secretariat

Cabinet Secretariat is responsible for providing administrative, logistical, and strategic support, including impartial advice, to the Premier and the Cabinet. In fiscal year 2022-23, it processed, analyzed, and advanced 368 submissions and other documents for Cabinet's consideration, and recorded Minutes of Council to document the decisions taken. Depending on their nature or the direction provided, some Minutes of Council require the drafting of Orders in Council for the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor. In 2022-23, 297 Orders in Council were prepared.

Cabinet Secretariat also provides operational and administrative support to the Economic Policy Committee and the Social Policy Committee of Cabinet, which met 59 times in 2022-23. This work also entails providing impartial advice and performing supplementary analysis of the items brought before the Committees. Cabinet Secretariat also supports the meetings of other Cabinet committees, which in 2022-23 included the Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure, the Cabinet Committee on Seniors, the Cabinet Committee on Routine Matters and Appointments, and the Hurricane Fiona Response Committee.

Finally, Cabinet Secretariat analyzed, processed, and advanced to the Premier's Office 81 information notes prepared by various departments and agencies on matters related to Government operations, public policy, or any matter of the day.

Provincial Protocol Office

The Provincial Protocol Office is responsible for planning, organizing, and supporting official and diplomatic visits and ceremonial events, and for planning, coordinating, and administering various honours, awards, and recognition programs, such as the Newfoundland and Labrador Bravery Award and the Order of Newfoundland and

Labrador. Further, as the Office's name would suggest, it advises on matters of protocol and etiquette as they relate to diplomatic and consular affairs, the Canadian Crown, precedence and forms of address, the application and usage of emblems and symbols, and commemorative ceremonies, unveilings, and any public events with a protocol component.

In 2022-23, the Provincial Protocol Office coordinated a number of diplomatic and consular visits and meetings, including:

- Her Excellency Sabine Sparwasser, Ambassador of Germany (virtual and in-person);
- Germany/Canada Accord: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Ambassador Sabine Sparwasser, Premier of Nova Scotia, Premier of New Brunswick, and Premier of Prince Edward Island;
- His Excellency Mark Berman, Canadian High Commissioner to Guyana;
- His Excellency Eamonn McKee, Ambassador of Ireland;
- Mr. Paul Hirschson, Consul General of Israel;
- Mr. Jun Saito, Consul General of Japan;
- His Excellency, Kanji Yamanouchi, Ambassador of Japan;
- His Excellency Ariunbold Yadmaa, Ambassador of Mongolia;
- His Excellency Adeyinka Aekun, High Commissioner of Nigeria;
- His Excellency Jon Elvedal Fredriksen, Ambassador of Norway;
- His Excellency Kerim Uras, Ambassador of Turkey;
- His Excellency David Cohen, Ambassador of the United States of America;
- Ms. Lyra Carr, Consul General of the United States of America; and
- His. Excellency Pham Cao Phong, Ambassador of Vietnam.

The Provincial Protocol Office also engaged in the following activities and fulfilled the following responsibilities in 2022-23:

- Coordinated and administered the call for nominations for the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador;
- Administered applications for the Newfoundland Volunteer War Service Medal;
- Administered nominations for the Newfoundland and Labrador Bravery Award;
- Administered the Public Service Award of Excellence;
- Provided administrative support and advice for the Canada/Germany Accord in Stephenville;

- Supported the planning and administration for the 2022 Royal Visit of the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall;
- Planned and administered the Memorial Service for Queen Elizabeth II;
- Planned and administered events surrounding the Accession to the Throne by King Charles III;
- Administered applications for the lighting of Confederation Building;
- Administered applications for use of the courtesy pole at Confederation Building;
- Planned and provided logistical oversight for the Platinum Jubilee Vice Regal Dinner; and
- Coordinated Half-Masting notifications for all Provincial Government buildings.

Communications and Public Engagement Branch

The Communications and Public Engagement Branch leads the Provincial Government's communications and marketing activities, and provides strategic advice on communication-related issues to the Office of the Premier, Cabinet, and departments and agencies. The Branch is also responsible for leading stakeholder engagement to inform decision making and policy development by Government.

The Branch's responsibilities are wide-ranging and include: developing communications policies and procedures; advising on communications planning; distributing news releases, media advisories, and public advisories; media monitoring; providing video, photography, and multi-media support; managing marketing activities; delivering customized media training for ministers and senior public service employees; managing Government's social media presence; and designing and delivering consultation and engagement strategies with the public, communities, and targeted stakeholders.

