

2023-2026

# BUSINESS PLAN

## Labrador Affairs





## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As Minister for the Department of Labrador Affairs, I am pleased to present our business plan for 2023-2026. This plan covers the period April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2026 and was developed in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, under which the Department is classified as a Category 2 entity. It provides an overview of the Department and indicates key goals and objectives to be accomplished during this period.

In consideration of Government's strategic directions to support the socio-economic development of Labrador, as well as provide accessible medical care through transportation assistance, key priorities of the Minister's mandate have been identified for the next three years. Outcomes of these directions include program administration, advocacy, partnership, collaboration and engagement.

As the Minister, I am accountable for the preparation of this plan and for the achievements of the goals and objectives pertaining to the Department.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Dempster". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Hon. Lisa Dempster  
Minister of Labrador Affairs



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## BUSINESS PLAN 2023-2026

## **Departmental Overview**

On April 1, 2023, the former Labrador Affairs Secretariat and the Medical Transportation Program from the Department of Health and Community Services were restructured to form the new Department of Labrador Affairs. The Department focuses on advocating for the social and economic development of Labrador while providing advice on government policies, planning and programs that impact Labrador. In addition, the Department administers the Medical Transportation Assistance Program (MTAP) and the Medical Transportation Program for Income Support Clients (ISMT).

### **Vision:**

The vision of the Department of Labrador Affairs is of a strong, sustainable and vibrant Labrador, where all people have the opportunity to prosper and contribute to their communities, regions and the province.

### **Mandate:**

The mandate of the Department of Labrador Affairs is to advance the social and economic development of Labrador by ensuring the unique perspectives are considered in the formation of government policy and in the delivery of provincial government programs and services in Labrador. The Department also administers medical transportation assistance programs for all areas of the Province.

### **Lines of Business:**

#### **1. Policy and Programming**

The Department of Labrador Affairs is responsible for the development, implementation and administration of provincial policies and programs from a

Labrador and rural/remote perspective. The Department aims to ensure that provincial policies, programs and services consider Labrador related issues by providing advice to provincial government departments and agencies and through its participation in provincial horizontal initiatives.

Labrador Affairs is responsible for the administration of Labrador-specific programs and grants that include:

- the Labrador Transportation Grooming Subsidy;
- the Labrador Aboriginal Nutritional and Artistic Assistance Program;
- the Labrador Sport Travel Subsidy Program and School Sport NL Labrador Travel Program;
- the Labrador Winter Games; and,
- annual operating grant for the Combined Councils of Labrador.

The Department is also responsible for the administration of the provincial Medical Transportation Assistance Program and the Medical Transportation Program for Income Support Clients.

## **2. Coordination, Collaboration and Advocacy**

To achieve its mandate to advance the social and economic development of Labrador, Labrador Affairs coordinates, collaborates, and advocates for Labrador and northern related initiatives. The Department collaborates with provincial government departments/entities, federal, territorial and municipal governments, industry organizations and stakeholders. The Department also works with stakeholders on MCP and Income Support clients to coordinate the medical transportation assistance programs.

### **Clients/Stakeholders:**

The primary clients and stakeholders of the Labrador Affairs branch include:

- Labrador residents, communities and groups, who expect leadership in



- facilitating economic and social development in Labrador;
- The Provincial Government and its departments/entities which require policy advice and input on Labrador issues;
  - Federal, municipal, and Indigenous Governments and Organizations that seek information and input on Labrador issues; and,
  - Clients of Labrador Affairs programs in which the Department administers.

Clients and stakeholders of the Medical Transportation branch include:

- MCP beneficiaries required to travel from rural and remote areas to larger centres to access specialized insured health care services;
- Income Support clients; and,
- Federal, municipal and Indigenous Governments and Organizations.

Additional information on the mandate and lines of business of Labrador Affairs is located on its website at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/exec/las/>.

