

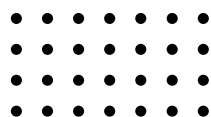


Office of the
SENIORS' ADVOCATE
Newfoundland and Labrador



2025 - 2026

Annual Performance Report





Office of the

SENIORS' ADVOCATE

Newfoundland and Labrador

Message from the Advocate



I am pleased to present the **2025-2026 Annual Performance Report** for the Office of the Seniors' Advocate (OSA). This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements outlined in the **Transparency and Accountability Act** for a Category Three entity and highlights the progress made toward achieving the objectives outlined in Year Three of our **Activity Plan 2023-2026**. It provides updates on the performance indicators associated with our core lines of business: Systemic Advocacy, Research and Reviews, and Education and Public Awareness. Although a previous Advocate served during the reporting period, as Acting Seniors' Advocate, I am responsible for the completion and release of this report and accountable for the results reported herein.

The 2025–2026 year was one of continued advocacy, research, engagement, and important change for seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador. We engaged with seniors, families, service providers, community organizations, and the public, gaining valuable insight into the challenges facing seniors and identifying issues requiring further attention, research, and action.

In 2025, we released the **Seniors' Report 2025: Monitoring Key Indicators of Seniors' Wellbeing in Newfoundland and Labrador**, the second report of its kind. We also released **An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure**, focused on helping seniors age safely and independently at home, and **From Review to Action: A Continuum of Care Approach**, which responded to concerns regarding long term care and personal care homes and provided 11 recommendations aimed at strengthening accountability and oversight, and supporting continuum of care legislation for seniors.

The OSA also continued to engage with seniors and communities in the province through consultations, meetings, presentations and public events. These conversations, along with ongoing research and analysis, helped ensure that the voices and experiences of seniors remained central to our advocacy and recommendations. The OSA remains committed to listening to seniors, identifying systemic issues, conducting research, informing the public, and advocating for the programs, services, and supports seniors need and deserve.

Pamela

Pamela Dawe
Seniors' Advocate NL (Acting)



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Overview



The OSA was created through the **Seniors' Advocate Act** (the **Act**) which came into force on July 2, 2017. The purpose of the OSA is outlined in the **Act**, as well as the powers and duties of the Seniors' Advocate.

The OSA is an independent statutory office of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Each year, the Seniors' Advocate must report to the House of Assembly on the exercise and performance of her/his powers and duties under the **Act**. For more details, please visit www.seniorsadvocatenl.ca

Personnel

The Seniors' Advocate is appointed for a term of six years with the possibility of reappointment for a second term of six years. The Advocate is an officer of the House of Assembly and reports directly to the Legislature through the Speaker of the House.

The OSA has four permanent staff: two Systemic Advocacy Consultants, one Policy Analyst and one Administrative Officer. These staff are members of the Public Service of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Vision

Seniors aging well and living their best lives in age-friendly communities: healthy, engaged, connected, supported, and fulfilled. Financially secure seniors with options to choose where they live (geographically and the type of living arrangement) and access to the programs and services they need.

Mandate

The OSA is established to identify, analyze and address systemic issues impacting seniors. Systemic issues are those which are found within an overall system, rather than a specific or individual concern.

The OSA identifies and addresses systemic issues and makes recommendations for improvements to seniors' services and programs provided to seniors living in Newfoundland and Labrador. The OSA has the authority to conduct interviews, surveys, consultations and make recommendations for improvements to seniors' services and programs. All recommendations are monitored for progress and the results are reported publicly on an annual basis. All incomplete recommendations will continue to be monitored and reported on.

While the OSA does not have legislative authority for individual advocacy, it receives hundreds of requests for advocacy. Through engagement and public awareness, research, reviews and systemic advocacy, the OSA ensures that the collective voices of seniors are heard.

Section 3 of the **Seniors' Advocate Act** outlines that the Office of the Seniors' Advocate is established to:

- ☒ identify, review and analyze systemic issues;
- ☒ work collaboratively with seniors' organizations, service providers and others to identify and address systemic issues; and
- ☒ make recommendations to government and government agencies respecting changes to improve services to and for seniors.

Values

The OSA believes strongly in its role as an independent voice for seniors in this province. Every effort is taken to ensure that the integrity and core values of this Office are reflected in its service to the public and in its internal activities.

Value	Action Statement
Fairness	Powers and duties will be applied in an open, unbiased manner. There will be no conflict of interest or undue influence during any stage of the review process. Every effort will be made to provide timely, accurate and fair recommendations.
Respect	Every individual in contact with this Office will be treated with respect. Differing opinions will be valued in an open, collaborative spirit.
Diversity	Every person is unique and the seniors' population, as a group, is not alike. Differences in experiences and opinions will be welcomed and used to build an open, accepting and strong service to the public.
Empowerment	This Office will support and encourage seniors to use their voices. Seniors will know that their issues are important and that they have a role in making positive changes.

Primary Clients

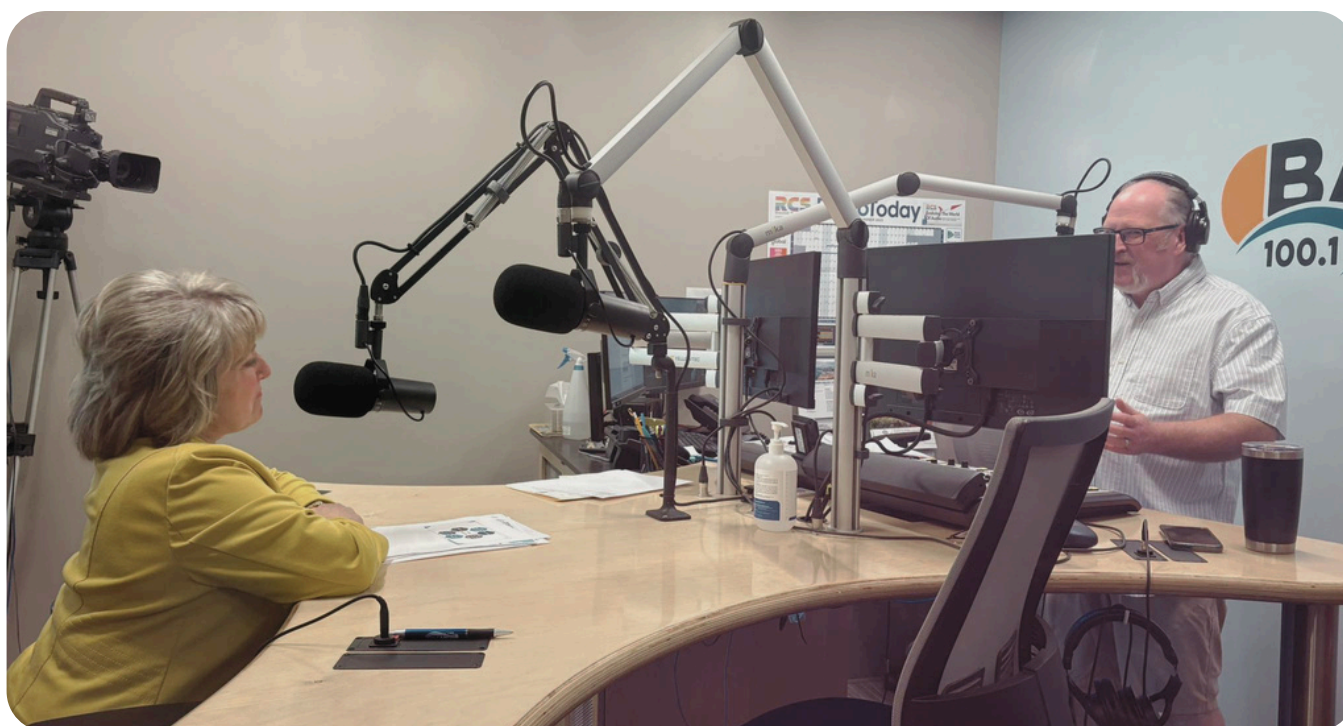
The **Seniors' Advocate Act** defines a senior as an individual who is 65 years of age or older (25.2 per cent of the province's population), or less than 65 years of age and receives seniors' services.¹ Seniors' services are defined in the legislation as programs, services or systems of support, prescribed in the regulations, that are related to health care, personal care, housing, transportation or finances that are used by or associated with seniors.