Multi-Media and Training

The Communications and Public Engagement Branch plays an important role in ensuring communications practices reflect the ever-changing media habits of stakeholders in this province and around the world. It is continuously modernizing its communications practices, with expanded video production that includes greater amounts of live and recorded content. The Branch works collaboratively with

departments to produce engaging videos that create awareness of important public service messages, departmental programs and initiatives, and ministerial messages. This video content is in addition to the live-streamed events and news conferences that serve to share Government-led initiatives with residents of the province.

To support expanded multi-media requirements, the Branch offers customized professional development for departmental communications staff, including video production training. Additionally, personalized media training sessions are available to ministers, executive, and departmental subject matter experts to assist with preparation for the House of Assembly, media interviews, public speaking, and technical briefings for announcements. Approximately 35 training sessions were held in 2022-23.

Marketing and Brand Management

The Marketing and Brand Management Division is the Provincial Government's core creative services group, partnering with agencies, boards, and commissions to offer brand guidance and marketing consultation services. As a centralized marketing group, the Division ensures Government's visual identity is managed effectively and consistently across all departments to help best position the Province for a variety of audiences.

In collaboration with departments and agencies, the Division supported more than 575 projects in 2022-23 to help ensure messages reached residents in a timely and strategic manner. The Division also manages the "Live/Work/Invest" website (www.findnewfoundlandlabrador.com), which helps present a strong, differentiated brand for Newfoundland and Labrador in international markets. Year over year, there has been a 70 per cent increase in visits to this website.

The Division also continues to expand Government's social media reach on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube. With platform-adapted social media content, the Provincial Government is well-positioned to reach local audiences or, depending on

the initiative or intended goal, national and global markets. Efforts to ensure Government's official social media channels contain reliable, up-to-date news and information from across the public service have translated into audience growth – nearly 40 per cent of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who use Facebook follow our account. In fiscal year 2022-23, Government's Facebook page reached over 3.5 million users, with more than 500 posts, and gained 7,700 new followers. Twitter remains a strategically advantageous communications and engagement tool, and Government has seen an increase in followership on that platform, with just over 61,000 users. The Division continues to work closely with departmental communications staff on training and support for social media, and to explore opportunities to grow Government's social media presence.

Public Engagement

Public engagement is a strategic means of bringing the public into the policy development and decision-making processes. More informed decisions and better outcomes – as well as greater support for decisions taken – are achieved when communities, organizations, Indigenous groups, interest groups, and the public are given meaningful opportunities to have their say.

In 2022-23, the Public Engagement and Planning Division supported 26 distinct public engagement projects involving a total of 6,423 participants (with 2,088 taking part in virtual or in-person consultation sessions). The Division gathered input through various means, including live virtual sessions, in-person events, and online questionnaires. The Division provides advice on engagement methodology, design and delivery, support and facilitation of engagement and consultation sessions, and the development of online project landing pages. Of the 26 projects, the highest participation rates for 2022-23 were (in descending order): the new Provincial Health Authority; Registered Nurses' Union NL; Budget 2023; Five-Year Roads Plan; and the **Animal Health and Protection Act**. As of March 31, 2023, the engageNL online engagement platform had 30,708 registered users. A wide-ranging list of engagement and consultation projects were

hosted on the platform, covering topics such as the Minimum Wage Review, the Anti-Racism Action Plan, the **Lands Act** Review, and the Colonial Building Name Change.

Lieutenant-Governor's Establishment

The Honourable Judy May Foote, Lieutenant-Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador, engaged in numerous activities in 2022-23. Constitutional duties comprised opening the legislature and delivering the Speech from the Throne, meeting with the Premier and Executive Council officials, and signing Orders in Council and statutory and non-statutory instruments. Her Honour oversaw various in-house events, such as investitures, performances, presentations, meetings, ceremonies, and receptions held at Government House. Her Honour also presided over external events (i.e., at outside venues), including those not organized or arranged by the Office of the Lieutenant-Governor (e.g., the Duke of Edinburgh Awards presentation).

During the reporting period, the Lieutenant-Governor represented The Crown by granting Royal Assent to 43 Bills approved by the House of Assembly, signing Orders in Council, and presiding over swearing-in ceremonies of Members of the House of Assembly and Cabinet.