## Staff and Budget

	2023-24 Estimates	Staff Complement
Labrador Affairs	\$19,412,000	60

The Department has offices located in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and St. John's. At the Labrador Affairs branch there are ten employees in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay office which includes the Assistant Deputy Minister, Director of Labrador Affairs, and Director of Communications. In the Medical Transportation Program branch there are 49 employees located in St. John's which includes the Assistant Deputy Minister. The Deputy Minister for the Department of Labrador Affairs is located in St. John's.

The Director of Communications also supports the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation and the Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat.

## **Issue One: Northern and Arctic Priorities**

Labrador Affairs represents the Province on various Northern and Arctic policy initiatives. The Department chairs the Arctic Policy Working Group comprised of various provincial departments/entities that have an active involvement or interest in the Arctic and Canada's North. The mandate of the group is to facilitate the coordination and collaboration between Provincial Government departments and entities on the social and economic development activities related to the Arctic and Canada's North.

Since 2000, the Department has played a lead role in the Northern Development Ministers Forum (NDMF) for the Province. The NDMF was established to advance the commonalities and diversities of Canada's Northern jurisdictions. The Department also represents the Province on the working groups for the Government of Canada's Arctic and Northern Policy Framework, and the Arctic Cooperation Advisory Committee.

In February 2023, the Province signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Nunavut to enhance responsible economic and social development and enable mutual benefits for stakeholders in both jurisdictions as opportunities continue to emerge in the Arctic. Labrador Affairs will lead the activities on behalf of the Province.

Continuing to build upon and expand priorities in the Arctic and North supports the government's strategic direction towards the social and economic development of Labrador.

**GOAL:**

By March 31, 2026, Labrador Affairs will have strengthened its role in Northern and Arctic priorities at the regional and national level.

**Indicators:**

- Lead activities of Northern and Arctic importance to the province;
- Strengthen relationships with Arctic and Northern partners on a regional and national level by hosting and attending conferences; and,
- Participate in activities related to the Arctic and North to increase collaboration and cooperation between the Province and northern stakeholders.

**Objective 1:**

By March 31, 2024, Labrador Affairs will have increased its presence at Northern and Arctic platforms to further inform the Government on areas related to the North.

**Indicators:**

- Implement requirements for the Memorandum of Understanding with Nunavut and relevant stakeholders partners;
- Lead and coordinate the hosting of the next Northern Development Ministers Forum;
- Coordinate Government's response to Arctic and Northern initiatives through Federal/Provincial/Territorial committees.

**Objective 2:**

By March 31, 2025 Labrador Affairs will have identified priority areas for collaboration on Northern and Arctic initiatives.

**Objective 3:**

By March 31, 2026 Labrador Affairs will have advanced recommended actions on priority areas related to Northern and Arctic initiatives.

**Issue Two: Labrador Transportation Grooming Subsidy**

The Labrador Transportation Grooming Subsidy (LTGS) provides funding to maintain snowmobile trails to isolated Labrador communities that do not have year-round road connections. Designated trails are groomed and marked over land and ice to remote communities including: Nain, Natuashish, Hopedale, Postville, Makkovik, Rigolet, Black Tickle, Norman Bay and Mud Lake.

Labrador Affairs works closely with service providers including the Inuit Community Governments (ICGs) of Nain, Hopedale, Postville, Makkovik, and Rigolet, as well as the Local Service District of Black Tickle, Eagle River Development Association (ERDA), Norman Bay Recreation Committee, Aids to Navigation Committee from Mud Lake, Town of North West River and the Grand River Snowmobile Club.

The Department has recognized the need for investment to support and maintain snowmobile trails in isolated Labrador communities. Through ongoing information gathering and collaboration, the Department anticipates enhancements to service delivery that is more responsive to the needs of Labrador's isolated communities.

**GOAL:**

By March 31, 2026 Labrador Affairs will have updated delivery of the LTGS that is responsive to the needs of isolated Labrador communities.

**Indicators:**

- Collaborate with Labrador's isolated communities and other stakeholders on service delivery options;
- Improve administration and delivery of the program.

**Objective 1:**

By March 31, 2024, Labrador Affairs will have determined the needs of isolated communities in Labrador to effectively deliver the LTGS.

