

Legal Aid NL Annual Report 2025-26



LEGAL AID NL

REAL LAWYERS FOR REAL PEOPLE



Message from the Chair

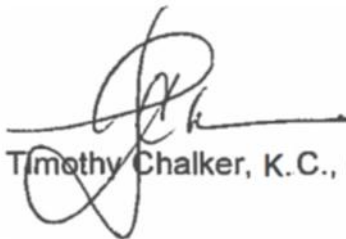
As chair of the Newfoundland and Labrador Legal Aid Commission (the Commission or Legal Aid NL), I am pleased to present the Commission's Annual Report which outlines the activities completed during fiscal year April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026. This report was prepared under my direction and in accordance with the provisions of the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. This report includes the audited financial statements of the Legal Aid Commission as prepared by the Office of the Auditor General.

The Legal Aid Commission, also known as Legal Aid NL, is classified as a Category 3 Government Entity and, as such, must prepare an Annual Report which presents information on the activities of the entity carried out during the preceding fiscal year in compliance with its mandate.

Legal Aid NL operates under the **Legal Aid Act**, which provides for the provision of legal counsel to represent eligible residents of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador who are charged with offences under the **Criminal Code of Canada**, other federal and provincial statutes, and people who have family disputes.

Residents of Newfoundland and Labrador avail of duty counsel services when appearing on criminal matters in Provincial and Youth Court or on family matters in the Supreme Court Family Division. These services also extend to visitors to Newfoundland and Labrador. Legal counsel may be appointed for non-residents either through the Legal Aid Plan of the province in which they reside, or through Legal Aid NL.

Legal Aid NL is accountable for the preparation of this report and for the results reported. I, as chair of the Newfoundland and Labrador Legal Aid Commission, accept accountability on behalf of myself and the entire board.



Timothy Chalker, K.C., Chair

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Background and Overview

Legal Aid NL is a publicly funded, independent organization established in 1976 by the **Legal Aid Act** (the Act) to assume responsibility for the Legal Aid Plan. Prior to this, a committee of the Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador administered the Legal Aid Plan.

The services of Legal Aid NL are an essential component of a fair and accessible justice system in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Legal Aid's mandate is to respond to the needs of those whose means are compromised, as well as the general public in certain instances, by providing high quality, innovative and collaborative legal services through a staff solicitor model.

Eligibility for full service legal aid representation requires that financial and legal eligibility requirements specified in the Act and the **Legal Aid Regulations** (the Regulations) are met. Once approved, services are provided by solicitors employed full time with Legal Aid NL in approximately 99 per cent of the cases, and by solicitors in private practice in those remaining. Private solicitors are paid on a fee-for-service basis in accordance with the tariff (hours and rates) of the regulations.

Legal Aid NL also delivers services, without the need for financial eligibility, through solicitors, by way of:

- Duty counsel on criminal law matters before the Provincial and Youth courts;
- Duty counsel on family law matters in the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador-Family Division in St. John's; and
- Brydges counsel, whereby a solicitor can be reached toll-free, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to provide advice to people upon arrest, detention, or questioning by a peace officer.

A board of commissioners, comprised of nine members, manages the affairs of Legal Aid NL. The Deputy Minister of Justice and Public Safety and the CEO/Provincial Director of Legal Aid NL, or their designates, serve as *ex-officio* members of the board. The Lieutenant-Governor in Council appoints seven Commissioners, three of whom are appointed from a list of nominees submitted by the Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Lieutenant-Governor in Council designates one of the board of commissioners as chair. Members of the board of commissioners as of March 31, 2026, were:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Timothy J. Chalker, K.C., Chair | • Donna Strong, Vice Chair |
| • Beth McGrath, K.C. | • Rodney Zdebiak, K.C. |
| • Melissa May | • Jon Josephson |
| • Paula Michelin | |

Ex-officio members:

- Justin Caines, Assistant Deputy Minister (designate of Deputy Minister of Justice and Public Safety)
- Harman Khurana, CEO and Provincial Director

Legal Aid Offices and Staff

As of March 31, 2026, Legal Aid NL employed 157 personnel including a CEO and provincial director, one deputy provincial director, 71 solicitors, and 84 support and administrative staff. Positions were allocated across a network of 18 offices, including the provincial head office, 12 area offices, and five project offices.

From five project offices, Legal Aid NL delivers the following services:

- The **Mental Health Office** works collaboratively with the Provincial Health Authority operating as Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services (NL Health Services) providing legal representation at the Mental Health Court, appearing before the Criminal Code Mental Disorder Review Board, the Mental Health Care and Treatment Review Board, as well as in the traditional court system. Legal Aid NL and NL Health Services take a multidisciplinary approach to client service in resolving legal and related issues which allows for the delivery of timely, comprehensive and holistic services to individuals who struggle with mental illness. By providing legal assistance through this office, clients with mental health issues who often face significant barriers to justice, have access to the legal rights to which they are entitled.
- The **Family and Child Offices** are located in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Corner Brook. Its role is to assist parents of children taken into care by the Department of Social Supports and Well-Being; to respond to the concerns of the Department of Social Supports and Well-Being; to assist parents in accessing the supports they need; and, to work towards the reunification of the family, where possible. Each office has a combination of lawyers, social workers, and paralegals.
- The **Family Duty Counsel Office** is located in St. John's at the family division of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador. This is a no-fee service for people with family law matters, who do not already have a lawyer. Duty counsel provides basic advice and speaks on their behalf in straightforward and uncontested court matters.
- The **Special Defence Unit** was established in June 2018 to provide legal services to clients with serious criminal charges. In early 2018, the Act was amended to remove the choice of counsel provision, so clients no longer choose a private lawyer on serious charges such as murder and manslaughter. Clients facing such charges are now represented by senior lawyers experienced in dealing with major criminal matters. The office is staffed with a team of three senior lawyers experienced in dealing with major criminal matters.