¹ Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Population Projections, Department of Finance, accessed March 30, 2026, <https://www.gov.nl.ca/fin/economics/pop-projections/>.

Given the definition of seniors in the **Act**, the OSA is also responsible to advocate for people under 65 years of age. In practice, the OSA typically serves people 50 years of age and older, which is 47.3 per cent of the province's population, according to most recent data.¹

Section 16 of the **Seniors' Advocate Act**, the Office of the Seniors' Advocate may:

- (a) receive and review matters related to seniors;
- (b) initiate and participate in reviews related to seniors;
- (c) conduct research related to seniors, including interviews and surveys;
- (d) consult with seniors, service providers and the public;
- (e) request information, other than personal health information within the meaning of the **Personal Health Information Act** and personal information within the meaning of the **Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015**;
- (f) make recommendations to government, government agencies, service providers and community groups respecting legislation, policies, programs, and services impacting seniors; and
- (g) inform the public about the Office of the Seniors' Advocate and promote awareness of systemic issues related to seniors.



¹ Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Population Projections, Department of Finance, accessed March 30, 2026, <https://www.gov.nl.ca/fin/economics/pop-projections/>.

Lines of Business

→ **SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY**

Systemic issues impact large numbers of people. These systemic issues are brought to the attention of the OSA through input from individuals, organizations, and service providers, as well as research and media reports. The OSA collates all issues under subcategories of ten distinct areas: aging well at home, elder abuse, finances, health care, housing, legal issues, long term care homes, personal care homes, transportation, and personal care.

The OSA can use a variety of methods to advocate including, meeting with officials to discuss the matter, writing to seek resolution of a matter, working with government and/or community to address the issue, making recommendations, or completing a systemic review and/or releasing a report.

Systemic reviews may include research, consultations, and information requests. Conclusions drawn from reviews may form the basis of recommendations to government, government agencies, service providers and community groups respecting legislation, policies, programs, and services impacting seniors. The Advocate closely monitors all recommendations to assess how they are implemented.

The OSA cannot advocate for individual seniors' issues; however, concerns are addressed through providing information to seniors and/or their families to enable them to access the appropriate program, service or resource. Nevertheless, the OSA maintains a record of all individual concerns to inform its systemic advocacy.





RESEARCH AND REVIEWS

The value of research is its ability to inform action, provide evidence, and contribute to developing knowledge. Research can be broad and include literature reviews, conversations, engagement and consultative processes, and models of best practices. As well, research informs the development of recommendations and annual reports as part of our monitoring processes. Regular discussions with the other provincial Seniors' Advocates (presently established in British Columbia, New Brunswick and most recently Manitoba) informs our research and knowledge and provides opportunities to speak as one voice and raise issues important to all Canadian seniors.

Seniors bring forward their concerns for the consideration of the Seniors' Advocate. When concerns are systemic, the OSA's thorough research practices ensure that strong recommendations are made. The **Act** provides the authority to complete reviews, request information and release reports with recommendations



ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

The Seniors' Advocate listens to seniors and encourages seniors to use their voices; the OSA makes sure that the collective voices of seniors are heard. All information gathered by the OSA informs public policy on many levels including: municipal, regional, provincial and national. While the powers and duties of the Seniors' Advocate are provincial in scope, there are occasions for national and international input and to inform national policy via consultations, committee membership and partnerships with national Seniors' Advocates.



The Advocate conducts provincial outreach to gather information and to share what we learn with seniors and policymakers. The OSA endeavors to connect with as many people as possible through its website, emails, quarterly newsletter, social media and the publication of reports, which may not necessarily be the subject of a report made to the House of Assembly under our **Act**. Regular meetings with community organizations and groups provide opportunities to promote education and awareness on topics of importance to seniors.



Highlights and Partnerships

During the reporting period of April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026, the OSA engaged in many activities including systemic advocacy, education, outreach and public engagements. Highlights of this period include:



REQUESTS FOR ADVOCACY ACTION

593

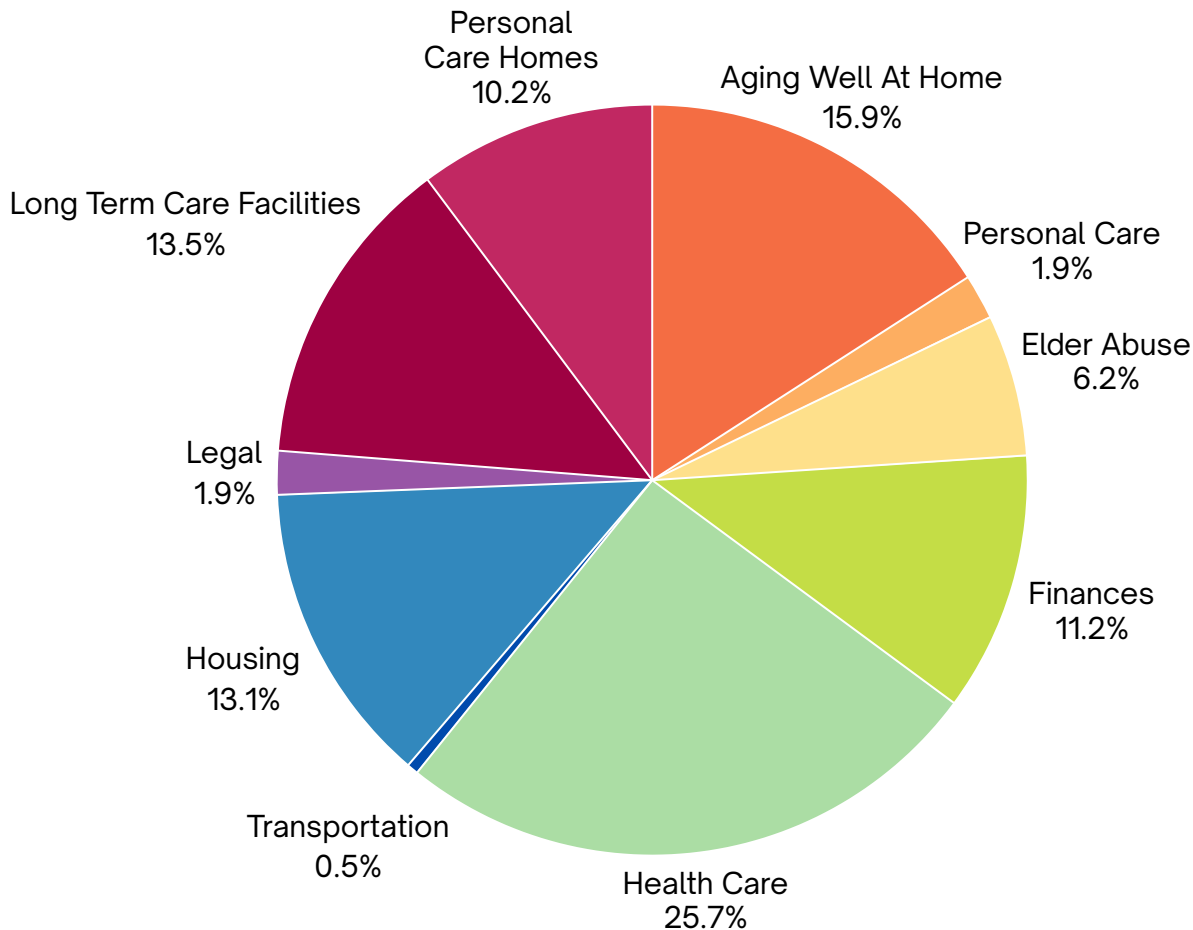
Individual issues are tracked to detect trends that identify systemic issues. The OSA categorizes its intake system into ten distinct areas:

- Aging Well at Home
- Elder Abuse
- Finances
- Health Care
- Housing
- Legal Issues
- Long Term Care Facilities
- Personal Care Homes
- Transportation
- Personal Care

The chart below highlights examples of concerns associated with each category.

Intake Areas	Examples of Areas of Concern
Aging Well at Home	Home support, home maintenance, technology, etc.
Elder Abuse	Adult Protection concerns, elder abuse, etc.
Finances	Cost of living, income/pensions, labour force participation, etc.
Health Care	Emergency rooms, mental health, auditory care, prescription drugs, acute care, access to family physicians, oral health, etc.
Housing	Access to affordable housing, homelessness, accessibility, landlord/tenant issues, etc.
Legal Issues	Court related matters, advance health care directives, wills, etc.
Long Term Care Facilities	Workforce, governance, quality of life, quality of care, etc.
Personal Care Homes	Workforce, governance, quality of life, quality of care, etc.
Transportation	Public transit, vehicle insurance, registration and licence, etc.
Personal Care	Support for caregivers, accessibility, etc.

The 593 requests for advocacy action from seniors, family members/caregivers and/or service providers are organized as follows:



- Health Care continues to be the most frequently raised concern, accounting for 25.7 per cent of requests, followed by Aging Well at Home at 15.9 per cent and Long Term Care Facilities at 13.5 per cent. Housing (13.1 per cent) and Finances (11.2 per cent) were also major areas of concern. It is important to note that the chart reflects only the primary concern identified at intake, and many individual issues are interconnected across multiple areas.
- While financial concerns appear lower in this distribution, the systemic issue of the high cost of living remains a consistent priority for seniors, highlighted through engagement sessions, surveys, and community consultations and confirmed through OSA research. Financial constraints also intersect with, and intensify, many other issues such as home care, transportation, and housing, whereas those with higher incomes may experience fewer challenges in these areas.



REPORTS



Fourth annual **Status Report on Recommendations 2024-2025** report

Read here:

<https://www.seniorsadvocatenl.ca/pdfs/StatusReportOnRecommendations2024-25.pdf>

Seniors' Report 2025 Monitoring Key Indicators of Seniors' Wellbeing in NL

Volume 2 of the Seniors' Report provides a comprehensive analysis on the wellbeing of NL seniors related to individual health, health care, finances, housing, transportation and safety. While there are some positive findings, the data confirms that NL seniors lag behind seniors in the rest of the country in all areas.

Read here:

<https://www.seniorsadvocatenl.ca/pdfs/SeniorsReport2025.pdf>

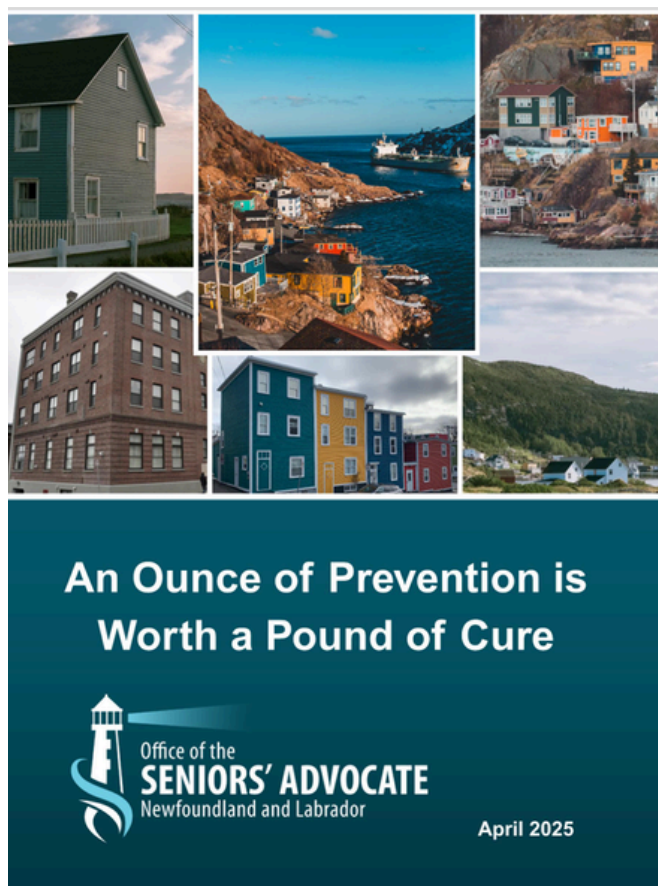


An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure

A recommendations report examining what seniors need to age well at home. It includes findings from an online survey of Newfoundland and Labrador older adults, as well as six recommendations to improve supports, services, and housing options that enable seniors to age well in the right place.

Read here:

<https://www.seniorsadvocatenl.ca/pdfs/AnOunceOfPreventionIsWorthAPoundOfCure-April15-2025.pdf>



From Review to Action: A Continuum of Care Approach

On May 15, 2025, the OSA released **From Review to Action: A Continuum of Care Approach**, in response to growing concerns about the lack of an implementation plan for the **Newfoundland and Labrador Long Term Care and Personal Care Home Review**. The report presents 11 recommendations to strengthen accountability, oversight, and coordination across the continuum of seniors' care (from home support to palliative care).

