

2025-2026

Annual Report

Justice and
Public Safety





MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

In accordance with the government's commitment to the requirements of a Category One Entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, I am pleased to submit the Annual Report for the Department of Justice and Public Safety for the period of April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026.

The 2025-26 fiscal year marked the third and final year of the 2023-26 strategic planning period. Throughout the year, the Department remained focused on its mandate and identified Strategic Issues, continuing to advance its objectives to achieve positive results and support safer communities. This progress is demonstrated through ongoing investments in policing and public safety, including increases in the number of police officers and Crown attorneys. The Department also continued its work to inform the development of a new adult correctional facility to replace Her Majesty's Penitentiary and made further investments in emergency services to enhance fire protection when those responsibilities were within the Department's mandate.

As Minister of Justice and Public Safety and the Attorney General, I am responsible for the preparation of this Annual Report. My signature below signifies my accountability for the reported results.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Helen Conway Ottenheimer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "H" and "C".

Hon. Helen Conway Ottenheimer, K.C.,
Minister of Justice and Public Safety
and Attorney General

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Departmental Overview

Organizational Structure

The Department of Justice and Public Safety (the Department) ensures the impartial administration of justice and the protection of public safety through the dual offices of the Attorney General and the Minister of Justice and Public Safety. The Department previously held responsibility for the Emergency Services Branch. Effective February 20, 2026, the Emergency Services Branch was transferred to the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands, and consequently responsibility for its services no longer rests with the Department.

Mandate

The Department's mandate reflects the dual responsibilities of the Minister of Justice and Public Safety and the Attorney General of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Department is responsible for the provision of legal services to the government and is responsible for the protection and safety of people in the province with respect to their persons and property. The Department's responsibilities are met through:

- Managing the Fines Administration Division
- Overseeing the Support Enforcement Program
- Administering the Office of the Public Trustee
- Protecting human rights and administering the Human Rights Commission
- Administering the courts, including family justice services
- Delivering adult probation services
- Overseeing the Office of the High Sheriff
- Providing services to victims of crime
- Offering legal advice to provincial government departments
- Delivering legislative drafting through the Office of the Legislative Counsel
- Administering legal aid services

- Supporting the Serious Incident Response Team
- Prosecuting accused persons
- Providing police protection
- Operating the province's correctional facilities
- Administering the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

Primary Clients

The Department primarily serves the general public and government departments and agencies. The Department provides a range of services to individuals or groups of individuals through the courts, public prosecutions, family justice services, support enforcement, victim services, correctional services, fines administration, and policing. The government itself is also a significant client of the Department. Civil law services are provided to government departments and agencies in the form of legal advice, as well as representation in litigation. Legislative drafting services are provided by the Office of the Legislative Counsel.

Vision

A justice and public safety environment that is accessible and understood, and which plays a key role in creating a fair, equitable and safe society where all people can pursue their lawful rights and freedoms.

Lines of Business

- **Adult Probation** is responsible for administering court imposed, community-based sentences for offenders who require supervision, control and counselling to develop their potential as law abiding members of the community.
- **Civil Division** is responsible for providing legal advice to government departments and agencies. These services include providing legal opinions, drafting commercial and financial documents, and representing the government and its agencies in

negotiations and civil actions before administrative tribunals, all levels of court and judicial inquiries.

- **Court Services** is responsible for providing infrastructure and administrative support to the Provincial Court of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador, including the Court of Appeal. Family Justice Services, which falls under the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador, is responsible for promoting dispute resolution outside the court process. The program assists parties in resolving parenting and support issues and offers parent information sessions, mediation, and counselling. Provincial Court also has responsibility for three specialty courts: Drug Treatment Court, Intimate Partner Violence Intervention Court, and Mental Health Court.
- **Correctional Services** is responsible for the safe and secure custody of youth and adult offenders, which includes services and programs for sentenced, remanded and detained offenders to assist with recovery and reintegration back into the community after release from custody.
- **Finance and General Operations Division** is responsible for planning, organizing, directing and controlling overall financial and administrative operations of the Department, including coordinating the annual budget submission, providing budgetary advice, ongoing financial analysis and consultative services, monitoring expenditures and receivables during the financial year for accurate financial information and financial reporting, ensuring proper financial controls and monitoring systems are in place, and human resource administration supports.
- **Fines Administration** is responsible for the processing, billing and collection of fines, penalties and surcharges imposed on individuals by Provincial Court, summary offence tickets, or other legislation. Ticket processing, billing and collection services are also provided to third parties such as municipalities, hospitals, and post-secondary institutions.
- **Office of the Chief Medical Examiner** is an independent entity that is responsible for reporting, investigating, and recording deaths pursuant to the **Fatalities Investigations Act**. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is also responsible for

appointing physicians to act as medical examiners and appointing medical investigators.

