

2025-2026

Annual Report

Jobs, Growth and
Rural Development





MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

I am pleased to present the Department of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development's annual report for the period April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026. As a Category 1 public body, this report has been prepared in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act** and applicable guidelines.

Following government restructuring on October 29, 2025, the department assumed new lines of business. To reflect these changes, a 2025-2026 Strategic Plan was developed to establish the department's priorities and goals while building on the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan. Accordingly, this report captures activities and results achieved under both the final year of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan and the 2025-2026 Strategic Plan.

During the year, the department advanced workforce development and labour market programming, fostered business and sector growth, strengthened regional and rural economic development, and supported immigration and welcoming communities to meet labour market needs in collaboration with key partners. Through these efforts, the department helped position the province for sustainable growth and lasting prosperity.

I thank departmental staff and partners for their steadfast dedication to delivering programs and services that support individuals, businesses, and communities throughout our province. Together, we will continue to build on this foundation to foster a more resilient and prosperous economy.

My signature below attests to my accountability for the results reported.

Sincerely,

Hon. A.M. (Lin) Paddock
Minister of Jobs and Growth
Minister of Rural Development
Minister of Immigration
Minister of Francophone Affairs

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Departmental Overview

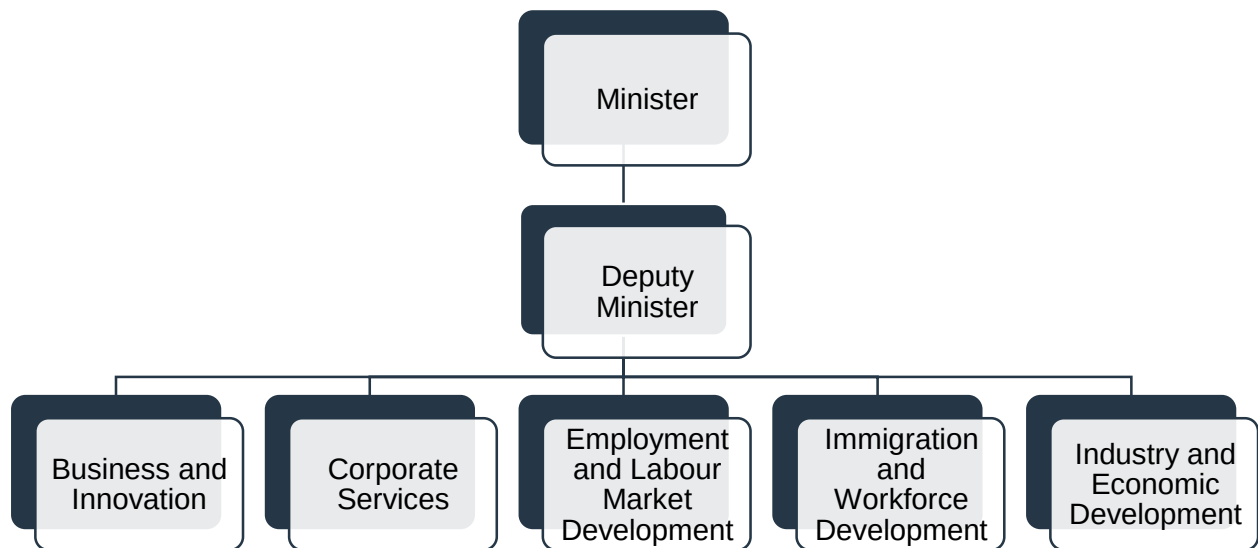
The Department of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development supports a strong, inclusive, and resilient economy, with a focus on:

- Workforce development and employment supports
- Business growth, innovation, and investment
- Population growth including immigration, attraction, and retention
- Regional and rural economic development
- Employer support and labour market alignment

The department delivers this work in partnership with individuals, businesses, and communities throughout the province, supporting economic growth, job creation, and a more prosperous Newfoundland and Labrador.

For a list of the entities that report directly to the Minister, see **Annex A: Public Entities**.

Organizational Structure



Following government restructuring on October 29, 2025, the department assumed responsibility for the Business and Innovation Branch and Industry and Economic Development Branch (previously with the former Department of Industry, Energy and

Technology). At the same time, responsibility for the Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Division, previously within the department's Employment and Labour Market Development Branch, was transferred to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

For information on the activities of each branch, see **Annex B: Branch Overview**.

Staff and Expenditures

As of March 31, 2026, the department's staff complement consists of 406 employees. The following tables provides staff complement and expenditures by branch.

Branch	# of Employees	Revenues	Expenditures
Executive and Support Services (includes Corporate Services)	28	(\$604,853)	\$ 4,511,715
Business and Innovation	37	(\$15,513,484)	\$ 63,036,344
Employment and Labour Market Development	203	(\$134,078,775)	\$ 159,134,597
Immigration and Workforce Development	72	(\$11,246,709)	\$ 23,866,249
Industry and Economic Development	66	(\$6,124,112)	\$ 33,856,565
Total	406	(\$167,567,933)	\$ 284,405,470
Net Expenditures			\$116,837,537

The department is headquartered in the Confederation Building and on Elizabeth Avenue in St. John's, has 18 regional economic development offices, and operates 19 client-facing Employment Centres throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

For a list and map of locations, see **Annex C: Employment Centre and Regional Office Locations**.