Read here:

<https://www.seniorsadvocatenl.ca/pdfs/FromReviewToActionAContinuumOfCareApproachReport.pdf>

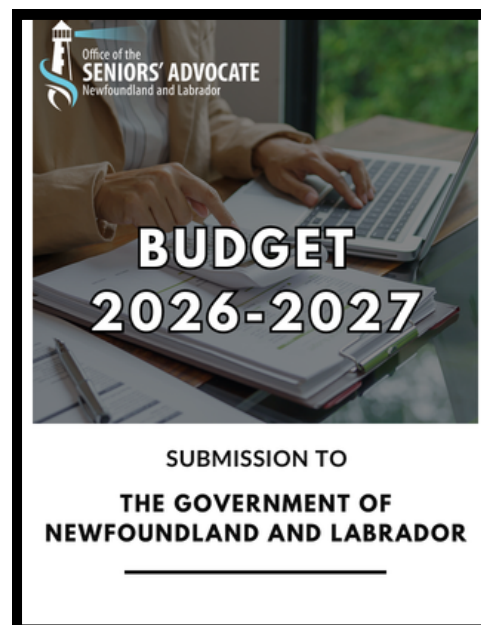
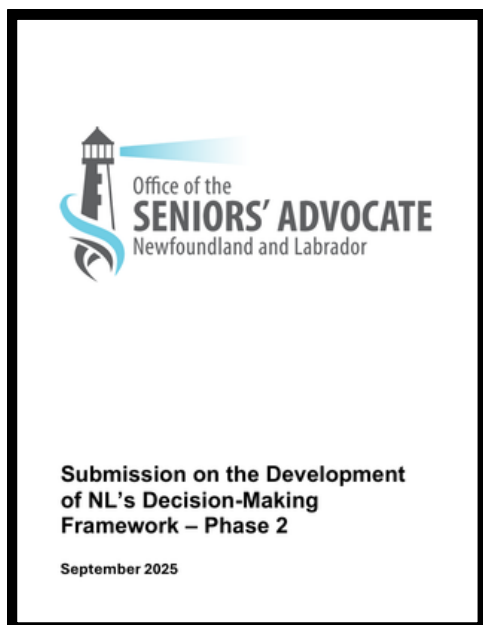




SUBMISSIONS

To ensure the perspective of seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador was included in government and community programs as well as policy development, the OSA compiled the following policy, recommendations and advocacy submissions:

- Submission on the Development of NL's Decision-Making Framework – Phase 2
- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador on Budget 2026



NEWS RELEASES

Aligned with the advocacy and public awareness mandate, the OSA issued nine news releases:

- Release of the report **An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure**
- Release of the report **From Review to Action: A Continuum of Care Approach**
- Launch of social media campaign and art contest to address ageism for Seniors' Month
- Statement regarding unclaimed deceased seniors
- Recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
- Release of **Status Report on Recommendations 2024-2025**
- Recognition of the International Day of Older Persons and National Seniors Day
- Release of the **Seniors' Report 2025 Monitoring Key Indicators of Seniors' Wellbeing in NL**
- Statement regarding the retirement of Seniors' Advocate, Susan Walsh

→ ADVOCACY ACTIONS

The OSA employs a variety of methods to advocate for systemic improvements to programs and services for seniors and to provide education on issues impacting seniors. These actions are reported in our quarterly newsletter, in presentations and via our email distribution list. There, seniors can see the advocacy of the OSA and the responses from those entities with authority to make the required change. Actions in 2025-26 included:

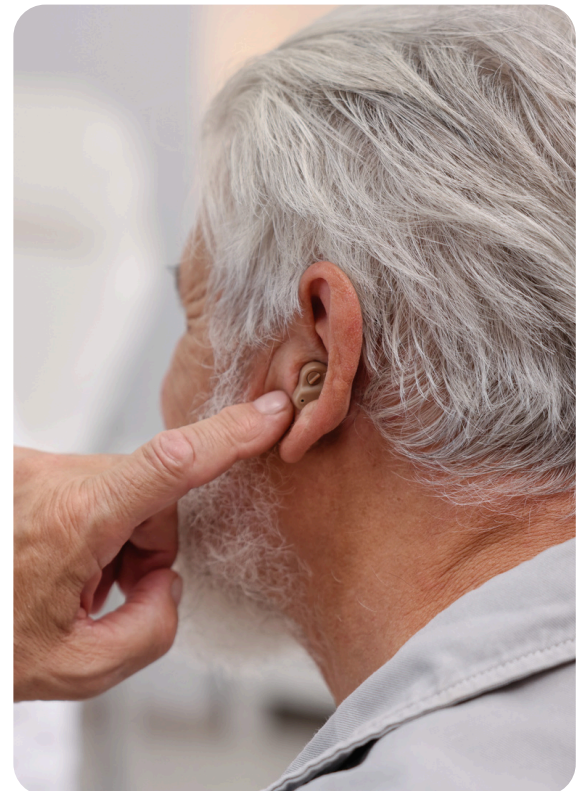
- Shingles Vaccine:** The OSA advocated for free shingles vaccination for seniors since 2019. Government initially expanded coverage to select seniors in June 2025, then announced free vaccination for all individuals aged 50+ effective September 1, 2025.
- Unclaimed Deceased Persons:** Following concerns about unclaimed deceased persons, most of whom were seniors, the OSA reviewed the process and raised concerns with NL Health Services. NLHS committed to community burials where possible, permanent grave markers, additional social workers for family outreach, and improved public information.
- Long Term Care & Personal Care Homes:** In response to the **Newfoundland and Labrador Long Term Care and Personal Care Home Review** and the lack of an implementation plan, the OSA released **From Review to Action: A Continuum of Care Approach**, with 11 recommendations for a coordinated and accountable seniors' care system.



- **Coast of Bays Community Concerns:** Community sessions in Milltown, Hermitage and Belleoram identified health care access as the top concern, including drivers' medicals, Family Care Teams, hostel space and limits on issues discussed during appointments. The OSA met with NLHS officials to address outstanding health care concerns and subsequently shared NLHS responses with local 50+ Clubs, including information on drivers' medicals, Family Care Teams, hostel availability and physician shortages.



- **Government Decision-Making Framework:** The OSA raised concerns about inadequate senior representation in the initial consultation process. Government accepted the recommendation that further consultations were needed. The OSA participated in the second phase and submitted a formal response highlighting seniors' priorities and accessibility.
- **Provincial Hearing Aid Program (PHAP):** Although government reported that the OSA's recommendation to transfer the program and use income-only eligibility was completed, the OSA found that the asset test remained in place. This discrepancy was raised with the Department of Seniors. The OSA has advocated for changes to the PHAP financial assessment process since 2019 and most recently identified it as a priority issue with the Minister of Health and Community Services. The Department advised that, effective January 6, 2026, the program would move to an income-based assessment, expanding eligibility for financial assistance.



- **International Day of Older Persons:** The Seniors' Advocate released a video highlighting the leadership, rights, well being and contributions of older adults, reinforcing the OSA's commitment to amplifying seniors' voices and promoting inclusive communities.
- **Entente Education Canada (formerly RTOERO - Retired Teachers of Ontario/ Les enseignantes et enseignants retraités de l'Ontario) Presentation:** The Advocate presented to more than 250 members on the role and impact of the OSA, contributing Newfoundland and Labrador's experience to the national discussion on the role of provincial Seniors' Advocates.



- **Home Support:** The OSA wrote to the Departments of Health and Community Services and Seniors regarding concerns with home support and requested an update on implementation of the Deloitte Review recommendations, particularly training and workforce readiness.
- **Adult Protection Act (APA):** The OSA raised concerns about APA referral processes, clinical safeguards, accountability and reporting, and requested provincial data for 2024–25. Government provided a detailed response and data and identified ongoing work to strengthen the adult protection system.
- **Government Engagement:** The OSA met with Ministers and senior officials across multiple departments to discuss key issues affecting older adults, including poverty reduction, Continuum of Care legislation and eligibility for government programs and services.



- **Seniors & Rental Housing:** The OSA raised concerns about seniors' experiences in the private rental market, including rising rents, limited accessible housing and housing instability. The Department of Government Services informed the OSA it is considering options and consulting stakeholders.