- **Office of the High Sheriff** is responsible for providing services to the Supreme and Provincial Courts. The Office of the High Sheriff administers the jury system, provides court security, judgement enforcement and trust account services, and executes orders and decisions of the Court.
- **Office of the Legislative Counsel** provides legislative drafting services to the government. Additionally, in conjunction with the King's Printer and the House of Assembly, the office ensures the publication and dissemination of provincial legislation.
- **Office of the Public Trustee** is responsible for protecting the financial assets and well-being of clients under the **Public Trustee Act, 2009**. The Office of the Public Trustee is a Crown corporation created by legislation and operates fully independent of government.
- **Policing Services** are delivered through the province's two policing agencies: the RNC and the RCMP. The Policing and Public Safety Division provides administrative accountability on the provision of policing services. Through a broad range of policing services, both police agencies are responsible for enforcing the law to protect public safety.
- **Policy, Strategic Planning and Information Management** is responsible for providing leadership in the identification, development and implementation of broad policy initiatives, departmental, horizontal planning, and accountability processes in government, as well as for supporting informed policy development through internal and external stakeholder engagement. The Division holds department-wide responsibility for all matters relating to records and information management.
- **Public Prosecutions** is responsible for prosecuting all offences pursuant to the **Criminal Code of Canada** and provincial statutes. Prosecutors appear in every level of court in the province and in the Supreme Court of Canada. Public Prosecutions also provides legal opinions and advice on criminal and criminal-related matters to policing agencies and other government departments that enforce provincial statutes.

- **Support Enforcement** performs several services related to the collection and distribution of court-ordered funds for support, maintenance or alimony. This includes registering and transmitting Support Orders, issuing Notices of Garnishment, tracing delinquent payers, and receiving and transmitting Interjurisdictional Support Orders applications.
- **Victim Services** provides a free service to support victims of crime. Services are available to adult victims of crime, 16 years of age and older, whether the crime has been reported or a charge has been laid. Services are also available to children, youth, or witnesses when under 16 years of age, when charges are laid.

Staffing and Budget

As of March 31, 2026, the Department employed 1,551 individuals, including the RNC. It also funded approximately 466 RCMP officers and 153.5 civilian staff to deliver frontline policing in about 41 locations throughout Newfoundland and Labrador under the Provincial Policing Services Agreement and Community Tripartite Agreements.

The Department employs a wide range of professionals including lawyers, police officers, social workers, psychologists, counsellors, correctional officers, youth care counsellors, deputy sheriffs, information management specialists, administrators, financial managers, educators and administrative support staff.

Branch	Staff Complement	2025-26 Budget
Corporate and Strategic Services	88	\$18,603,600
Courts and Justice Services	322	\$36,485,900
Public Safety and Correctional Services*	1,017	\$220,896,100
Legal Services**	54	\$33,276,900
Public Prosecutions	70	\$10,016,100
Total	1,551	\$319,278,500

* The staffing count for Public Safety and Correctional Services does not include the RCMP but does include its budget.

**The staffing count for Legal Services does not include the Legal Aid Commission but does include its budget.

More information on the Department of Justice and Public Safety can be found on the Department's website which can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/jps/>.

Highlights and Partnerships

Highlights

Minister Conway Ottenheimer Committed to Action on Police Oversight

In March 2026, Minister Conway Ottenheimer reaffirmed the Government's commitment to strengthening police oversight through the development of a modern, transparent, and independent framework. The objective is to establish a community-informed civilian oversight model for police services, including the creation of an independent police board. The proposed board would be civilian-led, politically neutral, and representative of the province's diverse communities. The Department committed to engaging and consulting with stakeholders throughout the development process to ensure the model reflects community priorities and aligns with recognized best practices. The overarching goal is to establish a police oversight framework that complements, rather than duplicates, the work of SIRT NL. By enhancing accountability and transparency in policing, the model is intended to strengthen public confidence in police services and support broader efforts to build safer communities.

