

2023-2026

STRATEGIC PLAN

**Newfoundland and Labrador
Housing Corporation**

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC), I am pleased to present the Corporation's three-year strategic plan for the period of April 1, 2023 - March 31, 2026.

The strategic plan was developed in consideration of the strategic directions of Government, the Corporation's mandate and budget, recommendations from the Health Accord Report, and feedback from engagement with employees and the public.

The goals and priorities laid out in this plan are reflective of the current and emerging housing needs in our province. As NLHC clients are comprised of individuals and families at varying stages on the housing continuum, there is a wide range of households in need of, and who benefit from, housing programs and services. Renters and homeowners alike – those experiencing homelessness, Indigenous peoples, seniors, persons with disabilities, women and children, immigrants – are best served by a comprehensive, collaborative approach to housing. Anchored by partnerships between governments, communities, and the private and not-for-profit sectors, this plan lays a firm foundation for increasing access to safe, adequate and affordable housing for the benefit of residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The priority issues in this Strategic Plan include: Increasing Access to Affordable and Adequate Housing; Addressing Homelessness; and Optimizing NLHC-owned Housing Stock. Each of these key priorities contains goals and objectives which collectively, build on achievements to date for the effective delivery of programs and services to meet the diverse and evolving housing needs of our clients.

As a Category 1 entity, NLHC is required under the **Transparency and Accountability Act** to table a strategic plan every three years. My signature is indicative of the Board's accountability for preparing and achieving the goals and objectives set out in the 2023-26 Strategic Plan, as well as reporting on accomplishments over the 3-year planning period.



Rhonda Neary
Chair

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Corporate Overview

Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC) is a provincial Crown Corporation that operates under the authority of the **Housing Corporation Act**. It is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Composed of individuals who represent various geographic areas and interest groups, the Board of Directors reports to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador through the Minister Responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation. The Chief Executive Officer is an ex-officio member of the Board and holds primary responsibility for the day-to-day operations of NLHC.

Board of Directors	
Rhonda Neary (Chair)	Portugal Cove-St. Philips
David Loveys (Vice-chair)	Conception Bay South
Karen Alexander	Paradise
Derrick House	Kippens
Colin O'Brien	Happy Valley-Goose Bay
Fraser W. Piccott	St. John's
Bernard Bromley	St. Anthony
Noreen Careen	Labrador City
Liz Palmera-Nunez	St. John's
Darlene Spracklin-Reid	St. John's
Julia Mullaley, CEO (Non-voting)	St. John's

Staff and Budget

As of March 31, 2023, NLHC had 317 permanent, seasonal, and temporary positions across four regions: Eastern, Central, Western and Labrador. NLHC's headquarters is located in St. John's. In addition to the headquarters, there are six offices and one satellite office. Ninety-five of the positions (29 per cent) are at the headquarters in St. John's while the regional offices have a combined total of 222 positions or 71 per cent.

NLHC's gross budget for fiscal 2023-24 is \$149.2 million. This is comprised of \$68.2 million in provincial funding, \$56.2 million in federal funding, rental revenue of \$22.3 million and \$2.5 million in other revenue sources.

Mandate

NLHC is a crown corporation whose mandate is to develop and administer housing assistance policy and programs for the benefit of low to moderate income households throughout the province.

Lines of Business

NLHC's clientele consists of individuals and families with low-to-moderate incomes who require assistance in accessing or maintaining safe, adequate and affordable housing. The programs delivered serve both renters and homeowners, and support vulnerable populations including those experiencing homelessness or fleeing gender-based violence, seniors, youth, Indigenous persons and persons with disabilities. NLHC delivers a wide range of programs across the full housing continuum to support the diverse range of housing needs throughout the province.

The Housing Continuum



An overview of NLHC programs is outlined below:

Rental Housing Program provides for the operation and maintenance of the Corporation's over 5,500 social housing units throughout the province.

Rental Assistance Program assists in the provision of affordable, adequate and suitable rental accommodations in the private market to households in need.

Partner Managed Housing Program provides financial and technical support to partner-managed and cooperative housing providers offering subsidized housing throughout the province.

Tenant and Community Relations Program provides supports and services to tenants along a continuum, spanning from individual supports, to family supports, to eviction prevention and community development initiatives delivered through our community and neighbourhood centres.

Supportive Living Program provides operating grants to non-profit organizations province-wide to prevent and end homelessness, foster long-term housing stability, and develop support services space to provide on-site and outreach services. This program includes a number of supportive housing options with 24/7 staffing and supports.

Emergency Shelter Program operates a 24/7 emergency shelter line and engages a range of non-profit and private shelter operators to respond to required temporary shelter placement for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Transition Housing Program provides funding to the province's ten transition houses to provide safe short-term accommodations, services and resources to support women and their children who are vulnerable to, at risk of, or have been subjected to intimate partner violence.