For more information on the department visit: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/jgrd/departement/>.

Highlights and Partnerships

Throughout 2025-2026, the Department of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development advanced key initiatives to strengthen workforce development and immigration, support innovation, and foster inclusive economic growth throughout Newfoundland and Labrador in collaboration with workers, job seekers, industry, communities, and interest holders.

Highlights

- **Supporting Innovation and Strategic Industry Growth:** Through \$600,000 in strategic partnership investments with industry associations, the Province is supporting growth in sectors such as technology, oceans, aerospace and defense, manufacturing, mining, craft industries, clean technologies, and life sciences. This investment has leveraged an additional \$3 million, and represents approximately 500 unique organizations, strengthening industry networks, amplifying impact, and positioning Newfoundland and Labrador for long-term economic growth.
- **Investing in Youth and Future Workforce Development:** Launched the 2026 Summer Employment Program for Students, helping employers create meaningful work opportunities while enabling students to gain valuable work experience, develop transferable skills, and strengthen their attachment to the labour force.
- **Advancing Credential Recognition Supports:** The Fair Registration Practices Office continued to play a key role in helping professionals enter the workforce by providing navigation support to 31 individuals pursuing licensure in regulated occupations. The Office also continued to collaborate with scheduled regulatory bodies to improve registration pathways, review registration and assessment practices, and provide guidance to support compliance with the Fair Registration Practices Act. In addition, the Office supported efforts to identify strategic international recruitment markets, helping attract skilled professionals who are well positioned to achieve licensure and address provincial labour market needs.

- **Promoting Inclusive and Diverse Communities:** Through the Newfoundland and Labrador Multiculturalism Grant Program, the department supports initiatives that foster welcoming, inclusive, and culturally vibrant communities, while supporting newcomer attraction and retention. In February 2026, the department approved a record 163 projects in 54 communities, representing a 53 per cent increase in geographic reach compared to the previous year. These investments also support objectives related to population growth, workforce development, and the long-term social and economic success of the province.

Partnerships

- **Advancing Labour Mobility:** Collaborated with federal, provincial, and territorial partners to develop recommended amendments to the **Canadian Free Trade Agreement** aimed at strengthening labour mobility provisions and addressing labour needs across the country.
- **Supporting Workforce Resilience through Tariff Response Measures:** Partnered with the federal government to establish the Canada–Newfoundland and Labrador Workforce Tariff Response, a \$10.6 million initiative designed to help workers and employers adapt to evolving global trade and market conditions. Through targeted training, reskilling, upskilling, and employment supports, the measures aim to strengthen workforce resilience, support labour market adjustment, protect jobs, and help Newfoundlanders and Labradorians seize economic opportunities and support long-term economic growth.
- **Supporting Ocean Innovation:** Provided funding to support the Digital Offshore 2026 Conference, which brought together more than 250 attendees from Newfoundland and Labrador and the world, to discuss emerging trends in technologies, security and defence, cybersecurity, digital literacy, and the future of technology driven work. The event provided an opportunity to showcase the province’s educational institutions, research facilities, and ocean technology companies, reinforcing the province’s position as a leader in ocean technology.

- **Strengthening Newcomer Retention through Data Collection:** In January 2026, the department concluded a comprehensive retention survey of 12,000 newcomers in partnership with the Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency to better understand and support newcomer experiences throughout the province.

Report on Performance

Strategic Issue 1

The need to enhance the effectiveness of employment and training programs to respond to shifting labour market demands and emergent economic opportunities.

A responsive and effective employment and training system is essential to supporting individuals in obtaining the skills, education, and work experience required to participate in the labour market. As labour market demands evolve due to technological advancement, demographic shifts, and emerging economic opportunities, programs and services must be continuously assessed and adapted to remain relevant and impactful. The department places particular emphasis on supporting labour force participation among underrepresented groups and ensuring employers have access to the skilled workforce needed to support economic growth.

To support this, the department works collaboratively with industry, post-secondary institutions, and community partners to deliver employment and training programming that meets the needs of both individuals and employers. Regular evaluation and improvement of these programs are critical to ensuring they are accessible, efficient, and aligned with current and future labour market demands.

During the reporting period, the department focused on strengthening program delivery, enhancing client supports, and advancing improvements based on evidence, feedback, and best practices.

2025-2026 Goal/Objective

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development will have enhanced the effectiveness of the employment and training programs offered to individuals and organizations in the province.

Performance Indicator 1: Improved program delivery and client support by conducting at least one comprehensive review of employment and training programs.