Minister Conway Ottenheimer Participated in National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ People

In February 2026, Minister Conway Ottenheimer virtually joined Indigenous, federal, provincial, and territorial leaders, along with survivors and families of gender-based violence, for the fourth annual Indigenous-Federal-Provincial-Territorial Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ People. As Indigenous communities were best positioned to design and deliver culturally grounded, trauma-informed, and sustainable solutions, discussions also included the importance of implementing approaches that were grassroots and community-led. The meeting reaffirmed the essential leadership of survivors, families, and youth, as their courage, knowledge, and advocacy continued to drive progress through collective action and collaboration to advance safety, justice, and healing.

Partnerships

Working Group to Address Long-standing Pressures in Provincial Courts

In December 2025, the Honourable Minister Conway Ottenheimer announced the formation of a working group to address issues and pressures being experienced in the Provincial Court of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Minister highlighted that action was being taken in collaboration with the Provincial Court to strengthen access to the justice system. The working group included the Honourable Robin Fowler, Chief Judge of the Provincial Court of Newfoundland and Labrador; another Provincial Court Judge; one member of the Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador private bar; and the Deputy Minister of Justice and Public Safety. The working group also had one representative from Legal Aid NL, one from Public Prosecutions, and one from the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees. The working group was tasked to report on systemic issues and recommend solutions that would support the important work of the court and ensure sustainable access to justice for all stakeholders, as well as support safe communities. The working group delivered a presentation of its findings to Minister Conway Ottenheimer in March 2026.

Action Plan in Response to Child and Youth Advocate Report

In January 2026, following the release of a Special Report by the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, the government initiated the development of an Action Plan, with contributions from the Departments of Justice and Public Safety, Social Supports and Well-Being, and Health and Community Services. Items within the Action Plan included an independent examination and improvement of police policies, procedures, and responses related to allegations that a child or youth had been sexually abused or exploited, as well as the completion of the ongoing review of the **Children, Youth and Families Act** to further protect and ensure the safety of children and youth in care from the potential of abuse or exploitation. All actions taken by the Department will be aligned with the recommendations of the Child and Youth Advocate and are intended to ensure that children and youth receive the protection and safety they deserve.

Report on Performance

Issue One – Responsive Public Safety Services

The Department's mandate includes responsibility for the protection and safety of people in the province, which included fire services and emergency services, but these were moved to the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands prior to the end of fiscal year 2025-26. The Department ensures the protection of the public through the provision of policing, probation, and correctional services. The Department will report on planned indicators for these services, which were essential to ensure that people felt safe in their communities. The Department recognized the importance of delivering them in a manner that was both responsive to the needs of residents and grounded in a thoughtful and measured approach. This commitment was demonstrated through targeted investments in programs, crime prevention initiatives, community safety planning, and staffing in policing and public prosecutions. These efforts supported the protection of families, communities, and businesses across Newfoundland and Labrador, while also contributing to the effective functioning of the justice system. The results reported below demonstrate that the Department has delivered programs and services that promote safer communities. As this is the last year of the 2023-26 Strategic Planning cycle, the Department will report on the Goal and indicators. The Department will also report on the 2025-26 Objective and indicators. These results are consistent with the government's strategic direction of safer communities through responsive public safety services.

Goal

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Justice and Public Safety will have delivered public safety programs and services that are responsive to the public safety needs of the province.

Indicators	Results
Provided financial assistance and select services to residents affected by adverse weather events through the Newfoundland and Labrador Disaster Financial Assistance Agreement Program.	The Department provided financial assistance and select services to residents affected by adverse weather events through the Newfoundland and Labrador Disaster Financial Assistance Agreement Program (NLDFAP) during 2023-26. The NLDFAP is a foundational financial support program designed to assist individuals, small business owners, not-for-profit organizations, and local governments in recovering from the impacts of significant disaster events. The program provides financial assistance to help offset essential costs associated with repairing or replacing uninsurable losses that exceed what applicants could reasonably be expected to bear on their own. By doing so, the program plays a critical role in supporting recovery and helping communities rebuild in the aftermath of natural disasters. In response to the significant impact of Hurricane Fiona in September 2022, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador took swift action to provide financial support to affected residents and communities. An initial allocation of \$30 million was earmarked to assist those impacted, particularly in heavily affected areas such as Port aux Basques. As recovery efforts progressed, total settlement payouts exceeded \$40 million throughout the 2023-26 planning period, reflecting the scale of the disaster and the level of support required. In the wake of Hurricane Fiona, the Department administered the program and accepted applications for