- **Income-Tested Programs:** The OSA requested an update on the government-wide review of income-tested program eligibility. The Department of Finance advised the OSA that the review remains incomplete, although the NL Seniors' Benefit was indexed to CPI effective July 1, 2025. The OSA continues to advocate for broader review of income thresholds.
- **Property Tax for Seniors:** The OSA reviewed concerns about municipalities discontinuing discounts for property tax rates for seniors, and raised the issue with the Minister responsible. Government confirmed age-based reduced tax rates are not permitted under current legislation, while offering discounts for people living with low-income is an option for municipalities.
- **Status of Recommendations Report:** The OSA began preparing its **2025-26 Status of Recommendations Report**, requesting updates from government departments on progress toward outstanding recommendations. Responses will be reviewed and incorporated into the upcoming report.





ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

The Advocate and staff conducted 13 community engagement sessions and met with over 400 seniors to hear their concerns. These community sessions were held in all Health Zones of the province, enabling the OSA to gain an understanding of regional and provincial issues impacting seniors.

The OSA engaged in public awareness through presentations, panels and information booths to the following groups/events:

- Law Society Lunch and Learn
- Town Hall - Rotary Club Corner Brook
- Canadian Psychological Association
- Seniors On The Go- Botanical Gardens
- Presentation at Tiffany Village Retirement Residence
- NL 50+ Federation Convention
- HelpAge Forum: Strengthening Community-Based Seniors' Services in NL
- Seniors' Day 2025
- Random Age Friendly Seniors' Information Fair
- MUN Faculty of Medicine: "Advocacy and Influencing Public Policy"
- A National Conversation with the Seniors' Advocates
- Coalition of Public Pensioners
- Presentation to Research & Knowledge Exchange
- Presentation at the NunatuKavut Inuit Health Forum: End-of-life Care
- NL College of Social Workers
- Community Forum on the 2025 Seniors' Report
- MUN Faculty of Nursing - 1st year students



The Advocate participated in 17 media interviews to inform the public of issues impacting NL seniors and advocate for required policy, programs and services.

The OSA engaged with many community organizations and agencies, including:

- 211
- 50+ Federation
- Aging Research Centre of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Canadian Coalition Against Ageism
- Canadian Institute for Health Information
- Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging
- Canadian Mental Health Association Newfoundland and Labrador
- Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission
- City of St. John's
- College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador (Newfoundland and Labrador College of Nurses).
- College of Physicians & Surgeons of Newfoundland and Labrador
- College of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador (Newfoundland and Labrador College of Nurses)
- Connections for Seniors
- exCHANGE Calgary Forum on Late-Life Homelessness
- End Homelessness St. John's
- Entente Education Canada
- Home Care Association of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Mental Health Foundation of Canada
- Newfoundland and Labrador Alzheimer's Society
- Newfoundland and Labrador Anti-Poverty Coalition
- Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Optometrists
- Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services
- Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network
- Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association
- Newfoundland and Labrador Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (NLNPEA)
- Newfoundland & Labrador Public Service Pensioners Association
- Oral Health Center/Mobile Smiles Newfoundland and Labrador Limited
- Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Public Legal Information Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (PLIAN)
- Schlegel Villages – Elderwisdom Green Bench Conversations
- SeniorsNL
- Soulier Design Studio - Aging Well at Home Specialist
- Stella's Circle
- The Gathering Place
- The Newfoundland and Labrador Coalition of Seniors', Pensioners' and Retirees' Associations

The OSA engaged in more than 15 meetings with ministers, executives, government officials and MHAs to share insights, raise issues of concern to seniors, and explore opportunities for improvements. In addition, the OSA met on several occasions with the Seniors' Advocates from British Columbia, New Brunswick, and Manitoba fostering interprovincial dialogue and the exchange of best practices to strengthen advocacy efforts and improve outcomes for older adults.

→ CONTINUOUS LEARNING



The OSA remained committed to staying well-informed on issues related to seniors and participated in 25 learning opportunities:

- 2026 Quorum - Taking Care (Quadrangle)
- Association between menopause age and estradiol-based hormone therapy with cognitive performance in cognitively normal women in the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging
- Canadian Geriatric Society Conference
- Conference Board of Canada
- Cyber Security Awareness
- Defensive Driver Awareness
- Engage Memorial Symposium
- Enabling Aging in Place
- Fraud Prevention and Detection
- Healthy Discussions: Acute Care for the Elderly (ACE) Unit
- Launch of the WHO Commission on Social Connection flagship report
- Launching the WHO Ageism Scale: A new way to measure ageism
- LIFE Research Institute: A Curriculum for Social Connection
- Opening doors to data: Canadian Research Data Centre Network cross-country tour
- Our Future is Aging Conference
- Research and Knowledge Exchange: Advancing Seniors' Health and Well Being
- Research and Knowledge Exchange: Atlantic Research Collaboration on Long Term Care
- Scientific Endeavours in Academia Conference
- SeniorsNL Conference 2025: Aging Vibrantly
- Sociodemographic determinants of mobility decline among community-dwelling older adults: preliminary findings from the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging
- The Encore Summit
- The Power of Plain Language: Better Research Participation, Engagement, and Impact
- Understanding Harassment

Report on Performance



Issue 1: Systemic Advocacy

Systemic advocacy means addressing issues that impact large numbers of seniors. For the next 30 years, the province's population will continue to age which will force a societal paradigm shift, requiring policymakers to consider the needs of older adults. The OSA will continue to focus on systemic advocacy to ensure policies, services and programs meet the demand as dictated by seniors.

Objective:

By March 31, 2026, the Office of the Seniors' Advocate will have continued to advocate on behalf of seniors to address systemic issues and strengthen seniors' services in NL.

Indicators	Accomplishments
Enhance procedures and protocols to identify and monitor systemic seniors' issues	All individual issues and requests for advocacy are collected in the HPE Records Management System. Reports generated from the database then enable the OSA to identify trends that confirm systemic issues. During the year, the OSA continued to use and refine its records management and intake processes to support the consistent categorization, tracking, and reporting of advocacy requests and concerns received from seniors, their family members, caregivers, and service providers. Staff regularly monitored the information collected to ensure the data supports the identification of emerging trends and systemic issues. The OSA also continued to track issues and concerns raised through public community sessions, meetings with community agencies, and other stakeholder engagements. This information, together with requests for advocacy action, contributes to the OSA's broader understanding of issues affecting seniors and helps inform systemic advocacy priorities.
Receive and review matters related to seniors	In addition to numerous contacts and collaborations with community organizations on issues impacting seniors, the OSA received 593 requests for advocacy action. OSA staff spent 5,568 minutes, or almost 93 hours, providing information and guidance to seniors, their families, caregivers, and service providers. The OSA had 13 public community sessions with over 400 seniors where issues and concerns were identified as well as potential solutions. All information received/gathered was documented, analyzed and utilized to inform the OSA's systemic advocacy role.
Consult with seniors, service providers, community organizations and the public	The OSA consulted with service providers and community groups through meetings to ascertain their perspective. The OSA presented at/attended over 30 events, which included public community sessions, seniors' day events, presentations to university students, professionals and professional associations. The OSA participated in over 50 meetings, which included community organizations, government officials and committees.