The Lieutenant-Governor is the Honorary Patron of 57 volunteer and philanthropic organizations, and supports or attends the events of numerous community and religious organizations. Notable activities during 2022-23 include: celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee at community events; hosting the Royal Tour during the celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee; hosting the annual Garden Party on the grounds of Government House; marking the passing of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II and the accession of King Charles III; hosting the annual conference of the Governor General, Lieutenant-Governors and Territorial Commissioners; promoting the culture of the province through the Lieutenant-Governor's Performance Series; attending various artistic performances throughout the province; and attending the opening ceremonies and events of the 2023 Labrador Winter Games, as well as various community events in

Labrador. Additionally, the Lieutenant-Governor supported military and police veterans throughout the year by attending and laying wreaths at remembrance ceremonies across the province. During the reporting period, the Lieutenant-Governor attended 25 award ceremonies and presented 370 awards, including investitures into the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Governor General's Exemplary Service Awards to various organizations. The Lieutenant-Governor also hosted five courtesy visits of Ambassadors, High Commissioners, and Consuls General.

Report on Performance

Issue One – Providing Support to Cabinet and Committees of Cabinet

One of the primary roles of the Office of the Executive Council is to support the decision-making processes of the executive branch of Government by providing non-partisan advice and support to Cabinet and committees of Cabinet. Cabinet is the highest decision-making body in the province and meets regularly to consider policy, program, regulatory, and financial issues as prepared by departments and advanced by ministers of the Crown. The Office of the Executive Council plays a critical role in supporting the Cabinet process, ensuring the effective operation of Cabinet and its committees, liaising with departments and agencies to ensure that necessary actions are taken further to the direction of Cabinet provided in Minutes of Council, and facilitating the coordination of initiatives that involve all or multiple departments and agencies.

2022-23 Objective

By March 31, 2023, the Office of the Executive Council will have undertaken initiatives that support the operations of Cabinet and committees of Cabinet.

Issue One – Providing Support to Cabinet and Committees of Cabinet	
Indicator	Actual
Number of Cabinet meetings held	42
Number of Cabinet committee meetings held	59
Number of Orders in Council issued	297

Issue Two – Providing Support to the Premier

The Office of the Executive Council is the branch of the Provincial Government that provides direct, impartial support to the Premier’s role in setting overall Government policy, coordinating initiatives brought forward by ministers, and developing responses to Government-level issues. The Office of the Executive Council provides briefings to the Premier on matters that will be considered by Cabinet, provides briefing notes to the Premier submitted by departments and agencies on the emergence or status of major issues or those that are likely to attract considerable public attention, and meets regularly with the Premier and senior staff to ensure that appropriate responses are developed for Government-wide issues and those that are a priority for the Premier.

2022-23 Objective

By March 31, 2023, the Office of the Executive Council will have undertaken initiatives that support the Premier as head of the executive branch of Government.

Issue Two – Providing Support to the Premier	
Indicator	Actual
Number of briefing notes provided to the Premier’s Office	81

Issue Three – Providing Support to the Clerk of the Executive Council as Head of the Public Service

The Clerk of the Executive Council is the most senior official in the public service and is responsible to the Premier for the overall effectiveness of the public service. In this role, the Clerk of the Executive Council oversees recruitment and training for senior executives; communicates regularly with deputy ministers through group meetings to share information and discuss matters that affect the public service and residents of the province; ensures that business continuity planning for Government as a whole is in place to provide for the continued delivery of programs and services during times of disruption; oversees the annual Public Service Award of Excellence to recognize leadership and excellence in the public service; and works with the Provincial Protocol Office and the Lieutenant-Governor’s Establishment respecting various ceremonial events, including the bestowal of the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Newfoundland and Labrador Awards for Bravery, and the Newfoundland and Labrador Volunteer War Service Medal.

2022-23 Objective

By March 31, 2023, the Office of the Executive Council will have undertaken initiatives that support the Clerk of the Executive Council as head of the public service.

Issue Three – Providing Support to the Clerk of the Executive Council as Head of the Public Service	
Indicator	Actual
Number of executive development training sessions offered and number of executive participating in those sessions	320 participants over 9 executive development sessions

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Number of deputy minister group meetings held	32
Number of inductees to the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador	On October 4, 2022, an investiture ceremony was held to induct eight Newfoundlanders and Labradorians into the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador
Number of Public Service Awards of Excellence bestowed	On September 13, 2022, the Public Service Award of Excellence was bestowed on seven individuals and three teams, for a total of 27 people recognized
Number of residents of Newfoundland and Labrador awarded a Newfoundland and Labrador Bravery Award	Approval received to present Newfoundland and Labrador Bravery Awards to six individuals (awards to be presented in fiscal year 2023-24)
Number of recipients of the Volunteer War Service Medal	Seven Volunteer War Service Medals were awarded in 2022-23

Issue Four – Provision of Government-Wide Communications Functions

The Communications and Public Engagement Branch is responsible for managing the communications and public engagement functions of the Provincial Government. The branch coordinates communications and consultation activities of all communications staff and of all departments; provides long-term planning to achieve Government’s communications goals; provides media monitoring; provides advice to navigate issues as they arise; and advances practices of sound public engagement.