	assistance until January 31, 2023. During this period, eligible applicants were able to submit claims for expenses related to disaster-related damage, including damage to primary residences, essential personal property, basic infrastructure, and business assets critical to ongoing operations.
Implemented new initiatives under the Guns and Gangs Violence Action Fund in collaboration with police and communities to enhance community safety.	The Department implemented new initiatives under the Guns and Gangs Violence Action Fund in collaboration with police and communities to enhance community safety throughout the 2023-26 Strategic Planning period. Through Budget 2024, an investment of \$700,000 was allocated to the RNC to support enhanced training and the acquisition of specialized equipment aimed at addressing gun and gang-related crime. This targeted investment reflects a proactive approach to public safety, equipping officers with the skills, knowledge, and tools required to respond to complex and emerging threats, while strengthening their capacity to prevent and disrupt criminal activity. Investing in modern equipment and ongoing training is a critical component of maintaining effective policing services, ensuring that the RNC can operate safely and efficiently while protecting both officers and the public. The allocation of these resources in 2024-25 supported improved incident response, intelligence-led policing, and enforcement strategies that contribute to safer communities. In addition, in 2025-26, this funding supported community safety planning initiatives, which play a key role in fostering strong relationships between the Department, law enforcement, and local communities. The Department

	collaborated with four communities on community safety and well-being planning throughout 2025-26. Through ongoing engagement and communication, these initiatives help to identify specific public safety concerns at the community level and ensure that programs and services are responsive, coordinated, and evidence-based. Together, these efforts reinforce a comprehensive approach to public safety that prioritizes prevention, collaboration, and community confidence in policing services.
Increased investments in search and rescue and equipment for firefighting.	The Department increased investments in search and rescue equipment and equipment for firefighting throughout the 2023-26 Strategic Planning period. In Budget 2023, funding was increased to \$3.8 million for the Fire Protection Vehicle and Firefighting Equipment Program, which represented a 47 per cent increase in the investment made in Budget 2022. This program approved 14 vehicle applications and 19 equipment applications. In 2025-26, the Department of Justice and Public Safety allocated a further \$4 million to increase investment in equipment and services. These continued investment in firefighting equipment and services throughout the 2023-26 period demonstrate the Department's commitment to safety and has allowed government to support communities so they may respond more effectively to emergencies.

Objective 1.3

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Justice and Public Safety will have delivered select programs and services to enhance public safety in a manner that is responsive to the needs of the province.

Indicators	Results
Invested \$4 million to support the justice system by adding six positions in Public Prosecutions and 15 positions to the Office of the High Sheriff.	The Department invested \$4 million to support the justice system by adding six positions in Public Prosecutions and 15 positions to the Office of the High Sheriff. Six new Crown Attorneys were hired in 2025-26, providing further support to the justice system and demonstrating the Department's ongoing commitment to safer communities and effective service delivery. Of these positions, one was added in Corner Brook, one in Grand Falls, and the remaining four were assigned to St. John's, where case volumes are highest. The strategic distribution of these roles reflects both current demand and anticipated pressures within the court system. Recruitment and retention can present particular challenges in regions outside the Metro St. John's area, making it more difficult to maintain consistent staffing levels. In this context, the addition of a Crown Attorney in Grand Falls is especially important, as it will help address workload pressures in the region and improve capacity to manage cases more effectively. Overall, the addition of six Crown Attorneys is expected to reduce the caseload burden on existing staff. This will allow for greater focus on individual files, improved preparation for court proceedings, and enhanced support for victims and witnesses. In turn, these improvements will contribute to more timely progression of cases through the justice