In 2025-2026, the department conducted a comprehensive review of three wage subsidy programs: **JobsNL**, **Employment Enhancement**, and the **Apprenticeship Wage Subsidy**.

The review objectives were to:

- Assess how the programs support departmental priorities and labour market needs, workforce attachment, and sustainable employment outcomes.
- Identify opportunities to strengthen program delivery.
- Evaluate accessibility and client experience.
- Explore options to enhance program effectiveness, improve outcomes, and support employers and job seekers.

In 2026-2027, the department will assess the review findings based on feasibility, alignment with government priorities, and operational considerations.

Performance Indicator 2: Began implementation of recommendations, as appropriate, from the review of the employment and training program to enhance program delivery and supports for clients.

During the reporting period, the department began implementing recommendations from the **Supported Employment Program** review completed in February 2025. The review identified opportunities to improve labour market participation and employment outcomes for persons with intellectual disabilities while addressing cost and budget challenges.

As of March 31, 2026:

- Seven recommendations have been fully implemented including, the streamlining of four programs into one.

- Six recommendations are in progress, including increasing collaboration among service delivery agencies to improve coordination, reduce duplication, and enhance client supports.

Strategic Issue 2

The need to drive business and economic growth and diversification and strengthen rural and regional economies through targeted investment, capacity building and innovation initiatives.

Newfoundland and Labrador is well-positioned for economic growth, with a number of high-growth sectors such as technology and AI transformation, ocean technology, aerospace and defence, health technologies, and manufacturing. Strategic, coordinated investment and innovation are essential to unlocking this potential, strengthening sector capacity, and supporting long-term economic diversification.

To advance these opportunities, the department works collaboratively with businesses, industry, communities, and other partners to deliver targeted programs, attract investment, and support innovation throughout the province. Particular emphasis is placed on strengthening rural and regional economies, enhancing competitiveness, and supporting businesses to scale and access new markets.

During the reporting period, the department advanced a range of initiatives to encourage investment, build capacity, support innovation, and foster sustainable economic growth throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

2025-2026 Goal/Objective

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development will have commenced and advanced initiatives to drive business and economic growth and diversification and strengthen rural and regional economies through investment and innovation.

Performance Indicator 1: Enhanced sector diversification and investment attraction activities to promote economic opportunities within the province.

The department continued to advance sector diversification and investment attraction through targeted investments, strategic partnerships, and business development activities that supported growth in both established and emerging sectors.

Key achievements include:

- Strategic investments in Memorial University's Student Design Hub and the Centre for Analytics, Informatics and Research are enhancing student skills, supporting company creation, and strengthening pathways to high-value careers and entrepreneurship.
- A \$2,455,000 investment has leveraged an additional \$3 million to support C-CORE's Dream-O Satellite Ground Station, positioning C-CORE, its partners, and the province as emerging leaders in the global space sector, driving economic growth through high value technical roles and expanded local expertise.
- Invested more than \$3.7 million in health technology and biotechnology companies, organizations, and academic institutions to support research and development and market development activities, leveraging an additional \$7.6 million from project partners and other funding sources.

Investment attraction efforts focused on high-potential sectors including aerospace and defence, manufacturing, technology and AI transformation, ocean technology, health technology, mining and critical minerals, and other emerging opportunities. To advance these priorities, the department:

- Undertook 105 new company engagements through in-market missions, conferences, targeted outreach, and inquiries.
- Hosted three companies from outside the province and delivered tailored programs that included key meetings, site visits, and facility tours.
- Increased focus on defence sector opportunities in response to national spending commitments and emerging opportunities within Canada's defence industry.

Performance Indicator 2: Supported non-commercial entities in driving rural and regional economic development and capacity-building across the province.

The department supported region-led economic development and capacity-building through investments that strengthened organizational capacity, leveraged partnerships, and advanced economic opportunities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Through the Regional Development Program, 43 projects were approved totaling \$3,049,194, leveraging an additional \$13,392,380 from other sources. Investments supported regional and sectoral development, diversification, and innovation through infrastructure, capacity building, marketing, and research initiatives. Examples include:

- The Gander and Area Chamber of Commerce received \$114,808, leveraging more than \$383,000, for the Kickstart Partnership in Training and Entrepreneurship initiative. The project supports workforce development in Central Newfoundland by connecting students to training and career opportunities in the aerospace, mining, and fabrication sectors while helping address critical skills gaps.
- Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador received \$144,925, leveraging \$434,775, to strengthen regional economic development capacity through skills development, strategic planning, and project development activities, helping communities advance local and regional economic growth initiatives.