Legal Aid NL also supports specialized projects and initiatives, including:

- The **Intimate Partner Violence Intervention Court**, a specialized court established in 2015 by the Department of Justice and Public Safety and supported by Legal Aid NL, with locations in St. John's, Stephenville and Grand Falls-Windsor. This court serves victims of domestic and intimate partner violence and helps enhance victim safety and offender accountability. Legal Aid NL provides a risk assessment officer, based in the provincial head office, to assess persons whose cases are being considered for inclusion in the Intimate Partner Violence Intervention Court. Solicitors from the St. John's area office, the Stephenville area office and the Grand Falls-Windsor area office handle the provision of advice and representation to accused persons.
- **The Indigenous project** focuses on working with Indigenous communities to improve access to justice and the quality of legal services for Indigenous peoples. Legal Aid NL supports this project through four community liaison worker positions in the towns of Nain, Hopedale, Natuashish and Sheshatshiu.
- **The French speaking project** ensures access to French-speaking services. Legal Aid NL maintains a roster of solicitors fluent in French to provide legal advice by telephone, in person and, when necessary, conduct trials in French.
- **The Drug Treatment Court**, established in 2019, by the Department of Justice and Public Safety is intended for offenders with serious drug addictions, who commit non-violent, drug-motivated offences. Legal Aid NL's Mental Health Office is supporting this initiative by actively processing referrals and transfers at the court's weekly file meetings and providing advice and representation to accused persons.

Lines of Business and Mandate

For residents of Newfoundland and Labrador who meet financial and case eligibility criteria, and for certain non-residents charged with a criminal offence or who otherwise qualify, the following services are provided:

- Representation in criminal, family and civil cases;
- Representation in appeals before the Courts;
- Representation before administrative tribunals in areas such as immigration and refugee claims, Canada Pension Plan, employment insurance and social assistance; and
- Representation in specialized courts including Mental Health Court, Intimate Partner Violence Intervention Court, and Drug Treatment Court.

For all residents of Newfoundland and Labrador, and visitors to the province, the following services are provided:

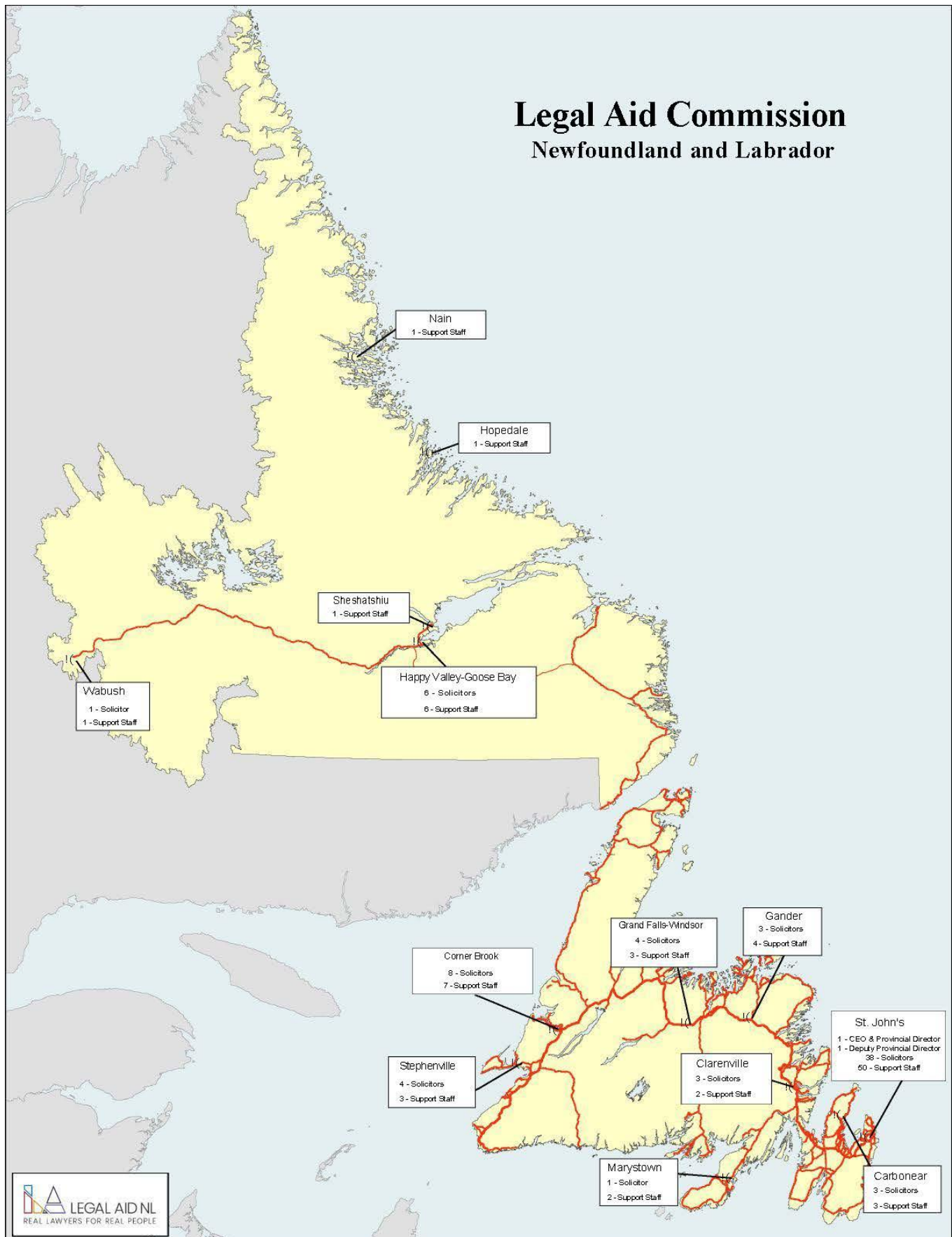
- Duty counsel to accused persons appearing in the provincial and youth courts across the province, and family division - trial division of the Supreme Court in St. John's.
- Brydges duty counsel, a 24-hour telephone service to people arrested or detained by a peace officer.