	system, helping to reduce delays and strengthen public confidence in the administration of justice. Funding was secured to provide for additional positions in the Office of the High Sheriff, and work to hire additional staff will continue in the 2026-27 fiscal year. This funding provides for 15 positions (14 Deputy Sheriff I positions, and 1 Manager position). The Manager for the Western Region previously oversaw Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Wabush, Corner Brook, and Stephenville. This area will now be restructured, with the new Manager position assuming responsibility for Labrador only. The Deputy Sheriff positions represent additional officer resources across all locations outside of St. John's, strengthening overall capacity across regions. Increased officer presence will enhance court security for judges, lawyers, staff, and the public at each location. Each location will be better equipped to support its designated circuit courts, reducing the need for officers to travel from other regions and, in turn, decreasing associated travel costs. Locations with holding cell facilities will also be better positioned to supervise individuals in custody, reducing reliance on RCMP/RNC resources. In addition, these positions will create more opportunities for officers to participate in training during regular working hours. The allocation of these additional positions is based on court dockets, with the volume of scheduled matters determining where increased staffing is required.
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Increased the number of RCMP Officers in Happy Valley-Goose Bay by five officers in accordance with a recommendation of the Policing Transformation Working Group.	The number of RCMP Officers in Happy Valley-Goose Bay was increased by three as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen resourcing. While the detachment has not yet reached the planned increase of five additional officers, funding has been secured and active recruitment to fill the remaining positions is underway with the expectation that the two remaining positions will be filled in summer 2026 pending transfers from other detachments. This continued investment reflects a commitment to enhance police capacity to respond to emergencies, deter crime, and support proactive policing initiatives. The Department will maintain close collaboration with the RCMP to ensure the detachment reaches its full complement, helping to provide a consistent and effective policing presence that supports the safety and security of residents in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.
Established a joint committee between the RNC and the RCMP to oversee provincial intimate partner violence matters.	In 2025-26, the RNC and the RCMP established a joint committee dedicated to overseeing and coordinating provincial responses to intimate partner violence. This initiative represents a significant step toward strengthening public safety by ensuring a more unified, consistent, and effective approach to addressing these complex and high-risk situations. The joint committee supports enhanced collaboration between both policing agencies, enabling the sharing of specialized training, best practices, and coordinated responses to high-priority and high-risk files. Through this collaborative framework, the RNC and RCMP are better positioned to identify emerging trends, improve investigative outcomes, and ensure timely information sharing, all of which contribute to more effective risk

	assessment and intervention strategies. The joint committee also provides a platform to align enforcement efforts with victim-centered and trauma-informed approaches, helping to ensure that survivors of intimate partner violence receive appropriate, timely, and coordinated support. By continuing to work together, both agencies can strengthen partnerships with community organizations and service providers, improving access to critical resources such as emergency housing, counselling, and legal supports. This integrated approach enhances the overall safety of individuals and families affected by intimate partner violence, while reinforcing a broader commitment to protecting vulnerable populations and preventing future incidents across the province.
Collaborated with four regions: Mount Pearl, Conception Bay North, Gander, and Happy Valley-Goose Bay on the development of community safety and well-being plans.	In 2025-26, the Department collaborated with four communities regions: Mount Pearl, Conception Bay North, Gander, and Happy Valley-Goose Bay, to support the development of Community Safety and Well-Being Plans throughout the province, recognizing these plans as a key tool in promoting safer, healthier, and more resilient communities. This work, undertaken by municipal coordinators in their respective communities, involves ongoing engagement with municipal leaders, community organizations and other stakeholders to ensure that each plan reflects local priorities, emerging risks, and the unique social and policing needs of each area. The City of Mount Pearl was the first to complete its plan, which it released in early 2026, setting an important benchmark and providing a model for other communities to follow. By supporting communities in identifying root causes of crime and

	vulnerability – such as mental health, substance use, and social inequality – these plans help guide targeted, evidence-based interventions. Continued engagement will ensure that each plan remains responsive and adaptive, ultimately prioritizing public safety while enhancing prevention efforts, improving service integration, and promoting community confidence in local safety initiatives.
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Issue Two – Enhanced Investments in the Justice System

The Department recognized that investments in policing and fire safety were essential to supporting the delivery of programs and services within the justice system. Throughout 2025–26, the Department continued to strengthen the system by establishing a group to inform the development of a new adult correctional facility, advancing the implementation of new technologies, and investing in fire equipment to enhance safety across the province. These initiatives and investments supported a justice system that was responsive and accessible to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. The results outlined below demonstrate the Department’s continued commitment to enhancing capacity and service delivery throughout 2025-26 and the 2023-26 strategic planning period. As this is the last year of the 2023-26 Strategic Planning cycle, the Department will report on the Goal and indicators. The Department will also report on the 2025-26 Objective and indicators. These efforts as reported in the results aligned with the government’s strategic direction of improving services through sustained investment in the justice system.

Goal

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Justice and Public Safety will have enhanced investments in the justice system to develop infrastructure and improve the capacity to deliver services.