**Indicators:**

- Engage service providers of the Labrador Transportation Grooming Subsidy program;
- Identify opportunities and challenges within the existing program;
- Identify service delivery requirements.

**Objective 2:**

By March 31, 2025 Labrador Affairs will have implemented service delivery requirements for the LTGS that are responsive of the needs of users.

**Objective 3:**

By March 31, 2026 Labrador Affairs will have assessed the effectiveness of the program updates for the LTGS.

## **Issue Three: Medical Transportation**

Through continuous review of the Province's medical transportation assistance programs, the Department of Labrador Affairs can improve upon health outcomes by providing timely access to transportation assistance benefits, and reduce the financial burden experienced by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians accessing medical care.

Taking the lead role, the Department will continue the work to provide medical transportation assistance to the citizens of the province, concentrating on specific geographic and economic challenges accessing medical care, with a focus on improved outcomes and efficiency.

### **GOAL:**

By March 31, 2026, Labrador Affairs will have supported the increased health and wellbeing of residents of the Province by enhancing and improving the availability of financial transportation assistance to facilitate access to specialized insured health services.

### **Indicators:**

- Refined and updated specific guidelines and or policies to address the unique needs of residents of the province to access medical services through provincial medical transportation assistance programs;
- Utilized feedback for monitoring and reviewing the medical transportation programs to ensure policy is current and effective for meeting the evolving needs of the province;
- Improved program efficiency by establishing quicker application assessment rates, call response rates and turnaround times for pre-payments and reimbursements; and,
- Improved public awareness of the medical transportation assistance programs through a greater online presence.

**Objective 1:**

By March 31, 2024 the Department of Labrador Affairs will have assessed the medical transportation needs of eligible residents utilizing the Medical Transportation Assistance Program and the Medical Transportation Assistance Program for Income Support Clients and implemented key enhancements to benefits/assistance to address those unique needs.

**Indicators:**

- Implemented key enhancements to benefits/assistance offered through the medical transportation assistance programs which will help address the unique needs of Labrador and Island residents of the province accessing health care services;
- Improved the applicant experience through a new Medical Transportation Assistance Program (MTAP) application; and,
- Improved public awareness of Medical Transportation Program for Income Support Clients (ISMT).

**Objective 2:**

By March 31, 2025 the Department of Labrador Affairs will have implemented service delivery requirements that enables the programs to be more responsive to the needs of MTAP and ISMT clients.

**Objective 3:**

By March 31, 2026 the Department of Labrador Affairs will have assessed the efficacy of MTAP and ISMT updates and highlighted areas for further resolution.

## Annex A: Strategic Directions

Strategic Directions are the articulation of desired physical, social and economic outcomes and normally require action by more than one government entity.

These directions are generally communicated by government strategic directions, platform documents, Throne and Budget Speeches, policy documents, and other communique. The **Transparency and Accountability Act** requires departments and public bodies to take into account these strategic directions in the preparation of their performance-based plans. This action will facilitate the integration of planning practices across government and will ensure that all entities are moving forward on key commitments.

The strategic directions that are relevant to the Department of Labrador Affairs are provided below. Each direction is comprised of a number of components or focus areas. These focus areas will be addressed through the various planning processes of the Department of Labrador Affairs.

Title: Socio-economic development

Outcome: Enhance the social and economic development for Labrador

This outcome supports the Department's vision of a strong, sustainable and vibrant Labrador, where all people have the opportunity to prosper and contribute to their communities, regions and the province. This will require focus in the following areas:

- Program administration
- Stewardship and advocacy
- Partnerships and collaboration
- Provincial Government policy and program delivery responsive to Labrador interests



Title: Access to specialized health care services

Outcome: Provide timely access to transportation assistance and reduce the financial burden experienced by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians accessing specialized health care services.

This outcome supports the Department of Labrador Affairs' vision where all people have the opportunity to prosper and contribute to their communities, regions and the province. This will require focus in the following areas:

- Engagement and consultation
- Program efficiency
- Provincial Government policies, programs and services collaboration