Indicators	Accomplishments
Release reports with recommendations	Released the Seniors' Report 2025 Monitoring Key Indicators of Seniors' Wellbeing in NL, An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure, and From Review to Action: A Continuum of Care Approach. To ensure the perspective of seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador was included in government and community programs as well as policy development, the OSA compiled the following policy, recommendations and advocacy submissions: • Submission on the Development of NL's Decision-Making Framework – Phase 2 • Government of Newfoundland and Labrador on Budget 2026
Complete status reports on recommendations	On May 8, 2025, the OSA released the Status Report on Recommendations 2024-2025 report.
Utilize a variety of methods to advance improved seniors' services	The OSA engaged with various government departments outlining, and/or following up on, systemic issues negatively impacting seniors, offering solutions, and seeking resolution. Some of this work included: • Letter to New Ministers requesting meetings with the Ministers responsible for Finance and Seniors; Health and Community Services and Labrador Affairs; Social Supports and Well-Being and Housing and Poverty Reduction; Justice and Public Safety; Municipal and Community Affairs and Community Engagement; and Government Seniors to highlight the OSA's priorities. • Letter to the Departments of Health and Community Services and Seniors regarding concerns with home support and requesting an update on the implementation of Deloitte Review recommendations, particularly training and workforce readiness. • Letter to the Minister of Seniors requesting the Action Plan for the Newfoundland and Labrador Long Term Care and Personal Care Home Review and emphasizing the need for implementation, oversight, and accountability. • Letter to the Minister of Finance requesting the government's Income Tested Program Review and raising concerns regarding eligibility for programs and services affecting seniors. • Letter to the Department of Government Services requesting a meeting to discuss the Residential Tenancies Act and housing challenges affecting seniors, including rising rents and limited accessible housing.

Indicators	Accomplishments
Inform the public	The OSA presented at over 30 events, which included public community sessions, seniors' day events, presentation to university students, professionals, and professional associations. These events were an opportunity to educate the attendees on the OSA's mandate, to share information on the systemic issues the OSA was addressing and advise attendees of systemic issues that had been successfully resolved as a result of our advocacy. Nine news releases were issued on matters related to seniors: • Release of the report An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure • Release of the report From Review to Action: A Continuum of Care Approach • Launch of social media campaign and art contest to address ageism for Seniors' Month • Statement regarding unclaimed deceased seniors • Recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day • Release of Status Report on Recommendations 2024-2025 • Recognition of the International Day of Older Persons and National Seniors Day • Release of the Seniors' Report 2025 Monitoring Key Indicators of Seniors' Wellbeing in NL • Statement regarding the retirement of Seniors' Advocate, Susan Walsh The OSA released its quarterly newsletters. The OSA maintained an email distribution list that grew to more than 1000 people. This email list includes people (primarily seniors) who attended any of the OSA's public events, including community engagement sessions or information booths, and voluntarily signed up to receive correspondence from the OSA. This distribution list is used to circulate information about the OSA, including reports released, newsletters, etc. as well as any information that seniors would benefit from hearing about, including government initiatives, grants, new programs/services. The Seniors' Advocate conducted 17 media interviews to ensure the public was aware of issues seniors were facing and potential solutions. The OSA remained active on social media platforms such as Facebook and X. The OSA developed and posted 137 posts.

Discussion of Results

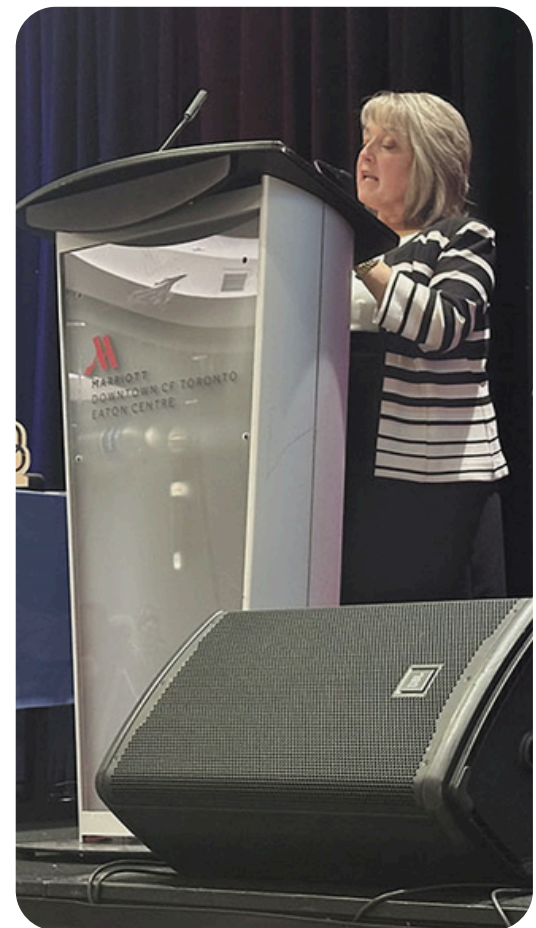
Over the past year, the OSA continued to strengthen its community engagement and systemic advocacy work. The OSA received 593 requests for advocacy action, with staff spending 93 hours providing information and guidance to seniors, their families, caregivers, and service providers. The OSA held 13 public community sessions, engaging with more than 400 seniors to identify concerns, discuss systemic issues, and explore potential solutions.

The OSA participated in more than 50 meetings with community organizations, government officials, and committees and presented at or attended more than 30 events, including public community sessions, Seniors' Day events, university presentations, and professional association events. These engagements provided opportunities to educate the public and professionals about the OSA's mandate, share information on systemic issues affecting seniors, and highlight issues successfully addressed through advocacy.

The OSA's research and reporting work also continued to support its systemic advocacy mandate. During the year, the OSA released the **Seniors' Report 2025: Monitoring Key Indicators of Seniors' Wellbeing in NL, An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure**, and **From Review to Action: A Continuum of Care Approach**. On May 8, 2025, the OSA also released the **Status Report on Recommendations 2024-2025**.

Public awareness and communication remained an important component of the OSA's mandate. The OSA issued nine news releases on matters affecting seniors, released quarterly newsletters, and conducted 17 media interviews to raise awareness of issues facing older adults and potential solutions. The OSA also maintained an email distribution list that grew to more than 1,000 subscribers, providing information about OSA reports, newsletters, government initiatives, grants, programs, and services of interest to seniors.

Together, these activities strengthened the OSA's ability to hear directly from seniors, identify and analyze systemic issues, advocate for solutions, and keep seniors, stakeholders, and the broader public informed about issues affecting older adults in Newfoundland and Labrador.



Issue 2: Research and Reviews

The OSA conducts research and completes systemic reviews to inform positions of the OSA and to support recommendations made to government, government agencies, service providers, and community groups. Regardless of how the research is used, the information gleaned will be utilized and the learnings made available to the public. When research leads to recommendations to enhance seniors' programs and services, the public will be informed of all reviews, findings and any actions resulting.

Objective:

By March 31, 2026, the Office of the Seniors' Advocate will have continued to conduct research and initiate required reviews and inform strong recommendations for improved seniors' services.