Through the Community Capacity Building component, 39 projects were approved totaling \$103,048, leveraging an additional \$26,740 to strengthen organizational capacity and support regional economic development. Examples include:

- The Labrador West Housing and Homelessness Coalition received \$2,704 to undertake strategic planning that will guide future actions and strengthen the organization's capacity to address housing insecurity and homelessness. The initiative supports sustainable housing solutions, community stability, workforce attraction and retention, and long-term regional economic resilience.
- The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture received \$10,000 to strengthen organizational skills, management capacity, and long-term effectiveness in supporting the province's agriculture sector. The project enhances industry coordination and leadership, supporting a more resilient and sustainable agriculture

sector while advancing provincial food self-sufficiency and economic development goals.

Performance Indicator 3: Supported companies in commercializing and diversifying across local, national, and international markets.

The department supported business growth, market expansion, and export development through strategic financing and trade development activities that helped Newfoundland and Labrador companies access new opportunities in domestic and international markets.

Through the Business Investment Program, which provides term loans to small and medium-sized enterprises in strategic growth sectors to support business expansion and attract additional investment, four projects were supported totalling \$784,000, leveraging an additional \$2,245,228 from private and partner sources. Loans included:

- The Candlelight Inn received a \$24,000 Business Investment loan, leveraging an additional \$56,000 from the applicant and other sources, to modernize and expand its accommodations in Rocky Harbour. The project will enhance the guest experience through new and upgraded lodging options, helping attract more visitors to Gros Morne National Park, encourage longer stays, and strengthen tourism-related economic activity in the region.

In addition, the department supported 10 trade missions to facilitate export growth and market diversification.

- These missions provided Newfoundland and Labrador organizations with access to international business development opportunities in markets such as Canada, Guyana, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Mexico.
- Thirty-six participating organizations gained market intelligence, established partnerships, and explored export opportunities in priority sectors.
- During the reporting period, the department approved \$207,000 in travel stipends to support participation in these missions.

Performance Indicator 4: Supported programming and services to foster growth and economic development

The department delivered targeted programs that supported business growth, innovation, productivity, and sector development throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

- The Business Growth Program (Productivity Improvement and Innovation, Knowledge and Technical Assistance, and Growth and Internationalization) supported 129 projects, with \$1,721,638 in contributions, leveraging an additional \$2,482,967 from proponents and organizations, including the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.
- The Harvester Enterprise Loan Program supported harvesters purchasing new or used vessels, licenses, or enterprises. During the reporting period, three projects were approved, providing \$371,700 in down payment loans, \$195,832 in interest rebates, and \$2,928,933 in loan guarantees.

Performance Indicator 5: Supported business growth and technology ecosystem development through programming that stimulates innovation and technology advancement.

During the reporting period, the department continued to support research, development, and commercialization initiatives that strengthened research capacity, developed highly qualified personnel, and fostered collaboration between industry and post-secondary institutions.

Through the Research and Innovation Fund, 31 non-commercial projects were approved totaling \$6,797,590, leveraging an additional \$14,556,900 from partners. Examples include:

- Memorial University's Future Ocean and Coastal Infrastructures: Designs for Diversity in Newfoundland and Labrador Blue Economy project, which is identifying

infrastructure needs to support stronger economic development in coastal communities and ocean industries. A \$590,000 investment leveraged approximately \$4.7 million in partner support.

- College of the North Atlantic's Lidar and Photogrammetry Infrastructure project, which received \$725,725 to support mining research related to digital twinning technologies, leveraging \$1.3 million for total project funding of approximately \$2.1 million. These technologies support more effective planning, monitoring, and management of mining operations.
- Memorial University's Student Design Hub, which connects post-secondary students with prototyping resources, skills and development programs, mentoring, and multidisciplinary collaboration opportunities. The department's contribution of \$717,750 leveraged \$2,460,344 to support innovative student-led projects and competition teams.

Through the Business Growth Program (Development and Commercialization), which supports commercial research and development and helps reduce the risks associated with bringing innovative products, processes, or services to market, seven projects were approved totaling \$2,652,039, leveraging an additional \$6,347,249 from partners, including the National Research Council.

Performance Indicator 6: Advanced, supported, and monitored connectivity projects.

The department continued to advance connectivity initiatives by improving the data and planning tools needed to support broadband and cellular infrastructure investments, particularly in rural and remote areas of the province.

Improving connectivity remains critical to enabling economic development and business growth. Due to geographic and market challenges, public investment is often required to expand cellular and broadband infrastructure. To support data-driven decision-making, the Province engaged FarrPoint Inc. to undertake comprehensive cellular coverage

mapping in November 2025. This work has produced an accurate representation of real-world signal strength and service availability throughout the province. The study:

- Identified service gaps along major highways.
- Informed infrastructure investment and planning decisions.
- Supported the development of targeted solutions, including new tower construction and localized coverage improvements.

In addition, the department developed a comprehensive overview of major connectivity gaps throughout the province to support discussions with federal and industry partners regarding future infrastructure investments.

Strategic Issue 3

The need to attract skilled newcomers to the province to support labour market needs, population growth, and inclusive communities.