Home Repair Programs provide financial assistance to low-income homeowners to complete much needed repairs to their homes, improve accessibility, or to make energy efficiency improvements. These programs support accessibility requirements for seniors and persons with disabilities thereby enabling individuals and families to exercise choice and self-determination and remain in their own homes.

In 2022-23, over 11,500 households received direct assistance through NLHC programs, and many additional individuals and families received assistance through a variety of community-based housing partnerships.

Additional information about the programs and services offered by NLHC, as well as the current mandate, can be found at the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation website: www.nlhc.nl.ca.

Issue One – Increasing Access to Affordable and Adequate Housing

Access to safe, stable, and affordable housing is a key social determinant of health and underpins social and economic inclusivity. The recently released Health Accord NL (2022) - Our province. Our health. Our Future - highlights the importance of secure housing that is safe, stable, and comfortable in determining positive health outcomes. It further identifies that programs such as social housing protect people and negate the impacts of poor housing on health.

A household is considered to be in core housing need if it cannot access adequate, affordable or suitable housing without spending 30 per cent or more of their before-tax income on housing. The most recent available data on the core housing need from the 2021 Census indicates that eight per cent of households in the province (17,525 households) were in core housing need, with affordability identified as the primary issue.

Another indicator of housing need is NLHC's social housing waitlist. The waitlist across the province has continued to steadily grow year over year, with a marked increase from 1,474 in March 2021 to 1,918 in March 2022 to 2,352 in March 2023, representing a growth rate of 60 per cent over the last two years. Over this same period of time, the rental market has continued to tighten and rents have continued to increase throughout the province. Similar to data for households in core housing need, affordability is the primary challenge identified by those on NLHC's waitlist.

Over the next three years, NLHC will increase access to affordable and adequate housing to support households in core housing need including seniors, young adults, Indigenous people, persons with disabilities, and those fleeing violence or experiencing homelessness. Investments will be prioritized to expand the number of Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador-Housing benefits to support affordability in the private

rental market, construct new NLHC units and create new housing options along the continuum in partnership with community partners.

These measures will support the province's commitments under its bilateral agreement related to the National Housing Strategy, including achieving a 15 per cent expansion target for social rental housing by March 31, 2028, equating to 894 units. Budget 2023 also announced a new, three-year, \$70 million program to support the construction of over 850 new affordable rental homes throughout the province in partnership with the private and community housing sectors.

Of those households in core housing need, 62 per cent are renters and 38 per cent are homeowners. Programs that support the diverse housing needs of both renters and homeowners will remain important. The provincial homeownership rate for low-income households under \$30,000 is 51.6 per cent, well above the Canadian average of 36 per cent. Over the next three years, NLHC's home repair and accessibility modification programs will be modernized and will continue to play a key role in supporting the affordability needs of low-income homeowners, particularly seniors in rural areas, to age in place.

Goal:

By March 31, 2026, NLHC will have increased access to affordable and adequate housing for individuals and families with low-to-moderate incomes.

Indicators:

- Increased number of affordable housing units.
- Increased number of rental benefits to access affordable rentals in private market.
- Number of households assisted with repairs, accessible modifications and energy efficiency upgrades.
- Modernized home repair programs.

Objective 1:

By March 31, 2024, NLHC will have implemented targeted measures to increase access to affordable and adequate housing for individuals and families with low-to-moderate incomes.

Indicators:

- Work commenced or completed on construction of over 100 new NLHC units.
- 95 additional households receiving rental benefits.
- Development and implementation of a new rental benefit for survivors of gender-based violence.
- Development and launch of a new Affordable Housing Program.
- Contracts awarded under the Affordable Housing Program.
- 1,000 households provided with financial assistance for home repairs.
- 300 households provided with financial assistance for accessibility modifications.
- 300 households provided with financial assistance for energy efficiency upgrades.
- Review of home repair programs commenced.

Objective 2:

By March 31, 2025, NLHC will have continued to increase access to affordable and adequate housing for individuals and families with low-to-moderate incomes.

Objective 3:

By March 31, 2026, NLHC will have further increased access to affordable and adequate housing for individuals and families with low-to-moderate incomes.

Issue Two – Addressing Homelessness

The experience of homelessness is often the result of systemic or societal barriers, including a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination. For some, the experience of intergenerational trauma further compounds the issue. Over the last several years, similar to trends across the country, the prevalence of homelessness has increased throughout the province.

NLHC, along with numerous provincial departments, health agencies and community organizations, deliver programs and services to support people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. As such, strong partnerships and coordination of expertise and resources will be required to effectively focus efforts at decreasing chronic homelessness and preventing new inflows into homelessness. Affordable and supportive housing also plays an important role in addressing homelessness and providing successful tenancies.

Over the next three years, NLHC will develop strategic housing actions to support the development of the provincial Social Well-being Plan and work with community and government partners to support eviction prevention measures, coordinate homelessness responses, expand shelter and supportive housing options, and expand and prioritize access to NLHC units and rental assistance in the private market for those experiencing homelessness or fleeing gender-based violence.