Indicators	Accomplishments
Collect and analyze demographic information	In 2024, the OSA received a one-time budget increase to hire a temporary Program and Policy Development Specialist to advance the work required for the Seniors' Report 2024. This position was established to provide dedicated capacity for in-depth data review and analysis. The position continued into 2025 to support the research, data analysis, and development of the Seniors' Report 2025, Volume two. In 2025, the OSA welcomed two Master's of Social Work students to complete a placement with the OSA, contributing research and analysis to support ongoing advocacy and reporting. Separate from the Seniors' Report 2025, the OSA undertook research on seniors' experiences with social connections. This included conducting a survey to better understand seniors' participation in social activities, social networks, and barriers to social connection.
Analyze health seniors-related data	Drawing on data obtained from relevant government departments and national research sources, the OSA conducted a comprehensive analysis of six key areas of seniors' wellbeing, two of which included individual health and health care, and released the second volume of the Seniors' Report 2025. This work provided the OSA with a strong evidence base, ensuring that the report captured and reflected the realities, challenges, and priorities of seniors throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. Key findings related to individual health and health care include: • 13 per cent of seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador are moderately or severely food insecure, the highest rate in Canada. • 50 per cent of seniors rate their health as very good or excellent, while 46 per cent live with three or more chronic conditions. • Newfoundland and Labrador has the lowest rate of seniors connected to a primary health care provider in the country, and the gap continues to widen. • The rate of hospitalizations and emergency department visits per 1,000 seniors increased by 1.6 per cent and 2.4 per cent, respectively. • Less than half of cataract and hip surgeries, and only one-third of knee surgeries, are completed within the appropriate wait times. • Average ALC stays are approximately 30 days, ranging from 16 days in Eastern-Rural to 46 days in Western. • Seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador experience higher-than-average rates of pain, restraint use, and potentially inappropriate antipsychotic use.

Indicators	Accomplishments
Analyze health seniors-related data	In response to Government’s Newfoundland and Labrador Long Term Care and Personal Care Home Review, the OSA analyzed the findings of the review alongside its own data, evidence, and information related to long term care and personal care home issues. This analysis helped identify ongoing gaps, trends, and emerging concerns affecting seniors’ health, quality of care, and access to appropriate services. The OSA’s analysis identified the need for greater accountability and a coordinated approach to addressing outstanding recommendations related to long term care and personal care homes. The report put forward 11 recommendations, including establishing clear authority and responsibility within the newly developed Department of Seniors for services to seniors, from home support through to palliative care. The recommendations provided a framework for government to respond to outstanding recommendations, strengthen accountability, and support the delivery of safe, appropriate, and quality care for seniors in the province.
Analyze financial seniors-related data	Drawing on data obtained from relevant government departments and national research sources, the OSA conducted a comprehensive analysis of six key areas of seniors’ wellbeing, one of which includes finances, and released the second volume of the Seniors’ Report 2025. This work provided the OSA with a strong evidence base, ensuring that the report captured and reflected the realities, challenges, and priorities of seniors throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. Analysis of financial data revealed significant pressures on seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador. • High reliance on income transfers: 51 per cent of seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador rely on income transfers, including OAS, GIS, and CPP, the highest rate in Canada. • Seniors have the lowest median income in Canada: In 2023, the median income for seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador was \$29,710, the lowest among all Canadian provinces and territories. • High reliance on the Guaranteed Income Supplement: While GIS uptake has decreased by 4 per cent over the past five years, Newfoundland and Labrador continues to have the highest proportion of seniors receiving GIS in Canada, at 44 per cent. This exceeds rates in the other Atlantic provinces, which range from 32 to 38 per cent. • Regional disparities are significant: Reliance on GIS is substantially higher in the province’s Central and Western Zones, where 56 per cent and 57 per cent of seniors, respectively, receive the benefit.

Indicators	Accomplishments
Conduct research	All systemic issues require significant research including literature reviews, jurisdictional scans, consultations, surveys, focus groups and interviews. The OSA conducted research to better understand the modifications and assistive devices seniors need to age safely, comfortably, and independently at home. This included reviewing existing research and evidence, considering concerns raised through public engagement, and conducting an anonymous online survey informed by seniors’ experiences and previous research. The research highlighted the importance of preventative supports and appropriate home modifications in helping seniors remain safely at home and reducing the risk of accidents and injuries. The findings informed the OSA’s An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure report, released April 16, 2025. The report includes six recommendations to strengthen supports for aging in place, including developing a senior-friendly “How-To” guide, expanding the 65Plus Plan to include assistive devices, and taking a more preventative approach to NLHC’s Home Modification Program by providing small modifications without an assessment and no-cost loans for seniors who do not qualify for the existing program. The Seniors’ Report 2025 was developed following analysis of data collected in office, along with additional provincial and national sources. The OSA undertook extensive research into six key areas of impact on seniors’ well being. This included detailed data analysis, and the collection of information on issues such as income supports, housing affordability, and the rising cost of transportation. This report will be produced annually, enabling the OSA to monitor changes and identify trends over time.
Consult with seniors, service providers, community organizations and the public.	The OSA consulted with service providers and community groups on issues of concern to seniors. These consultations were often a result of concerns the OSA heard, as part of our information gathering, and an opportunity for service providers and community groups to share what they were seeing in their respective agencies. Through 13 community consultations and over 50 meetings, the OSA consulted with seniors, service providers and community organizations throughout the province.

Indicators

Accomplishments

Inform the public

The Seniors' Advocate conducted 17 media interviews to ensure the public is aware of issues seniors are facing and potential solutions.

The OSA released its quarterly newsletters.

Nine news releases were issued on matters related to seniors.

Released the **Seniors' Report 2025 Monitoring Key Indicators of Seniors' Wellbeing in NL, An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure**, and **From Review to Action: A Continuum of Care Approach**.

Through the release of the **Status Report on Recommendations 2024-25**, the OSA informed the public on the status of all recommendations made by the Office. The report also includes government's response to the OSA's formal public recommendations.

The OSA publicly released all submissions including:

- Submission on the Development of NL's Decision-Making Framework – Phase 2,
- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador on Budget 2026.



Discussion of Results

Collecting, analyzing, and tracking trends in seniors' health and well being continues to be a priority for the OSA. The **Seniors' Report 2025** strengthened the OSA's capacity to examine demographic, health, financial, housing, transportation, and safety-related data from provincial and national sources. The Policy Analyst position established to support this work continued into 2025, providing dedicated capacity for research, data analysis, and development of the report. The OSA also welcomed two Master's of Social Work students whose placements contributed to ongoing research and analysis.

Consultation remained an important component of the OSA's work. Through 13 community consultations and more than 50 meetings, the OSA engaged with seniors, service providers, and community organizations across the province. These discussions provided valuable insight into the issues seniors experience and helped the OSA identify emerging concerns and areas requiring further research or action. The OSA also continued to inform the public about issues affecting seniors and the progress of its advocacy work.

During the year, the Seniors' Advocate participated in 17 media interviews, the OSA released quarterly newsletters and nine news releases, and published the **Seniors' Report 2025, An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure, and From Review to Action: A Continuum of Care Approach**. The **Status Report on Recommendations 2024-25** also provided transparency on the status of the OSA's recommendations and government responses. Together, these activities supported the OSA's role in identifying issues, using evidence to inform recommendations, and keeping seniors and the public informed.