Vision

A province where all people, regardless of means, capacity, social situation, or gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) identity factors, have access to the knowledge and services they require to protect their basic legal rights and quality of life through collaborative, holistic and long-term solutions to their legal issues.

Legal Aid Commission

Newfoundland and Labrador



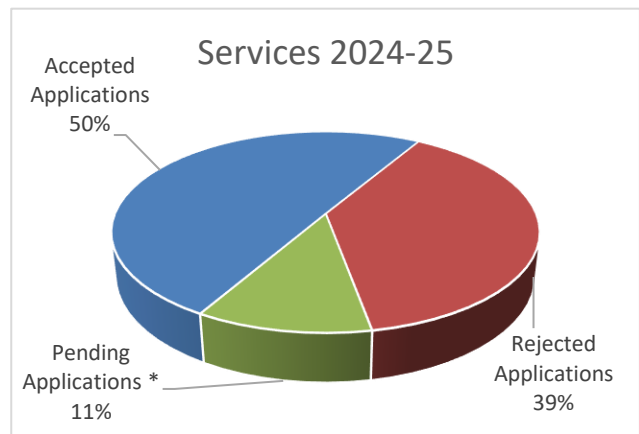
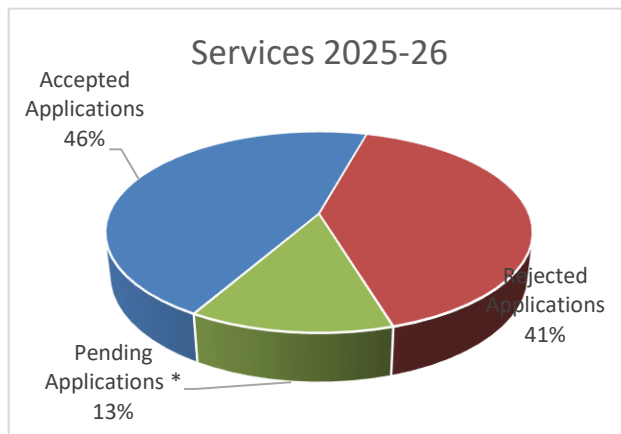
Highlights and Partnerships

Applications for Legal Services

During the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026, Legal Aid NL received 8,134 applications for full service legal representation.

Of the applications received, approximately 46 per cent (or 3,739 applications) were approved, approximately 41 per cent (or 3,335 applications) were rejected as they did not meet one or both of the financial or legal eligibility criteria, and the remaining 13 per cent (or 1,060 applications) were pending a decision. The table and charts below show the change in the number of files handled by Legal Aid NL in the 2025-26 fiscal year as compared to the previous year.

Applications Processed				
	2025-26		2024-25	
Accepted Applications	3,739	46%	4,076	50%
Rejected Applications	3,335	41%	3,134	39%
Pending Applications *	1,060	13%	911	11%
Total	8,134	100%	8,121	100%
* Pending applications have not yet been approved as additional information is required before a decision can be made as to an applicant's eligibility.				



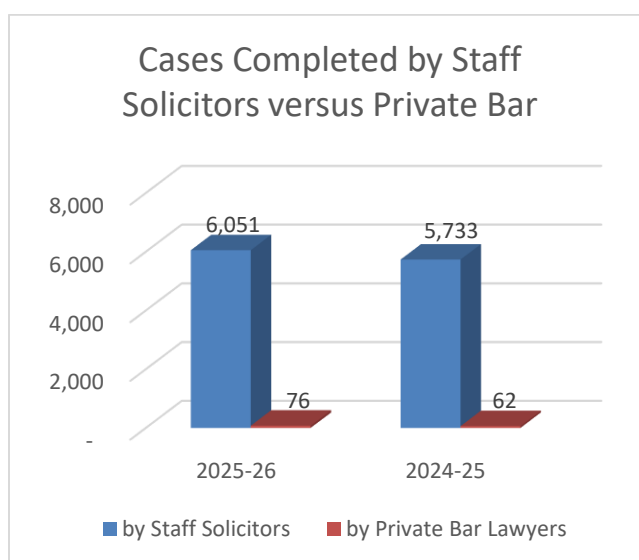
Type of Legal Representation

Legal Aid NL provides a range of legal services to low-income individuals primarily in the areas of family and criminal law. During 2025-26, 69 per cent (or 2,588 applications) of 3,739 applications approved related to criminal matters; the remaining were made up of 21 per cent civil (770 applications), 10 per cent youth (361 applications), and less than one per cent immigration/refugee matters (20 applications). The table below outlines the types of applications received and approved year-over-year.

Law Type	2025-26			2024-25		
	Applications Received	Applications Approved		Applications Received	Applications Approved	
Criminal	4,697	2,588	69%	4,649	2,778	68%
Youth	386	361	10%	476	445	11%
Civil/Family	2,940	770	21%	2,909	830	20%
Immigration	111	20	<1%	87	23	1%
Total	8,134	3,739	100%	8,121	4,076	100%

Cases Completed

Legal Aid NL primarily uses a staff solicitor model to deliver legal services as opposed to relying on the private bar for service delivery. During the 2025-26 fiscal year, Legal Aid NL provided representation on 6,127 cases. Consistent with previous years, staff lawyers handled approximately 99 per cent (or 6,051) of the cases completed, with private bar representing one per cent (or 76) of the cases completed. The chart below shows the year-over-year comparison of the number of cases completed by staff solicitors versus private lawyers.