2022-23 Objective

By March 31, 2023, the Office of the Executive Council will have undertaken initiatives to ensure effective communication from the Provincial Government and effective public engagement with residents of the province.

Issue Four – Provision of Government-Wide Communications Functions	
Indicator	Actual
Number of Communications Plans reviewed	220
Number of news releases distributed	1,309
Number of news conferences held	127
Number of public engagements held	26 engagement projects encompassing 6,423 participants

Opportunities and Challenges

Reporting year 2022-23 was not without its share of challenges for Newfoundland and Labrador. Whether new and emerging, or long-standing and familiar to the province's residents, issues in the post-pandemic world are increasingly complex and interrelated, requiring heightened global awareness, immediacy of response, increased collaboration, and novel solutions. One of the most important issues facing the world and indeed this province is climate change. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador takes climate change, and the extreme weather events it may cause, very seriously – we have no choice, as evidenced by the 103 recorded forest fires that ravaged parts of the province during the summer of 2022, consuming nearly 24,000 hectares of forest land, or Hurricane Fiona, which swept through the southwest corner of the island of Newfoundland in late September 2022 with winds and a sea surge that devastated several communities. In both cases, the Provincial Government worked with residents, communities, businesses, organizations, and other governments to provide timely assistance and relief. And in both cases, the Provincial Government has taken the time to reflect on the change that must happen now to prevent or mitigate extreme weather-related events in the future.

From such reflection, opportunities arise – chances to do things differently, to plan for a longer term, to make wiser, more strategic investments now that can lower costs and prevent or soften impacts down the road. In the past year, Government has continued its efforts to position Newfoundland and Labrador as a global leader in the production of renewable and low-emitting energy, including wind and hydrogen. By lowering our collective carbon footprint and sharing the potential of our energy resources with international partners, the Province, which already boasts a largely carbon-neutral energy grid, is doing its part to slow the pace of global warming, while at the same time creating jobs and opportunities for investment.

Change is not just happening at the climate and environmental levels. The lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic include ongoing shortages in materials and labour,

which have combined with other forces to drive up the cost of everyday living. Again, the Province has responded in recent months with a number of measures to make life more affordable. These include: a one-time, cost-of-living relief cheque up to \$500 for residents aged 18 and older; increases to the minimum wage; reductions in the provincial tax on gas and diesel; elimination of the retail sales tax on personal property insurance; maintaining the home heating supplement for furnace and stove oil; changes to the Income Support program to discontinue child support claw backs; and increases in the Seniors' Benefit and Income Supplement. Government will continue to identify opportunities to help Newfoundlanders and Labradorians with their financial well-being, while managing public finances responsibly.

In the midst of all this, an unwanted and unjust war continued to play out across the Atlantic. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have long been known for their warmth, generosity, and hospitality. By providing a safe, stable environment to hundreds of Ukrainians over the past year, not only have we come to the aid of people in desperate need of safety, humanity, and a livelihood, we have at the same time helped grow our population, enrich our cultural fabric, and create economic opportunity. In 2023-24 and beyond, Government will continue to take the same innovative, strategic and, especially, **compassionate** and **inclusive** approach to addressing critical issues like housing and homelessness, mental health and addictions, and health and education transformation that affect existing residents and newcomers alike.

None of this happens simply by saying it is important. Adapting to the changes around us and making them work to our collective betterment requires the efforts of all Government departments, with direction, support, and coordination from the Office of the Executive Council.

Financial Information

The expenditure and revenue information below is based on public information provided in the Report on the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for Fiscal Year Ended 31 March 2023 (unaudited).

Division	Actual	Revised	Original
Cabinet Secretariat and the Provincial Protocol Office	3,444,693	3,462,400	2,463,900
Communications and Public Engagement	2,526,757	2,978,900	3,245,400
Financial Administration Division	526,659	599,100	749,100
Lieutenant-Governor's Establishment	722,026	744,300	657,300
Total	7,220,135	7,784,700	7,115,700