Indicators	Results
Completed work on select correctional infrastructure projects and new court facilities.	Throughout the 2023-26 Strategic Plan period, the Department maintained a strong focus on advancing critical infrastructure projects aimed at modernizing correctional facilities and enhancing overall capacity, safety, and service delivery across the province. This period was marked by sustained investments and coordinated efforts to address aging infrastructure, improve living and working conditions,

	and ensure facilities meet contemporary standards for security, rehabilitation, and operational efficiency. As part of Budget 2023, the government allocated \$13 million to support ongoing work related to the construction of a new correctional facility in St. John's, as well as significant renovations to the Labrador Correctional Centre in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. These investments were key components of a broader strategy to replace outdated infrastructure and respond to growing demands within the corrections system. The new facility in St. John's is intended to provide a modern, purpose-built environment that reflects best practices in corrections, while the upgrades in Labrador aim to improve functionality, safety, and the overall quality of the facility for both staff and inmates. Building on this progress, Budget 2024 included an additional investment of \$8 million to advance key initiatives associated with the replacement of Her Majesty's Penitentiary (HMP). This funding supported critical pre-construction and procurement activities required to move the replacement project forward. A significant milestone during this period was the completion of the Request for Proposals (RFP) process led by the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (TI). Following a thorough evaluation, the proposal submitted by New Avalon Corrections Partners was accepted, marking an important step toward the delivery of a new, modern correctional facility.
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	Collectively, these investments and accomplishments demonstrate the Department's continued commitment to renewing correctional infrastructure, improving public safety outcomes, and ensuring that facilities are equipped to meet current and future needs. Budget 2024 also invested \$5 million to support the redevelopment of the Martin Gallant Building in Stephenville Crossing to accommodate court facilities. At that time, the Department worked in partnership with TI on planning for the redevelopment. However, the redevelopment of the building was not finished before March 31, 2026.
Implemented modern technology and improved digital equipment options to enhance operations and services at the law courts.	Work continued throughout 2025–26 to upgrade and procure modern technology and improve digital equipment at the law courts across the Province. These upgrades aim to enhance operations and services. In partnership with the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), the law courts issued an RFP in September 2024. The goal was to find a solution to modernize all courtrooms with new audio-visual technology. Work on the RFP process continued through 2025–26 and included a detailed review of all proposals received. In January 2026, the law courts conditionally awarded the project to two well-known vendors pending approval of the 2026 Budget. This project will replace outdated video conferencing and audio recording systems with modern, user-friendly technology. It will also introduce new features, such as live streaming, digital evidence presentation, and simpler scheduling for virtual and hybrid court proceedings. These

	improvements will increase efficiency, reduce delays, and help staff and court participants manage proceedings more effectively across locations. The new systems will also support greater accessibility and flexibility, allowing the courts to handle cases while maintaining high service standards. The new technology is expected to be implemented across the province by the end of the 2026–27 fiscal year.
Implemented the Province-Wide Radio System throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.	Throughout the 2023-26 Strategic Plan period, the Department of Justice and Public Safety made several steps toward implementing the Province-Wide Radio System throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. Budget 2023 invested \$21 million to provide the Province-Wide Radio System on the Avalon Peninsula. The RNC and RCMP were using the new system as of April 13, 2023, and paramedics and ambulance dispatchers on the Avalon Peninsula began using the system in July 2023. In 2024-25, the Department of Justice and Public Safety expanded the Province-Wide Radio System to additional users across the province. The continued expansion was part of an \$181 million investment over 12 years to support the implementation of the Province-Wide Radio System. The expansion incorporated various first responders across the province. By increasing the number of first responders, their ability to communicate, respond to emergencies, and coordinate any necessary actions is enhanced.

Objective 2.3

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Justice and Public Safety will have enhanced the capacity of the justice system to deliver services through improved infrastructure.

Indicators	Results
Established an Advisory Committee of stakeholders with comprehensive experience in corrections to inform the ongoing development of the new Adult Correctional Facility.	The Department took steps during 2025-26 to establish an Advisory Committee of stakeholders with comprehensive experience in corrections to inform the ongoing development of the new Adult Correctional Facility. The Department created a potential list of committee members, including community organizations who provide prison in-reach, as well as representatives from the province's Indigenous governments and organizations. While progress was made, the committee was not formally established during 2025-26, as ongoing work on the new facility was not at the stage where the committee was required. The Department understands that the committee is a necessary part of the development of the new Adult Correctional Facility and will establish this committee as work continues on the new facility. The Department recognizes the importance of engaging with community partners in the process of developing the new Adult Correctional Facility and will continue that engagement as the development of the facility continues.
Implemented a digital evidence management system for the RNC.	A digital evidence management software solution was successfully piloted in 2025-26, demonstrating clear operational benefits and strong alignment with modern policing needs. Building on this success, a full rollout to frontline RNC officers is planned for 2026-27. Prioritizing