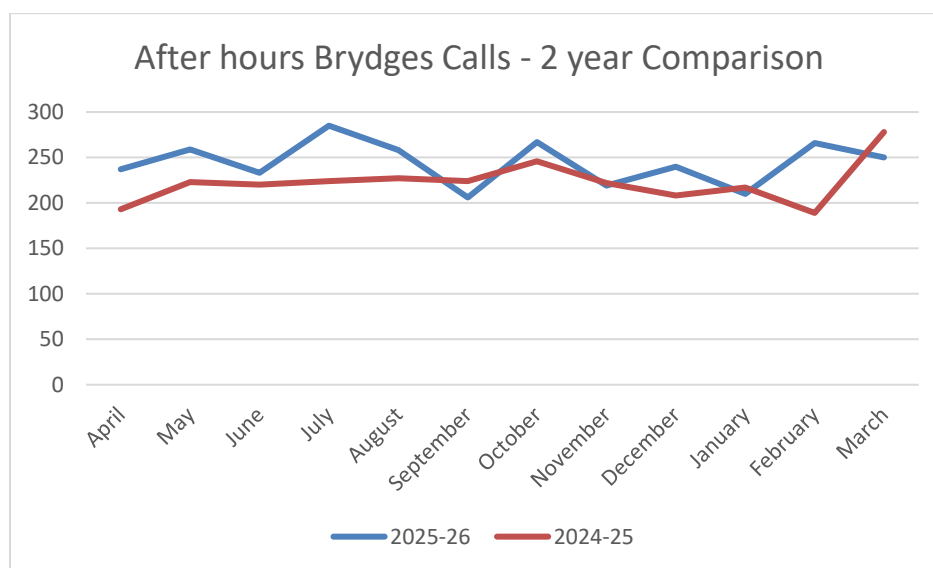
Duty Counsel Services

Duty counsel at Provincial Court is a no-charge service provided to people on their first appearance before a provincial or youth court judge. During the 2025-26 fiscal year, duty counsel assisted 16,402 clients, including 15,871 adults and 531 youth. The majority of adult clients assisted through duty counsel involved matters relating to criminal charges (15,067 clients or 95 per cent of adults). The remaining adult client assists pertained to family law issues and were assisted by duty counsel solicitors from the family division project office.

Duty Counsel				
Client	2025-26		2024-25	
Adult				
Criminal	15,064	95%	11,014	94%
Family	807	5%	741	6%
Total Adult	15,871	97%	11,755	96%
Youth	531	3%	482	4%
Total	16,402	100%	12,237	100%

Brydges Counsel Services

Brydges counsel is a telephone service offering free legal advice on a 24-hour basis to individuals under arrest and in custody, under active investigation by the police, and who need immediate advice on their rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and criminal law matters. The number of clients assisted by Brydges Counsel in 2025-26 was 2,930 as compared to 2,671 in 2024-25, representing a 10 per cent increase over the prior year.



Report on Performance

Strategic Issue: Improved Productivity and Client Service Delivery Through Focus on New Technology and Training

During 2025–26, Legal Aid NL advanced its strategic focus on strengthening system usability and internal workflows through targeted enhancements to its existing client management system (LAMIS). Building on the decision to enhance rather than replace the system, work during the year concentrated on identifying, prioritizing, testing, and implementing functional improvements that support more efficient operations and improved client service delivery.

In collaboration with the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), Legal Aid NL submitted targeted functional improvement requests aimed at addressing system performance, usability, and workflow efficiency. These requests were informed by staff consultations, operational reviews, and feedback from the internal working group established to guide system enhancements, ensuring that proposed changes reflected organizational needs and front-line user experience.

Testing and phased implementation of approved enhancements occurred throughout the year, supported by underlying infrastructure upgrades completed in the prior period. These improvements contributed to increased system stability, improved performance, and enhanced functionality within LAMIS. Enhancements were rolled out in a controlled manner to minimize service disruption and allow for user feedback to inform ongoing refinements.

As enhancements were implemented, Legal Aid NL communicated system changes to staff through internal updates and provided targeted training and guidance to support adoption. This approach ensured staff were informed of new or revised functionalities and able to integrate improvements into daily practice.

While work to modernize the client management system is ongoing, progress achieved during 2025–26 represents an important step toward more efficient, consistent, and reliable system operations. These efforts directly support improved productivity and client service delivery, while positioning Legal Aid NL to continue incremental system enhancements aligned with operational priorities.

Goal:	By March 31, 2026, Legal Aid NL will have procured, tested, deployed and customized new PMS to improve productivity for enhanced client service delivery and move towards electronic filing of all client data.
Indicators:	Actual Results:
Procurement and deployment of PMS organization-wide.	Through the due diligence and work completed during 2023-24 in relation to procurement of a new (PMS), Legal Aid NL decided to discontinue the procurement of a new system and instead changed focus to upgrading and enhancing its existing PMS.
Identification, testing and implementation of customizations required to address selected deficiencies in workflow.	Since a new PMS was no longer necessary, during 2024-25 significant work was completed to develop and plan technological enhancements for the existing program, LAMIS. During 2024, Legal Aid NL engaged extensively with the OCIO to develop a workplan that outlined key system enhancement objectives, resource requirements, and timelines for testing and implementation. To further support this initiative, Legal Aid NL established an internal working group to help identify enhancement opportunities, validate system requirements, and participate in testing and implementation of proposed changes.
Identification, testing and implementation of customizations required to address document management needs.	As the new system was not implemented, there were no system customizations required as indicated. Instead, Legal Aid NL collaborated closely with OCIO to make infrastructure upgrades and implement targeted system enhancements aimed at improving functionality and user experience within LAMIS. The revised approach helped realize several advantages, including accelerated implementation timelines, reduced training demands for staff, and fewer disruptions to services. Legal Aid NL continues to make incremental system enhancements to maintain a modern PMS that is efficient, reliable, and aligned with operational priorities.