Immigration remains a critical driver of the province's economic, social, and cultural development. As demographic pressures persist, including an aging population and low fertility rates, immigration plays an important role in supporting workforce growth and long-term economic sustainability.

Attracting and retaining skilled newcomers is essential to addressing current and emerging labour market needs, supporting business growth, and fostering diverse and inclusive communities. The department continues to work with employers, communities, and partners to enhance recruitment efforts, promote the province as a destination of choice, and strengthen pathways for newcomers to live and work in the province.

2025-2026 Goal/Objective

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development will have worked to bolster the attraction of new skilled professionals to the province.

Performance Indicator 1: Conduct at least 10 in-person and virtual recruitment sessions.

The department exceeded its target by delivering more than 28 in-person and virtual recruitment sessions during the reporting period. These activities connected employers with skilled international candidates and supported the successful hiring of candidates in key sectors, including healthcare, education, and early childhood education.

Attraction and recruitment activities were supported by the department's virtual recruitment platform, which provides employers and job seekers with ongoing access to job postings and candidate profiles. As of March 31, 2026, approximately 319,000 individuals were registered on the platform.

The department held three large virtual events, including:

- February 2026: All occupations, including 10 roundtable sessions.
- March 2026: Veterinary medicine, including two roundtable sessions.
- March 2026: Healthcare occupations, including three roundtable sessions.

The department held in-person events, including:

- United Kingdom (November 2025): Three sessions for health professionals.
- Ghana (February 2026): Five sessions for education professionals.
- Newfoundland and Labrador: Five sessions focused in part on labour attraction and recruitment of temporary residents already living in the province.

Performance Indicator 2: Enter a minimum of one Memorandum of Understanding with foreign governments, entities, or agencies on labour transfer to support ongoing labour needs in the province.

While the department did not finalize a Memorandum of Understanding during the reporting period, negotiations and relationship-building efforts continued with international partners to support provincial labour market needs. Developing these agreements requires significant engagement and coordination, with timelines extending beyond the reporting period. Activities included:

- Advancing negotiations with international partners by refining in-demand occupation lists, translating documents, establishing eligibility requirements, and clarifying expectations between parties.
- Working with Global Affairs Canada and other federal partners to strengthen communication channels and identify opportunities to connect with skilled international workers and prospective international partners.

These efforts strengthened international partnerships and promoted Newfoundland and Labrador as a destination of choice for skilled workers. Ongoing labour attraction activities supported employer access to global talent and helped address workforce needs in critical sectors throughout the province.

2023-2026 Report on Performance

During the 2023-2026 reporting period, the department focused on supporting a strong a resilient workforce and economy in Newfoundland and Labrador by enhancing employment and training programs, driving economic growth and rural development, attracting skilled newcomers to the province to support population growth and labour market needs, and strengthening the apprenticeship system.

From April 1, 2023, to October 28, 2025, the department operated under the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, which focused on immigration, workforce development, employment and training programs, and strengthening the provincial apprenticeship system.

Following government restructuring on October 29, 2025, a 2025-2026 Strategic Plan was developed to reflect the department's new lines of business and guide its priorities for the remainder of the fiscal year. As part of this restructuring, responsibility for the Business and Innovation Branch and the Industry and Economic Development Branch was transferred to the department from the former Department of Industry, Energy and Technology, while responsibility for the Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Division was transferred to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

The following section outlines the department's progress toward the strategic issues and goals identified in both Strategic Plans and reflects its overall performance during the 2023-2026 reporting period.

Strategic Issue: The need to enhance the effectiveness of employment and training programs to respond to shifting labour market demands and emergent economic opportunities.

During the reporting period, the department enhanced employment and training programs through comprehensive program reviews, service improvements, and implementation of recommendations designed to enhance program effectiveness, improve client outcomes, and better align supports with evolving labour market needs.

The department exceeded its target of reviewing four programs by completing comprehensive reviews of five employment and training programs. These included the Employment Steps for Success pilot program, the Supported Employment Program, and three wage subsidy programs: JobsNL, Employment Enhancement, and the Apprenticeship Wage Subsidy Program.

The department also achieved its goal of implementing appropriate recommendations arising from program reviews to enhance program delivery and client supports.

Following the review of the Employment Steps for Success pilot program, the department reassessed program design and delivery and issued a new call for applications. While the pilot provided valuable insights into service delivery and client needs, challenges remained in achieving its intended outcomes, and the program was subsequently concluded.

Implementation of recommendations from the Supported Employment Program review began in 2025-2026, resulting in seven recommendations being fully implemented by year-end, including the consolidation of four programs into a single program to improve accessibility, streamline administration, and strengthen service delivery. Implementation of additional recommendations aimed at enhancing coordination among service delivery agencies, reducing duplication, and improving employment supports for persons with intellectual disabilities is underway.

In 2026-2027, the department will assess the findings of the wage subsidy review to identify opportunities to strengthen workforce attachment, improve employer participation, and ensure continued alignment with government priorities, labour market demand, and operational considerations.