	access to a comprehensive digital evidence management system will significantly enhance officers' ability to securely collect, store, and manage evidence in real time. By reducing reliance on manual processes and minimizing administrative delays, the system will accelerate evidence handling, improve accuracy, and strengthen the integrity of investigations. From a public safety perspective, faster and more reliable access to digital evidence enables officers to make better-informed decisions in the field and during investigations. This can lead to quicker case resolution, more effective enforcement actions, and improved coordination with prosecutors and the courts. Overall, the full implementation of digital evidence management technology represents a critical investment in modern policing that will directly support safer communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.
Over \$4 million invested in fire equipment, vehicles, and training to increase focus on fire protection and safety in communities.	The Department invested \$4 million in fire equipment, vehicles, and training to increase focus on fire protection and safety in communities. The funding purchased items such as fire trucks, firefighting utility vehicles, Personal Protective Equipment, Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus fill stations, and communication equipment. Continued investment in fire safety infrastructure and equipment remains vital as communities face increasing wildfire activity and more extreme fire conditions linked to climate change. Strengthening local firefighting capacity

	not only improves emergency response times and effectiveness but also helps safeguard lives, property, and critical infrastructure across the province.
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Opportunities and Challenges

The Department continues to support initiatives and programs that help strengthen the justice system in Newfoundland and Labrador, which includes ongoing investments in policing and public safety. The Department remains focused on providing a justice system that is efficient and responds to the needs of residents across the province. While some challenges arose over the year, these situations created opportunities to adjust priorities and continue investing in initiatives that support safer communities.

In 2025-26, some Provincial Court operations experienced disruptions. In response, the Minister committed to investigating and reviewing the causes of staffing shortages and broader system pressures affecting court services. This review helped to identify next steps, and by working closely with the courts, the Department will continue to improve access to justice. Furthermore, the Department continues to strengthen the Office of the High Sheriff through additional staffing, which assists in maintaining and enhancing court security at locations throughout the province.

The Department also responded to challenges during the 2025-26 forest fire season. As in many other regions, climate change has increased the risk, size, and intensity of wildfires in Newfoundland and Labrador. These events place added pressure on emergency response services, especially when fires threaten nearby communities. Although responsibility for Emergency Services was transferred to the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands in February 2026, the Department of Justice and Public Safety supported response and recovery efforts, including participation in the Cabinet Committee established to assist with the Conception Bay North Wildfires, until responsibility for Emergency Services was transferred to the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands in February 2026,

Supporting safer communities remains a key focus for the Department. Efforts continued on recruiting new police officers and working directly with municipalities on

their Community Safety and Well-Being Plans. The City of Mount Pearl completed its Community Safety Plan, and further collaboration with other communities is underway. These partnerships allow communities to develop plans tailored to their unique needs and demonstrate meaningful progress toward improving public safety across Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Department will continue to focus on ensuring that all areas of the justice system have the resources needed to deliver effective services. This approach supports employees in their roles, strengthens confidence in service delivery, and ensures the public has timely access to justice and continued confidence in the system. These efforts represent sustained investment in the justice system, both now and into the future. By prioritizing key areas and addressing emerging issues, the Department seeks to mitigate challenges and improve outcomes. It will also continue to collaborate with internal partners and external stakeholders to advance improvements across the justice system.

Financial Information

Expenditure and revenue figures included in this document are based on public information provided in the “Report on the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the Year Ended 31 March 2026 (unaudited)”. The full report can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/exec/tbs/publications/public-accounts/>.

You can request a copy of the report by contacting:

Comptroller General's Office

P.O. Box 8700 St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

Phone: 709.729.4866

		Actual \$	Estimates	
			Amended \$	Original \$
1.1.01.	Minister's Office	305,376	322,000	262,000
1.2.01.	Executive Support	1,447,621	1,506,200	1,318,300
1.2.02	Administrative and Policy Support	5,112,896	5,562,900	8,255,200
	Less Related Revenue (Federal)	(1,065,336)	(969,500)	(969,500)
	Less Related Revenue (Provincial)	(74,492)	(210,100)	(210,100)
1.2.03	Legal Information Management	898,821	981,100	904,800
	Less Related Revenue (Provincial)	0	0	0
1.2.04	Administrative Support (Capital)	1,500,160	1,500,500	1,500,500
1.3.01	Fines Administration	1,121,964	1,475,800	2,590,300
	Less Related Revenue (Federal)	0	(66,500)	(66,500)