Objective 3:	By March 31, 2026, Legal Aid NL will have identified, tested and implemented customizations required to address document management needs.
Indicators:	Actual Results:
Identified and submitted additional functional improvements requests to OCIO.	During 2025–26, Legal Aid NL identified and submitted a series of targeted functional improvement requests to OCIO to enhance the usability and efficiency of the LAMIS system. These requests were informed by consultations with staff, operational reviews, and input from the internal system working group. Examples include enhancements to search and filtering capabilities (e.g., calendar note search functionality and date-range filtering for contact notes), workflow improvements (e.g., default date logic updates), and administrative controls (e.g., user search and account lock/unlock features). Additional requests included addressed reporting and data organization needs for improved tracking and analysis.
Completed testing and implementation of proposed system enhancements.	Legal Aid NL collaborated closely with OCIO to test and implement multiple system enhancements aimed at improving functionality and user experience within LAMIS. Testing activities took place between July and August 2025 and involved iterative feedback, issue identification, and validation prior to deployment. A total of nine system updates were successfully implemented and rolled out on September 16, 2025. These included practical improvements such as a standardized address copy function, automated charge counts, enhanced calendar features, and consent tracking on client records. In addition, LAMIS migrated to a new AIX server in October 2025, improving system supportability, stability, and security by moving to a fully supported and regularly patched environment.
Communicated system improvements to staff and provided appropriate training.	Legal Aid NL communicated system enhancements to staff through organization-wide updates in advance of and following implementation. Staff were informed of changes, including new functionality and workflow improvements introduced in the September 2025 release. Guidance was provided to support adoption of features such as enhanced search tools, address formatting, and calendar updates. Communication regarding the October 2025 server migration was also issued to prepare staff for temporary downtime and ensure continuity of operations. This structured approach to communication and training supported user awareness, reduced disruption, and helped staff effectively incorporate system improvements into their daily work.

Opportunities and Challenges

Between 2023 and 2026, Legal Aid NL made meaningful progress in modernizing its technology environment and improving operational efficiency. These efforts have established a more stable technological foundation while minimizing service disruption.

Despite this progress, Legal Aid NL continues to face opportunities and challenges as it responds to increasing service demands, evolving technology requirements, and growing expectations around information governance and security. Ensuring consistent information practices, maintaining compliance with legislative requirements, and managing information across its lifecycle remain key challenges. At the same time, these areas present opportunities to improve efficiency, reduce risk, and enhance information quality in support of client service delivery.

In response, in the coming years Legal Aid NL will focus on strengthening its information management program. By enhancing governance, compliance, lifecycle management, access, security, and training, the organization will address existing gaps and create a more structured and accountable information environment. This approach will ensure information is managed as a strategic asset, supported by clear standards and consistent oversight.

Through these efforts, Legal Aid NL will establish a unified and reliable information management program, positioning the organization for continued success through improved efficiency, stronger decision-making, and future service innovation.

LEGAL AID NL
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
MARCH 31, 2026

Management's Report

Management's Responsibility for the Newfoundland and Labrador Legal Aid Commission Financial Statements

Management, in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, has prepared the financial statements and the integrity and objectivity of these statements are management's responsibility. Management is also responsible for all of the notes to the financial statements, and for ensuring that this information is consistent, where appropriate, with the information contained in the financial statements.

Management is also responsible for implementing and maintaining a system of internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that transactions are properly authorized, assets are safeguarded and liabilities are recognized.

Management is also responsible for ensuring that transactions comply with relevant policies and authorities and are properly recorded to produce timely and reliable financial information.

The Board is responsible for ensuring that management fulfills its responsibilities for financial reporting and internal control and exercises these responsibilities through the Board. The Board reviews internal financial information periodically and external audited financial statements yearly.

The Auditor General conducts an independent audit of the annual financial statements of the Commission in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, in order to express an opinion thereon. The Auditor General has full and free access to financial management of the Newfoundland and Labrador Legal Aid Commission.

On behalf of the Newfoundland and Labrador Legal Aid Commission.



Harman Khurana, CPA, CMA
CEO & Provincial Director



Laura Critch, CPA
Manager of Finance



OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Board of Commissioners
Newfoundland and Labrador Legal Aid Commission
St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador

Opinion

I have audited the financial statements of the Newfoundland and Labrador Legal Aid Commission (the Commission), which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2026, and the statement of operations, statement of change in net financial assets, and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In my opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Commission as at March 31, 2026, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Basis for Opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of my report. I am independent of the Commission in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in Canada, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Other Information

Management is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, but does not include the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. The annual report is expected to be made available to me after the date of this auditor's report.

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and I will not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Independent Auditor's Report (cont.)

In connection with my audit of the financial statements, my responsibility is to read the other information identified above when it becomes available and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. When I read the annual report, if I conclude that there is a material misstatement therein, I am required to communicate the matter to those charged with governance.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Commission's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Commission or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Commission's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, I exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

Independent Auditor's Report (cont.)

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Commission's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Commission's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Commission to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.



SANDRA RUSSELL, CPA
Deputy Auditor General

July 24, 2026

St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR LEGAL AID COMMISSION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
March 31, 2026

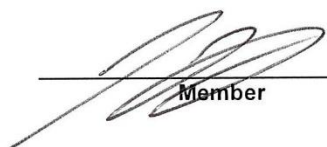
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR LEGAL AID COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at March 31	2026	2025
FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Cash	\$ 15,364,001	\$12,404,845
Accounts receivable (Note 3)	116,709	111,319
	<u>15,480,710</u>	<u>12,516,164</u>
LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (Note 4)	3,256,100	2,721,848
Employee future benefits (Note 5)	38,040	35,886
	<u>3,294,140</u>	<u>2,757,734</u>
Net financial assets	<u>12,186,570</u>	<u>9,758,430</u>
NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Prepaid expenses (Note 6)	241,272	228,585
Tangible capital assets (Note 7)	204,887	241,938
	<u>446,159</u>	<u>470,523</u>
Accumulated surplus	<u>\$ 12,632,729</u>	<u>\$ 10,228,953</u>
Contractual obligations (Note 8)		
Trusts under administration (Note 9)		

The accompanying notes are an
integral part of these financial statements.