Strategic Issue: The need to drive business and economic growth and diversification and strengthen rural and regional economies through targeted investment, capacity building and innovation initiatives.

This strategic issue was introduced following government restructuring in October 2025 and incorporated into the department's 2025-2026 Strategic Plan.

In support of this priority, the department advanced initiatives that strengthened business growth, economic diversification, innovation, and regional development throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. All associated goals were achieved, with results reported under Strategic Issue 2 of this annual report.

Strategic Issue: The need to attract skilled newcomers to the province to support labour market needs, population growth, and inclusive communities.

Over the three years, the department achieved its immigration and labour attraction targets, helping address workforce shortages, support labour market growth, meet employer workforce needs, contribute to economic growth, and attract skilled newcomers to Newfoundland and Labrador.

The province welcomed 5,485 new permanent residents in 2023, exceeding the annual target of 3,950. This momentum continued in 2024 with approximately 5,755 new permanent residents, surpassing both the annual target of 4,500 and the long-term objective of welcoming 5,100 newcomers annually by 2026. Although no target was established for 2025 and 2026 due to evolving federal immigration policies and reduced permanent residence allocations, the department continued to advance labour attraction efforts to support population growth and address targeted workforce needs.

International recruitment activities also met the target of 10 recruitment sessions annually. More than 95 recruitment sessions were delivered in 2023-2024, 113 in 2024-2025, and over 28 in 2025-2026, connecting Newfoundland and Labrador employers with skilled international candidates and supporting hiring across key sectors.

The department strengthened international partnerships to support long-term labour market needs and workforce development. The original 2023-2026 Strategic Plan included a target of five Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with foreign governments on labour transfer. By the end of 2024-2025, three MOUs had been established, leaving two remaining in the final year of the plan. Following provincial government restructuring and the development of a new 2025-2026 Strategic Plan, the department revised the 2025-2026 annual target from two MOUs to one to reflect evolving federal immigration policies. In 2023-2024, two labour cooperation MOUs were signed to support the recruitment of Registered Nurses from India. In 2024-2025, the department facilitated a five-year MOU among the Republic of Korea, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and College of the North Atlantic to establish a work placement program for Early Childhood Educators. Although an additional MOU was not finalized in 2025-2026, negotiations and relationship-building efforts continued with international partners, including refining occupational requirements, establishing eligibility criteria, and strengthening collaboration with federal counterparts to support future labour mobility initiatives.

Strategic Issue: Strengthen the overall effectiveness, sustainability, governance and accessibility of our provincial apprenticeship system

Prior to the transfer of the Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Division to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in October 2025, the department made significant progress in strengthening Newfoundland and Labrador's apprenticeship and trades certification system.

A key achievement was the completion of a comprehensive independent review of apprenticeship and trades certification programs and policies. Informed by extensive engagement with industry and other interest holders, the review identified 31 recommendations to strengthen industry engagement, increase apprentice participation, enhance training sustainability, and improve system governance and administration.

The department was working to implement the recommendations prior to government restructuring.

The department also maintained strong apprenticeship outcomes throughout the reporting period. In 2023, Newfoundland and Labrador achieved a Red Seal pass rate of 58 per cent, exceeding the national average by eight percentage points and ranking fifth among provinces and territories.

To improve accessibility and support apprentice success, the department secured funding to increase capacity in the Virtual Learning Strategist Program by 50 per cent. The expanded program provided learning supports and accommodations to apprentices facing barriers to certification, including learning disabilities, test anxiety, and essential skills gaps.

Efforts to increase participation in the skilled trades among underrepresented groups also continued. Throughout 2023-2024, female apprentices in non-traditional trades accounted for 11 per cent of apprentices in the province, matching the national average. Investments in the Office to Advance Women Apprentices supported mentorship, employment connections, wage subsidies, and other initiatives that help women enter and succeed in non-traditional trades.

The department also supported an independent review of the Indigenous Skilled Trades Office, which works to increase Indigenous participation in the skilled trades. Completed in 2023-2024, the review assessed the organization's effectiveness and sustainability and identified opportunities to strengthen client supports, employer partnerships, workplace inclusion, and performance measurement. The findings helped inform future funding and program decisions.

Opportunities and Challenges

The Department of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development enters the coming year with a strong foundation in workforce development, immigration, business growth, and regional economic development. These strengths position the department to respond to emerging opportunities while continuing to address economic and demographic pressures.

Opportunities

There is an opportunity to build momentum in innovation and sector development by supporting high-growth firms, attracting investment, and expanding provincial presence in global markets. Continued collaboration with key partners will also help align programs with labour market needs and support business growth.

The department can further strengthen workforce development by improving connections between education, training, and employment; supporting lifelong learning; expanding opportunities for youth and early-career workers, increasing labour force participation among underrepresented groups; and supporting immigration and welcoming communities that contribute to population growth and workforce participation. There is also an opportunity to advance regional approaches to economic development that help communities identify and pursue local opportunities.