	Less Related Revenue (Provincial)	(650,338)	(920,600)	(920,600)
2.1.01.	Civil Law	197,848,482	198,560,100	14,443,400
2.1.02.	Sheriff's Office	6,680,063	7,153,200	8,091,200
	Less Related Revenue (Federal)	(961)	(60,600)	(60,600)
2.1.03.	Support Enforcement	969,521	1,059,100	1,119,100
2.2.01.	Criminal Law	9,002,282	9,076,300	10,073,500
	Less Related Revenue (Federal)	(57,416)	(57,500)	(57,500)
2.3.01.	Legal Aid	21,112,900	21,112,900	21,112,900
	Less Related Revenue (Federal)	(3,851,909)	(3,710,000)	(3,710,000)
2.3.02.	Commissions of Inquiry	0	100	100
2.3.03.	Other Inquiries	4,983,064	5,568,300	5,000,000
2.3.04.	Office of the Chief Medical Examiner	2,575,403	2,885,800	2,647,000
	Less Related Revenue (Federal)	(70,000)	0	0
	Less Related Revenue (Provincial)	0	(120,000)	(120,000)
2.3.05.	Human Rights	1,167,071	1,174,900	1,043,900
	Less Related Revenue (Federal)	0	0	0
2.3.06.	Office of the Public Trustee	766,027	820,000	820,000

	Less Related Revenue (Provincial)	(1,419,030)	(1,000,000)	(1,000,000)
2.4.01.	Legislative Counsel	608,269	612,400	584,900
3.1.01.	Supreme Court	8,070,179	8,415,400	9,283,200
	Less Related Revenue (Federal)	(1,053,841)	(1,068,300)	(1,068,300)
3.2.01.	Provincial Court	14,075,313	14,343,900	13,550,900
	Less Related Revenue (Federal)	0	0	0
	Less Related Revenue (Provincial)	(596,253)	(770,400)	(770,400)
4.1.01.	Royal Newfoundland Constabulary	72,082,802	72,571,300	76,384,800
	Less Related Revenue (Federal)	(364,558)	(669,800)	(669,800)
	Less Related Revenue (Provincial)	(465,207)	(580,600)	(580,600)
4.1.02.	Royal Canadian Mounted Police	108,083,750	111,322,200	106,937,000
	Less Related Revenue (Federal)	(464,300)	(721,100)	(721,100)
	Less Related Revenue (Provincial)	0	(141,300)	(141,300)
4.1.03.	RNC Public Complaints Commission	463,248	476,600	389,600
4.1.04	Serious Incident Response Team	387,428	457,600	456,100
4.2.01.	Adult Corrections	54,543,695	55,664,000	50,204,500
	Less Related Revenue (Federal)	(2,232,524)	(7,683,900)	(7,683,900)

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	Less Related Revenue (Provincial)	(1,569,063)	(1,300,000)	(1,300,000)
4.2.02.	Youth Secure Custody	6,008,003	6,298,400	4,899,900
	Less Related Revenue (Federal)	(2,127,449)	(2,544,400)	(2,544,400)
	Less Related Revenue (Provincial)	0	0	0
Total: Department		503,751,661	506,326,400	319,278,500

Annex A: Departmental Entities

The following entities under the Department are responsible for planning and reporting as category 3 entities, pursuant to the **Transparency and Accountability Act**:

- Board of Commissioners of Public Utilities;
- Child Death Review Committee;
- Commissioner of Lobbyists;
- Consumer Advocate;
- Criminal Code Mental Disorder Review Board;
- Human Rights Commission;
- Human Rights Commission Panel of Adjudicators;
- Newfoundland and Labrador Legal Aid Commission (Legal Aid NL);
- Office of the Chief Medical Examiner;
- Royal Newfoundland Constabulary Public Complaints Commission;
- Royal Newfoundland Constabulary Public Complaints Commission Panel of Adjudicators; and,
- Serious Incident Response Team of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Activity plans and annual reports for the entities can be viewed on the Department's publications webpage at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/jps/publications/>. In addition, the following are entities of the Department, but do not have any reporting responsibilities under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**:

- Complaints Review Committee;
- Fitness to Practice Committee of the Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador;
- Law Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador;
- Law Society Disciplinary Panel;
- Legal Appointments Board;
- Judicial Complaints Panel; and
- Judicial Council of the Provincial Court of Newfoundland and Labrador.