Signed on behalf of the Board:


Chairperson


Member

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR LEGAL AID COMMISSION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
March 31, 2026

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR LEGAL AID COMMISSION

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

For the Year Ended March 31

	2026 Budget	2026 Actual	2025 Actual
	Unaudited (Note 14)		
REVENUES			
Province of Newfoundland and Labrador			
Operating grants	\$ 21,112,900	\$ 21,112,900	\$ 20,296,600
Law Foundation of Newfoundland and			
Labrador grant	2,600,000	2,505,270	4,357,087
Legal services	55,000	79,630	62,319
Interest	400,000	351,573	384,833
	24,167,900	24,049,373	25,100,839
EXPENSES (Note 10)			
Administration	7,206,408	6,903,457	7,105,509
Criminal law	9,521,824	9,744,985	9,205,211
Youth law	596,831	609,199	544,413
Civil law	4,379,537	4,387,956	4,357,607
	21,704,600	21,645,597	21,212,740
Annual surplus	2,463,300	2,403,776	3,888,099
Accumulated surplus, beginning of year	10,228,953	10,228,953	6,340,854
Accumulated surplus, end of year	\$ 12,692,253	\$ 12,632,729	\$ 10,228,953

The accompanying notes are an
integral part of these financial statements.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR LEGAL AID COMMISSION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
March 31, 2026

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR LEGAL AID COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF CHANGE IN NET FINANCIAL ASSETS
For the Year Ended March 31

	2026 Budget	2026 Actual	2025 Actual
	Unaudited (Note 14)		
Annual surplus	\$ 2,463,300	\$ 2,403,776	\$ 3,888,099
Tangible capital assets			
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	(65,000)	(60,348)	(162,842)
Net book value of tangible capital assets disposal	-	13,275	194,745
Amortization of tangible capital assets	89,000	84,124	85,613
	24,000	37,051	117,516
Prepaid expenses			
Acquisition of prepaid expenses	-	(241,272)	(228,585)
Use of prepaid expenses	-	228,585	214,537
	-	(12,687)	(14,048)
Increase in net financial assets	2,487,300	2,428,140	3,991,567
Net financial assets, beginning of year	9,758,430	9,758,430	5,766,863
Net financial assets, end of year	\$ 12,245,730	\$ 12,186,570	\$ 9,758,430

The accompanying notes are an
integral part of these financial statements.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR LEGAL AID COMMISSION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
March 31, 2026

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR LEGAL AID COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
For the Year Ended March 31

	2026	2025
Operating transactions		
Annual surplus	\$ 2,403,776	\$ 3,888,099
Adjustment for non-cash items		
Amortization	84,124	85,613
Bad debt (recovery) expense	(2,296)	8,080
Loss on disposal of tangible capital assets	13,275	194,745
	2,498,879	4,176,537
Change in non-cash operating items		
Accounts receivable	(3,094)	(4,323)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	534,252	346,780
Employee future benefits	2,154	607
Prepaid expenses	(12,687)	(14,048)
Cash provided from operating transactions	3,019,504	4,505,553
Capital transactions		
Purchase of tangible capital assets	(60,348)	(162,842)
Cash applied to capital transactions	(60,348)	(162,842)
Net increase in cash	2,959,156	4,342,711
Cash, beginning of year	12,404,845	8,062,134
Cash, end of year	\$ 15,364,001	\$ 12,404,845

The accompanying notes are an
integral part of these financial statements.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR LEGAL AID COMMISSION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
March 31, 2026

1. Nature of operations

The Newfoundland and Labrador Legal Aid Commission (the Commission) operates under the authority of the Legal Aid Act. The purpose of the Commission is to establish and administer a plan for the provision of legal aid for the residents of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The affairs of the Commission are managed by a Board of Commissioners consisting of the Assistant Deputy Minister of Justice and Public Safety (ex-officio), the Provincial Director of the Commission (ex-officio) and 7 members appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

The Commission is a Crown entity of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and as such is not subject to Provincial or Federal income taxes.

2. Summary of significant accounting policies

(a) Basis of accounting

The Commission is classified as an Other Government Organization as defined by Canadian public sector accounting standards (CPSAS). Management, in accordance with CPSAS for provincial reporting entities established by the Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB), prepares these financial statements. The Commission does not prepare a statement of remeasurement gains and losses, as the Commission does not enter into relevant transactions or circumstances that are being addressed by this statement. Outlined below are the significant accounting policies followed.

(b) Financial instruments

The Commission's financial instruments recognized in the statement of financial position consist of cash, accounts receivable, and accounts payable and accrued liabilities. The Commission generally recognizes a financial instrument when it enters into a contract that creates a financial asset or financial liability. Financial assets and financial liabilities are initially measured at cost, which is the fair value at the time of acquisition.

The Commission subsequently measures all of its financial assets and financial liabilities at cost or amortized cost. Financial assets measured at cost include cash. Financial assets measured at amortized cost include accounts receivable. Financial liabilities measured at cost include accounts payable and accrued liabilities.

The carrying value of cash, accounts receivable, and accounts payable and accrued liabilities approximate fair value due to their nature and/or the short-term maturity associated with these instruments.

Interest attributable to financial instruments is reported in the statement of operations.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR LEGAL AID COMMISSION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
March 31, 2026

2. Summary of significant accounting policies (cont.)

(c) Cash

Cash includes cash in bank and petty cash funds.

(d) Employee future benefits

- (i) The cost of accumulating, non-vesting sick leave benefits is calculated based upon management's best estimate of its employees' sick leave utilization rates, sick leave balances, annual sick leave entitlements and current salary levels. Under the former annual leave policy, all employees hired before September 30, 1994 were credited with 2 days sick leave per month. After this date, the Commission moved to the new paid leave policy that did not include a sick leave entitlement. Accumulated benefits under the former policy may be used in future years and, if not used, the benefits cease upon termination of employment.
- (ii) Under the Legal Aid Act, Commission employees shall be considered to be employed in the public service for the purpose of the Public Service Pensions Act, 2019. Employee contributions are matched by the Commission and then remitted to Provident¹⁰ from which pensions will be paid to employees when they retire. The Public Service Pension Plan is a multi-employer defined benefit plan, providing a pension on retirement based on the member's age at retirement, length of service and the average of their best six years of earnings for service on or after January 1, 2015, and, for service before January 1, 2015, the higher of the average of the frozen best 5 years of earnings up to January 1, 2015, or the average of the best 6 years of earnings for all service.