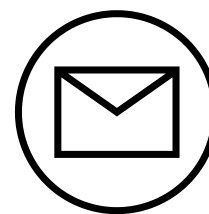
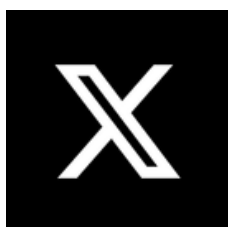


Issue 3: Engagement and Public Awareness

The OSA will continue to engage seniors, families, stakeholders, and community organizations to identify and discuss systemic issues and solutions. The OSA will take a leadership role in educating the public on matters of importance to seniors and supporting community organizations in their challenges to meet the varied needs of seniors. The OSA will continue to promote public awareness of the systemic issues impacting seniors as well as findings and/or recommendations of systemic reviews undertaken by the OSA.

Objective:

By March 31, 2026, the Office of the Seniors' Advocate will have continued to increase opportunities to engage and inform seniors, educate the public and support seniors' community organizations on issues impacting seniors.



Indicators	Accomplishments
Engage seniors, seniors' organizations, community organizations, municipalities, governments and others.	The OSA connected with 50+ clubs throughout the province, with 10 clubs hosting town halls. The OSA also met with seniors through other existing community senior groups and hosted two community sessions open to the public and one to residents only. The OSA attended, and setup an information booth at, five seniors' expos/conventions, where we displayed information about our office, provided promotional merchandise, and met with seniors. The OSA participated in over 50 meetings. Meetings with provincial government ministers, provincial deputy ministers, and as requested Members of the House of Assembly, involved providing information on matters of importance to seniors and advocating for required programs and services.
Collaborate with and support seniors' community organizations	The OSA had over 40 meetings with community organizations. The OSA attended five community seniors' expos/conventions to create awareness of the Office and our role: • Seniors' On The Go, hosted by MUN Botanical Gardens • NL 50 + Federation AGM • Seniors' Day, hosted by the City of St. John's • Random Age Friendly Communities Seniors' Information Fair • Seniors and Science hosted by the Johnson Geo Centre The Seniors' Advocate presented at the 50+ Federation Convention. The convention enabled the Advocate to provide an update to over 350 seniors on the work of the OSA and discuss issues of importance to seniors. CARP NL, NLPSPA, and participating associations of the NL Seniors Coalition hosted a public town hall where the Seniors' Advocate shared key findings from the Seniors' Report 2025 on seniors' well-being in Newfoundland and Labrador and responded to questions from attendees. More than 100 people participated, both in person and online, contributing to a productive dialogue on issues affecting seniors. Participants shared their experiences, asked questions, and provided ideas that helped inform the ongoing advocacy work of the OSA.

Indicators	Accomplishments
Develop and distribute promotional materials	The OSA expanded its inventory of promotional material, which are provided at public events. All promotional material contained contact information for the OSA and a benefit to seniors (i.e. magnifying bookmarks). Hundreds of promotional material items were handed out at consultations, community booths, and other events.
Participate in media interviews and public presentations on matters of importance to seniors	The Advocate completed 17 media interviews to ensure the public was aware of issues seniors were facing and potential solutions. The OSA presented at over 30 events, which included public community sessions, seniors' day events, and presentations to the MUN Faculty of Nursing and Faculty of Medicine.
Issue news releases, reports, newsletters and information of public interest	The OSA released nine news releases, four newsletters, the Seniors' Report 2025 Monitoring Key Indicators of Seniors' Wellbeing in NL , An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure , From Review to Action: A Continuum of Care Approach , the Status Report on Recommendations 2024-25 , two submissions, and the Annual Performance Report 2024-25 . The OSA also issued emails through our distribution list which contained information of public interest, as well as posted on X and Facebook.



Discussion of Results

The OSA maintains a strong working relationship with community organizations throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. Through these partnerships we have raised awareness of, and called for action on, multiple seniors' systemic issues.

The OSA continues to create opportunities to promote its activities and inform the public. Ongoing media interviews have been instrumental for informing the public, as well as the release of our reports and quarterly newsletters. The OSA engaged with ten 50+ clubs, hosted three community sessions open to the public and participated in over 50 meetings.

The Advocate conducted 17 media interviews to provide the position of seniors and the OSA on matters impacting seniors and thereby ensuring the public is aware of these issues and any potential solutions. The Advocate also presented at over 30 events, including public community sessions, seniors' day events, and various other presentations. The OSA issued nine news releases, four newsletters, **the Seniors' Report 2025 Monitoring Key Indicators of Seniors' Wellbeing in NL, An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure, From Review to Action: A Continuum of Care Approach**, the **Status Report on Recommendations 2024-25**, two submissions, and the **Annual Performance Report 2024-25**. Information of public interest was also shared through the OSA's email distribution list and social media platforms, ensuring that seniors and the broader public are aware of ongoing issues and supports.

The OSA remains committed to supporting seniors' community organizations. We participate in senior events in the community, typically with a booth set up, where we are available to hear from seniors and answer questions. Promotional items are always in high demand. Having the booth allows for engagement with a high number of seniors, many of whom are interested in hearing about our office and our work for seniors.



Opportunities and Challenges

The most significant and concerning challenge for the OSA is achieving the powers and duties as set out in the **Seniors' Advocate Act (Act)** with the limited staffing resources. The **Act** states that the Office of the Seniors' Advocate is established to:

- (a) identify, review and analyze systemic issues related to seniors;
- (b) work collaboratively with seniors' organizations, service providers and others to identify and address systemic issues related to seniors; and
- (c) make recommendations to government and government agencies respecting changes to improve seniors' services.

With a total staff of five including the Seniors' Advocate, the challenge to meet the mandate and address the systemic issues facing seniors in the province is extremely challenging. The requirements currently set out in the **Act** are expansive, but the OSA is limited by the human resources to complete the systemic advocacy role.

On June 5, 2026, legislation to replace the current **Seniors' Advocate Act** was passed in the House of Assembly. Once proclaimed, the new **Act** will provide the Seniors' Advocate with expanded powers and align the role more closely with those of other statutory officers in the province. These changes will enable the OSA to more directly support seniors and respond to issues affecting their well being. While the passage of the legislation represents a positive development, the expanded mandate will require expanded financial and human resources to be effective. The OSA's capacity to meet both its existing responsibilities and the requirements of an expanded mandate remains limited. The additional powers provided under the new **Act** can not be fully realized without sufficient staff capacity to undertake the research, investigations, advocacy, and follow-up required. Ensuring the OSA has the necessary resources will therefore be critical to implementing the new mandate and strengthening advocacy and oversight for seniors across the province.

Significant work must be undertaken before the new **Act** can be implemented. Details related to implementation, resources, and timing have yet to be confirmed, and proclamation remains outstanding. In the interim, the OSA continues to carry out its legislated systemic advocacy role and address issues affecting seniors across the province.

Financial Information

Expenditure and revenue figures included in this document are based on information provided in the Report on Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for Year Ended 31 March 2026.

		Estimates	
		Actual	Amended Original
		\$	\$ \$
OFFICE OF THE SENIORS' ADVOCATE			
CURRENT			
7.1.01. OFFICE OF THE SENIORS' ADVOCATE			
01. Salaries	523,103	576,400	576,400
Operating Accounts			
Employee Benefits	2,238	5,700	5,700
Transportation and Communications	28,779	55,300	61,900
Supplies	7,951	8,400	5,000
Professional Services	12,200	12,200	9,000
Purchased Services	41,936	44,000	44,000
Property, Furnishings and Equipment	3,074	4,000	4,000
02. Operating Accounts	96,178	129,600	129,600
Total: Office of the Seniors' Advocate	619,281	706,000	706,000

Contact Us

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 Newfoundland and Labrador



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