Immigration will continue to play an important role in addressing labour market needs, particularly in rural areas. Targeted recruitment in key occupations, combined with efforts to support newcomer retention through community connections and employment opportunities, will help meet workforce demands and support major economic development projects.

Complementing these efforts, beginning April 1, 2026, Newfoundland and Labrador will begin its three-year term as Provincial-Territorial Co-chair of the Forum of Ministers Responsible for Immigration, marking the Province's first time in this leadership role. This presents a strategic opportunity to help shape national immigration priorities at a

time when governments across Canada are focused on nation-building initiatives, addressing labour market needs, and supporting economic growth. Through enhanced collaboration with provinces, territories, and the federal government, Newfoundland and Labrador will be well positioned to advance shared immigration and workforce priorities while ensuring the Province's interests are reflected in national policy discussions and decision-making.

Challenges

At the same time, the department will continue to operate in a challenging environment shaped by labour supply and demographic pressures. An aging population, continued outmigration, and increasing competition for skilled workers across Canada will remain challenges for labour force growth, workforce sustainability, and employer recruitment efforts.

The department must ensure its programs deliver measurable outcomes for individuals, businesses, and communities while maintaining alignment across workforce, business, and regional development priorities. Delivering effective supports across a large and diverse province will continue to require flexible, regionally responsive approaches.

As Newfoundland and Labrador becomes increasingly diverse, continued efforts will be needed to support newcomer attraction and retention, foster welcoming communities, and ensure residents and organizations are equipped to support a growing multicultural population.

While progress has been made to enhance cellular connectivity, service gaps remain in rural and remote regions and along key routes that connect communities. Addressing these gaps will require ongoing collaboration and increased federal investment. The department remains committed to collaborating with federal partners, industry, and communities to strengthen connectivity throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

While these challenges will require ongoing attention, the department is well positioned to build on its strengths while continuing to adapt to evolving labour market and economic conditions.

Financial Information

Summary of Expenditure and Related Revenue for the Year Ended March 31, 2026 (unaudited)				
		Actual Expenditure (\$)	Amended Budget (\$)	Original Budget (\$)
Executive and Support Services				
	Ministers Office	411,200	508,200	508,200
	Executive Support	2,006,969	2,187,874	1,869,574
	Administrative Support	2,093,546	3,428,800	3,540,100
Employment and Skills Development				
	Employment and Training Programs	16,202,998	17,961,700	17,961,700
	Labour Market Development Agreement	124,457,045	125,370,300	125,370,300
	Workforce Development Agreement	4,138,338	4,641,800	4,641,800
	Employment Assistance Program for Persons with Disabilities	9,368,921	9,638,800	9,638,800
Regional Service Delivery				
	Client Services	4,967,295	6,404,400	6,611,400
Immigration and Workforce Development				
	Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism	22,978,569	23,403,500	23,403,500
	Workforce Development Secretariat	887,680	942,600	942,600
Business and Innovation				
	Accelerated Growth	2,062,323	2,416,800	2,416,800
	Investment Attraction Fund	41,919,841	42,875,000	43,000,000
	Business Analysis	2,218,180	2,518,200	2,210,300
	Innovation and Business Investment	16,836,000	16,836,000	16,836,000
Industry and Economic Development				
	Sector Diversification	1,729,911	1,780,100	1,780,100
	Regional and Economic Business Development	4,258,111	4,843,800	5,068,000
	Comprehensive Economic Development	24,042,259	26,460,600	26,460,600
	Green Transition Fund	3,826,284	14,545,400	14,544,100
	Total Gross Expenditures	284,405,470	306,763,874	306,803,874
	Total Revenue	-167,567,933	-151,546,200	-151,546,200
	Total Net Expenditures	116,837,537	155,217,674	155,257,674

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	Actual Expenditure (\$)	Amended Budget (\$)	Original Budget (\$)
Totals by Branch			
Executive and Support	4,511,715	6,124,874	5,917,874
Employment and Skills Development	154,167,302	157,612,600	157,612,600
Regional Service Delivery	4,967,295	6,404,400	6,611,400
Immigration and Workforce Development	23,866,249	24,346,100	24,346,100
Business and Innovation	63,036,344	64,646,000	64,463,100
Industry and Economic Development	33,856,565	47,629,900	47,852,800
Total Department Gross Expenditures	284,405,470	306,763,874	306,803,874

Annex A: Public Entities

The Innovation and Business Investment Corporation and Newfoundland Hardwoods Limited are public entities that report to the Minister of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development. Both entities are classified as Category 3 entities under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**.