The contributions from the Commission to the plan are recorded as an expense for the year.

(e) Tangible capital assets

Tangible capital assets are recorded at cost at the time of acquisition, which includes amounts that are directly related to the acquisition, design, construction, development, improvement or betterment of the assets.

The cost, less residual value, of the tangible capital assets is amortized on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives as follows:

Office furniture and equipment	5 years
Computer equipment	5 years
Software development	5 years
Leasehold improvements	Lesser of 5 years or remaining life of the rental agreement.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR LEGAL AID COMMISSION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
March 31, 2026

2. Summary of significant accounting policies (cont.)

(e) Tangible capital assets (cont.)

Tangible capital assets are written down when conditions indicate that they no longer contribute to the ability of the Commission to provide services, or when the value of future economic benefits associated with the tangible capital assets are less than their net book value. The net write-downs are accounted for as expenses in the statement of operations.

(f) Prepaid expenses

Prepaid expenses are charged to expense over the periods expected to benefit from it.

(g) Revenues

Revenues are recognized in the period in which the transactions or events occurred that give rise to the revenues. All revenues are recorded on an accrual basis, except when the accruals cannot be determined with a reasonable degree of certainty or when their estimation is impracticable.

Government transfers (Province of Newfoundland and Labrador operating grants) are recognized as revenues when the transfer is authorized and any eligibility criteria are met, except when and to the extent that transfer stipulations give rise to an obligation that meets the definition of a liability. Transfers are recognized as deferred revenue when transfer stipulations give rise to a liability. Transfer revenue is recognized in the statement of operations as the stipulations related to the liabilities are settled.

The Law Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador Grant revenue has no performance obligations as the Law Foundation must transfer two-thirds of the net revenue received in each calendar year directly to the Commission as per Part IV of the *Law Society Act, 1999*.

Revenue from Legal Services has no performance obligations as the Commission's authority to recover costs, disbursements and fees for professional services comes from the *Legal Aid Act and Regulations*. These revenues are recognized when the Commission has the authority to claim or retain an inflow of economic resources and can identify the past event that gives rise to the revenue.

Interest revenue is recognized as earned.

There is no revenue from non-recurring activities with performance obligations presented in these financial statements.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR LEGAL AID COMMISSION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
March 31, 2026

2. Summary of significant accounting policies (cont.)

(h) Expenses

Expenses are reported on an accrual basis. The cost of all goods consumed and services received during the year are recorded as an expense in that year.

(i) Measurement uncertainty

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with CPSAS requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reporting amounts of assets and liabilities, and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities, at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of the revenues and expenses during the period. Items requiring the use of significant estimates include the collectability of accounts receivable, expected useful life of tangible capital assets and the accrual for legal fees and disbursements-private bar.

Estimates are based on the best information available at the time of preparation of the financial statements and are reviewed annually to reflect new information as it becomes available. Measurement uncertainty exists in these financial statements. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

3. Accounts receivable

	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>
Legal services	\$ 86,204	\$ 99,615
Harmonized Sales Tax	52,804	36,299
	139,008	135,914
Less: Allowance for doubtful accounts	(22,299)	(24,595)
	\$ 116,709	\$ 111,319

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR LEGAL AID COMMISSION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
March 31, 2026

4. Accounts payable and accrued liabilities

	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>
Trade	\$ 846,216	\$ 351,907
Legal fees and disbursements-private bar	209,247	210,202
Salaries and benefits	2,200,637	2,159,739
	<u>\$ 3,256,100</u>	<u>\$ 2,721,848</u>

5. Employee future benefits

Employee future benefits consist of:

	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>
Severance pay	\$ 33,305	\$ 33,305
Accumulating, non-vesting sick leave benefit liability	4,735	2,581
	<u>\$ 38,040</u>	<u>\$ 35,886</u>

(a) Severance pay

Executive, management, and non-management/non-union employees of the Commission as at May 31, 2018 were entitled to severance pay. No further severance will accrue for these employees after May 31, 2018. All employees had the option of receiving their severance entitlement prior to March 31, 2019 or deferring it to a later date.

The severance liability as at March 31, 2026 represents severance owing to an employee who deferred receiving their severance entitlement.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR LEGAL AID COMMISSION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
March 31, 2026

5. Employee future benefits (cont.)

(b) Accumulating, non-vesting sick leave benefits

All employees hired before September 30, 1994, were credited with two sick days per month for use as paid absences during the year due to illness. Subsequent to September 30, 1994, the Commission moved to the new paid leave policy that did not include a sick leave entitlement. Sick leave benefits accumulated prior to September 30, 1994, may be used in future years and, if not used, the benefits cease upon termination of employment. For the year ended March 31, 2026, a sick leave liability was calculated for five employees.

(c) Pension contributions

Under the Legal Aid Act, the Commission's employees are subject to the Public Service Pensions Act, 2019. The Public Service Pension Plan is administered by Provident¹⁰, including payment of pension benefits to employees to whom the Act applies. The Plan is a multi-employer, defined benefit plan.

The plan provides a pension to employees based on their age at retirement, length of service and rates of pay. The maximum contribution rate for eligible employees was – 11.85% (2025 - 11.85%). The Commission's contributions equal the employee contributions to the plan. Total pension expense for the Commission for the year ended March 31, 2026, was \$1,418,503 (2025 - \$1,404,218).