Goal:

By March 31, 2026, NLHC will have increased targeted and coordinated responses to support housing stability for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Indicators:

- Development and implementation of strategic housing actions to support a provincial Social Well-being Plan.
- Increased supports for shelter diversion and eviction prevention.
- Increased low-barrier shelter and supportive housing options.
- Supported new or enhanced partnerships to improve housing stability for individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- Prioritized access to affordability measures and housing supply for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Objective 1:

By March 31, 2024, NLHC will have implemented initiatives and supported partnerships to improve housing stability for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Indicators:

- Development and partial implementation of strategic housing actions to support a provincial Social Well-being Plan.
- Initiatives implemented to stabilize tenancy and prevent evictions.
- Low-barrier shelter options created.
- Shelter standards developed and short-term actions identified for implementation.
- Supported partnerships to improve housing stability for individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- Prioritized access to affordability measures and housing supply for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Objective 2:

By March 31, 2025, NLHC will have implemented further initiatives and supported new partnerships to improve housing stability for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Objective 3:

By March 31, 2026, NLHC will have further implemented targeted and coordinated responses to improve the system and supports for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Issue Three – Optimizing NLHC-owned Housing Stock

NLHC is the largest landlord in the province, providing a safe and affordable home to over 12,000 individuals. Preserving, repairing and upgrading our public housing stock to meet the needs of current and future tenants is a priority for NLHC and also aligns with a key focus area of the federal National Housing Strategy (NHS). The NHS has targets that would see 100 per cent of established baseline of social housing units preserved to 2028, while also targeting repairs to 20 per cent of the baseline units. The nine-year bilateral agreement (2019-2028) between our Province and the Federal Government requires that by the end of March 2028, 5,957 social housing units continue to be available for tenants and 1,192 social housing units receive repairs. An additional priority for NLHC is planning for, and investing in, major repairs required on vacant units to ensure these units are made available for individuals and families in need of affordable housing.

As NLHC's housing stock was primarily built 40-60 years ago, it is also important that the Corporation continues to pursue new technologies and best practices for modernizing its stock, including in the areas of energy efficiency and accessibility. Investments in these areas help to ensure homes are adapted to meet current and evolving clients' needs, support a healthy and functional indoor environment, make for a more comfortable living space and reduce clients' energy costs. NLHC will also continue to explore use of its stock in new and innovative ways to meet the diverse housing needs throughout the Province.

Over the next three years, NLHC will focus efforts on improving the sustainability of its housing stock by completing interior and exterior upgrades, investing in vacant units requiring major repairs, and improving energy efficiency and accessibility features.

Goal:

By March 31, 2026, NLHC will have enhanced its housing stock to improve living conditions for clients.

Indicators:

- Improved quality of housing stock.
- Improved energy efficiency of housing stock.
- Improved accessibility of housing stock.

Objective 1:

By March 31, 2024, NLHC will have completed prioritized repairs and upgrades to its social housing units to support the sustainability of the stock.

Indicators:

- 400 exterior renovations completed.
- 100 interior renovations and major repair vacancies completed.
- 280 units with improved energy efficiency.
- Accessibility features incorporated as appropriate to meet clients' needs.
- Civil infrastructure upgrades for 30 units commenced.

Objective 2:

By March 31, 2025, NLHC will have further improved its housing stock to meet clients' evolving needs.

Objective 3:

By March 31, 2026, NLHC will have modernized and improved its housing stock and related infrastructure to improve living conditions for clients.

Annex A: Strategic Directions

Strategic directions are statements of desired physical, social or economic outcomes and normally require action by more than one government entity. These directions are generally communicated by Government through Throne and Budget Speeches, policy documents and other communiqués. The **Transparency and Accountability Act** requires departments and public bodies to consider these strategic directions in the preparation of their performance-based plans. This facilitates the integration of planning practices across Government.

National Housing Strategy and NLHC Action Plans

In 2019-20, a substantial collaborative effort between the provincial and the federal governments resulted in the signing of a 10-year \$344.7 million cost-shared Bilateral Agreement under the 2017 National Housing Strategy. Investments under the Bilateral Agreement focus on preserving, renewing, and expanding social and community housing and responding to the diverse housing needs throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

In late 2019-20, NLHC completed its first three-year Action Plan required under the Bilateral Agreement; the second Action Plan covers the period of 2022-25. These Action Plans are designed to support the shared goals of the National Housing Strategy and address Provincial housing priorities. NLHC will continue to work across sectors and in partnership with key stakeholders to realize the ambitious goals set forth under the bilateral agreement and related action plans.

Mandate Letter

The mandate letter for the Minister Responsible for NLHC outlines a commitment to continue working with other ministers, community stakeholders and individuals experiencing housing insecurity to develop a Housing and Homelessness Plan to help

address the social systemic barriers related to homelessness. Further commitments included continuing to work closely with community partners to help improve access to affordable housing, including investments in modernizing or renovating public housing units, and delivering the Home Energy Savings Program to help make homes more energy efficient and fight climate change.