Annex B: Branch Overview

Business and Innovation

The Business and Innovation Branch negotiates, assesses, and monitors funding proposals and agreements for large-scale and special projects, providing business and financial support throughout project development and implementation. The branch delivers operational support to the Innovation and Business Investment Corporation, including accounting, payment, and collection services, and participates as a limited partner in venture capital funds in support of government funding commitments for technology startup companies in the province. The branch also promotes Newfoundland and Labrador as a premier destination for foreign direct investment and pursues key opportunities to attract new investment. Through its programs, the branch supports provincial businesses to increase productivity, adopt new technologies, minimize market expansion risks, grow exports, diversify trade, undertake business development, and engage in commercial research and development.

Corporate Services

The Corporate Services Branch is responsible for the department's financial, information, and human resource management functions. Additionally, it coordinates all corporate policy requirements, including legislative reviews, planning and accountability functions, and quality assurance and evaluation functions. The branch also provides advice on privacy matters and supports access to information requests.

Employment and Labour Market Development

The Employment and Labour Market Development Branch provides strategic leadership through the development of policies, programs, and services related to employment and economic job growth working closely with workers, employers, training partners, industry groups, not-for-profit organizations, and provincial and federal departments.

Delivered regionally, programs and services help individuals prepare for, find, and keep meaningful work while supporting employers in meeting labour supply needs. Through a

network of 19 Employment Centres throughout the province, the branch offers career advice, job search assistance, pre-employment supports, training and skills development, wage subsidies, and other employment and training supports.

Services are delivered both in person and online, and are available to a wide range of clients, including individuals who require additional support to prepare for employment or training.

Immigration and Workforce Development

The Immigration and Workforce Development Branch provides strategic leadership to advance immigration and workforce development by designing and delivering effective policies, programs, and services in collaboration with internal and external partners.

The branch provides support to employers to help them find available skilled workers and helps them identify and recruit international workers when jobs cannot be filled locally or domestically. The branch promotes Newfoundland and Labrador in international and Canadian markets as a place to live, work and settle, and helps retain newcomers by connecting them with available settlement supports in their communities.

The branch also promotes multicultural awareness, supports efforts to eliminate racism, and through the Fair Registration Practices Office, works with regulatory bodies to ensure skilled workers and internationally educated professionals can have their credentials recognized through fair, transparent, and timely processes. This helps reduce barriers to licensing and supports labour mobility across Canada.

Through the Workforce Development Secretariat, the branch leads labour market and workforce policy and stakeholder engagement. Key work includes leading the development of a population growth strategy focused on workforce development, growing families, growing regions and returning Newfoundlanders and Labradorians home. Additionally, the Workforce Development Secretariat engages with the federal,

provincial, and territorial governments and gathers and analyzes labour market data to inform the department's workforce policy.

From April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2029, the branch is also housing the Provincial/Territorial (P/T) Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers Responsible for Immigration (FMRI) as the P/T Co-Chair. The Secretariat helps lead federal-P/T collaboration to advance shared immigration priorities and strengthen Canada's immigration policies and programs.

Industry and Economic Development

The Industry and Economic Development Branch is responsible for regional economic development as well as sector growth and diversification for the provincial economy.

Through its regional offices, the branch leads provincial planning and program delivery, and provides capacity building, facilitation, and advisory services to commercial and non-commercial clients, as well as financial support for commercial and non-commercial clients. It engages communities, businesses, co-operatives, social enterprises, industry associations, and other interest holders to advance regional economic development.

To support economic diversification and growth, the branch identifies opportunities in established and emerging technology sectors to foster new business growth, develop the technology ecosystem, and advance regional diversification. In doing so, it engages in and supports sectoral research and provides financial and non-financial support to post-secondary institutions, industry associations, and other non-commercial clients to strengthen partnerships and interest holder engagement. The branch also supports non-commercial research and development and works with the federal government and service providers to expand both broadband and cellular connectivity throughout the province.

Annex C: Employment Centre and Regional Office Locations

Employment Centres

Employment Centres offer walk-in and appointment-based career advice, job search assistance, pre-employment supports, training and skills development, wage subsidies, and other employment and training supports.

There are 19 Employment Centres located in 18 communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador including Carbonear, Channel-Port aux Basques, Clarenville, Corner Brook, Dunville, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Lewisporte, Marystown, Mount Pearl, Port Saunders, Springdale, St. Alban's, St. Anthony, St. John's (two centres), Stephenville, and Wabush.

Regional Offices

Regional Offices are staffed with employees who lead economic development program delivery. They provide capacity building, facilitation, and advisory services to commercial and non-commercial clients, as well as financial support for commercial and non-commercial clients. Staff provide regional presence and engage communities, businesses, co-operatives, social enterprises, industry associations, and other interest holders to advance regional economic development.

There are 18 regional offices located in 18 communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, including Carbonear, Channel-Port aux Basques, Charlottetown, Clarenville, Corner Brook, Deer Lake, Ferryland, Forteau, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador City, Marystown, Placentia, Port Saunders, St. Alban's, St. Anthony, and Stephenville.

Map of Headquarters, Employment Centres, and Regional Offices