6. Prepaid expenses

	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>
Bar fees and insurance	\$ 123,662	\$ 124,529
Computer support	12,461	9,195
Prepaid human resources expenses	19,102	15,021
Prepaid travel	38,835	31,588
Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission	47,212	48,252
	<u>\$ 241,272</u>	<u>\$ 228,585</u>

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR LEGAL AID COMMISSION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
March 31, 2026

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR LEGAL AID COMMISSION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
March 31, 2026

7. Tangible capital assets

Original Cost

	Balance March 31, 2025	Additions	Disposals	Balance March 31, 2026
Office furniture and equipment	\$ 984,350	\$ 15,503	\$ (29,900)	\$ 969,953
Computer equipment	920,612	21,888	(432,089)	510,411
Software development	138,975	13,043	(13,043)	138,975
Leasehold improvements	173,460	9,914	-	183,374
	<u>\$ 2,217,397</u>	<u>\$ 60,348</u>	<u>\$ (475,032)</u>	<u>\$ 1,802,713</u>

Accumulated Amortization

	Balance March 31, 2025	Amortization	Disposals	Balance March 31, 2026	Net book value March 31, 2026	Net book value March 31, 2025
Office furniture and equipment	\$ 915,776	\$ 22,332	\$ (29,668)	\$ 908,440	\$ 61,513	\$ 68,574
Computer equipment	760,600	57,297	(432,089)	385,808	124,603	160,012
Software development	138,694	130	-	138,824	151	281
Leasehold improvements	160,389	4,365	-	164,754	18,620	13,071
	<u>\$ 1,975,459</u>	<u>\$ 84,124</u>	<u>\$ (461,757)</u>	<u>\$ 1,597,826</u>	<u>\$ 204,887</u>	<u>\$ 241,938</u>

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR LEGAL AID COMMISSION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR LEGAL AID COMMISSION
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8. Contractual obligations

The Commission has entered into agreements requiring lease payments for office and equipment rental as follows:

2027	\$ 927,734
2028	820,379
2029	805,990
2030	762,824
2031 to 2034	<u>584,884</u>
	<u>\$ 3,901,811</u>

9. Trusts under administration

Assets held in trust of \$84,197 (2025 - \$219,976) include amounts received by the Commission for legal services which have yet to be completed. When a contract for legal services is entered into with a client, a provision may be made in the contract for periodic payments to be made to the Commission while the legal services are being provided. Once the legal services have been completed, any payments received at that time will be combined with the general funds of the Commission. Any payments received under these contracts subsequent to the completion of legal services will be recorded with the general funds of the Commission immediately. Assets held in trust also include amounts received by the Commission, such as settlements, which will be disbursed once the related services have been completed.

10. Expenses by object

	2026 Budget Unaudited (Note 14)	2026 Actual	2025 Actual (Note 15)
Amortization	\$ 89,000	\$ 84,124	\$ 85,613
Bad debt (recovery) expense	-	(2,296)	8,080
Bar fees and insurance	202,516	193,248	194,226
Commissioners' fees and expenses	74,800	45,195	51,010
Conference and education	175,000	158,964	137,130
Legal fees and disbursements	1,103,000	1,157,524	1,090,492
Library fees	46,400	44,847	43,713
Loss on disposal of tangible capital assets	-	13,275	194,745
Miscellaneous	21,000	5,836	5,619
Office and equipment rental	1,380,807	1,381,215	1,378,625
Office expense	414,450	374,074	373,124
Salaries and benefits	17,951,377	17,917,047	17,399,184
Professional services	94,000	125,033	104,607
Telephone	109,000	108,421	106,938
Travel	43,250	39,090	39,634
	\$21,704,600	\$21,645,597	\$21,212,740

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR LEGAL AID COMMISSION
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March 31, 2026

11. Related party transactions

Province of Newfoundland and Labrador:

During the year, the Commission received \$21,112,900 (2025 - \$20,296,600) from the Province in Operating grant revenue.

The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), an entity within the Executive Council of the Province, provides Information Technology (IT) support services to the Commission. These IT costs are reflected in these financial statements for \$99,874 (2025 - \$99,848). These transactions are recorded at their carrying amount.

12. Financial risk management

The Commission recognizes the importance of managing risks and this includes policies, procedures and oversight designed to reduce risks identified to an appropriate threshold. The risks that the Commission is exposed to through its financial instruments are credit risk, liquidity risk and market risk.

Credit risk

Credit risk is the risk that one party to a financial instrument will cause a financial loss for the other party by failing to discharge an obligation. The Commission's main credit risk relates to cash and accounts receivable. The Commission's maximum exposure to credit risk is the carrying amounts of these financial instruments. The Commission is not exposed to significant credit risk with its cash because this financial instrument is held with a Chartered Bank.

The Commission is exposed to significant credit risk related to its accounts receivable relating to amounts owed from clients. Legal aid clients enter into a payment program based on a contract for the provision of legal services, and the accounts receivable balance is comprised primarily of small amounts held by a large client base. Any estimated impairment of these accounts receivable has been provided for through a provision for doubtful accounts as disclosed in Note 3.

There have been no significant changes from the previous year in the exposure to credit risk or policies, procedures and methods used to manage credit risk.

Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Commission will be unable to meet its contractual obligations and financial liabilities. The Commission's exposure to liquidity risk relates mainly to its accounts payable and accrued liabilities, and its contractual obligations. The Commission manages liquidity risk by monitoring its cash flows and ensuring that it has sufficient resources available to meet its contractual obligations and financial liabilities. The future minimum payments required from the Commission in relation to its contractual obligations are outlined in Note 8.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR LEGAL AID COMMISSION
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12. Financial risk management (cont.)

There have been no significant changes from the previous year in the exposure to liquidity risk or policies, procedures and methods used to manage liquidity risk.

Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. Market risk comprises three types of risk: currency (foreign exchange) risk, interest rate risk and other price risk. The Commission is not exposed to significant foreign exchange risk or other price risk. The Commission is not exposed to significant interest rate risk related to cash because of its nature.

There have been no significant changes from the previous year in the exposure to market risk or policies, procedures and methods used to manage market risk.

13. Non-financial assets

The recognition and measurement of non-financial assets is based on their service potential. These assets will not provide resources to discharge liabilities of the Commission. For non-financial assets, the future economic benefit consists of their capacity to render service to further the Commission's objectives.

14. Budget

Budgeted figures are unaudited and have been prepared on a cash basis. They are provided for comparison purposes and have been approved by the Commission's Board.

15. Comparative figures

Certain comparative figures have been restated to conform to the current period's presentation.