

2023-2026

# BUSINESS PLAN

## Women and Gender Equality





## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equality (WGE), I am pleased to present a Business Plan for the period April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2026.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to promoting a province that is inclusive and welcoming to all people. To achieve this vision, our Provincial Government has tasked WGE to work to advance the social, economic, cultural, and legal status of women and gender diverse individuals in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The WGE 2023-26 Business Plan identifies three priority areas to help further efforts related to gender equality. Continued collaboration with Provincial Government partner departments and agencies, community stakeholders, and Indigenous groups and organizations is necessary to achieve outcomes in each of the identified priority areas.

Through consistent government-wide application of Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+), WGE works to ensure that the diverse perspectives of women, girls, and gender diverse individuals help inform the development of government programs, services, policies, legislation, and budgets. WGE is dedicated to preventing violence against at-risk populations, and finding targeted, action-focused solutions towards gender-based violence.

This plan has been prepared and submitted in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act** provisions for a Category Two entity. As Minister, I am accountable for the preparation of this plan, and the achievement of the specific goals and objectives reported in this document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pam Parsons".

Hon. Pam Parsons

Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equality



# Table of Contents

<b>Overview .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Mandate .....	5
Budget.....	5
Lines of Business .....	6
Primary Clients.....	8
Vision .....	9
<b>Strategic Issue 1 – Economic and Social Wellbeing .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Goal .....	10
Goal Indicators.....	10
Objective 2023-24 .....	10
Objective Indicators .....	11
Objective 2024-25 .....	11
Objective 2025-26 .....	11
<b>Strategic Issue 2 – Gender-Based Violence.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Goal .....	12
Goal Indicators.....	12
Objective 2023-24 .....	13
Objective Indicators .....	13
Objective 2024-25 .....	13
Objective 2025-26 .....	14
<b>Strategic Issue 3 – Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+).....</b>	<b>14</b>

BUSINESS PLAN 2023-2026

Goal ..... 15

    Goal Indicators ..... 15

Objective 2023-24 ..... 15

    Objective Indicators ..... 15

Objective 2024-25 ..... 16

Objective 2025-26 ..... 16

**Annex A: Strategic Directions ..... 17**

## Overview

The Office of Women and Gender Equality (WGE) is a central agency that supports the development of programs, services, policies, legislation, and budgets to advance the social, economic, cultural, and legal status of women and gender diverse individuals in the province. WGE provides specific resources within the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador structure to advance equity for women and gender diverse individuals. WGE is housed within Executive Council and staff report to the Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equality. In 2022-23, WGE had a core staff complement comprised of 10 permanent and three temporary positions, inclusive of the Minister's Office.

Further information about WGE can be found at: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/exec/wge/>.

## Mandate

WGE supports an "all of government" approach to the application of Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) to programs, services, policies, legislation, and budgets. WGE supports the work of community partners to achieve our common goal - advancing the social, economic, cultural, and legal status of women and gender diverse individuals in our province. WGE undertakes initiatives to encourage, promote, support and retain women and gender diverse people in leadership roles, including in running for elected office. WGE collaborates and works with women's equity-seeking organizations, the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and Indigenous groups and organizations to ensure Newfoundland and Labrador is a safe, accessible and inclusive place for all.

Within this mandate, WGE is responsible for the **Status of Women Advisory Council Act**.

## Budget

WGE is located in St. John's at the Confederation Building, West Block. For 2023-24, WGE has a total budget of \$5.47 million, inclusive of the Minister's Office and the

Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

## **Lines of Business**

WGE staff are responsible for the following lines of business:

### **Policy Analysis and Advisory Services**

WGE defines policy as any action taken by government. WGE supports an "all of government" approach to the application of Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) to programs, services, policies, legislation, and budgets. Through the application of GBA+, WGE provides advice to Provincial Government departments and agencies on how gender equity can best be achieved – highlighting gaps and potential detrimental impacts of programs, services, policies, legislation, and budgets on women, girls, and gender diverse individuals helps move us collectively one step closer to achieving gender equity in Newfoundland and Labrador.

### **Information Collection and Communication Services**

WGE is responsible for collecting relevant information from a variety of sources to provide evidence-based policy advice. To meet this responsibility, WGE may perform jurisdictional scans, secondary research, content analysis and quantitative analysis to identify systemic inequities, gaps in information, and assess the overall social, economic, cultural, and legal status of women and gender diverse individuals in our province. As part of the information collection process, WGE consults regularly with women and equity-seeking organizations to identify ongoing and emerging issues of special concern, as well as potential solutions.

### **Gender-Based Violence Prevention**

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains prevalent in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power, and harmful social norms. GBV is



pervasive and its persistence continues to impact social, economic, cultural, and legal systems in our province. WGE is committed to the prevention of GBV in Newfoundland and Labrador. In order to achieve this goal, WGE works collaboratively with violence prevention organizations, community-based stakeholders, Indigenous groups and organizations, Provincial Government departments and agencies, and other orders of governments to ensure grassroots knowledge is utilized to identify long-term systemic solutions to the prevention of GBV in our province. Implementing long-term systemic solutions to address the varying types of inequality that exist within our society is essential to creating an environment where individuals live free from a threat of violence and have an opportunity to reach their full potential.

### **Grants Program**

Subject to approved criteria, WGE provides non-repayable grants to equity-seeking organizations for activities and initiatives that seek to advance the status of women and gender diverse individuals in Newfoundland and Labrador.

### **Working within Government**

Many Provincial Government departments and agencies share responsibility for issues of special concern to women and gender diverse individuals. WGE works with such departments and agencies to assist in the application of Gender-Based Analysis Plus on programs, services, policies, legislation, and budgets in order to help advance the status of women, girls, and gender diverse individuals in our province. WGE acts as a catalyst within government, heightening awareness and initiating change where needed. WGE sits on cross-departmental committees such as the Atlantic Domestic Homicide Network, Health in All Policies Committee, Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities Committee, Gender-Based Needs Working Group, and Indigenous Health Working Group.

### **Acting as Federal-Provincial Liaison**

The staff of WGE maintains a close working relationship with federal, provincial and territorial counterparts and acts as a Federal-Provincial Liaison. This includes ongoing participation in intergovernmental working groups that address such issues as Women's Economic Participation and Prosperity, Leadership and Democratic Participation, Gender-Based Violence and Access to Justice, Gender-Based Analysis Plus, Intergovernmental Strategic Planning, and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

### **Working with the Community**

WGE carries out ongoing engagement with women's groups and equity-seeking organizations. WGE collaborates with and consults women and gender diverse individuals with intersectional perspectives in order to identify the issues of particular concern to them, and to ensure their views are considered in the design of government strategies to enhance their economic and social status. Business, labour, and community groups are consulted to ensure that the concerns of women and gender diverse individuals are considered at every level of decision-making.

### **Primary Clients**

WGE works collaboratively with many stakeholder organizations throughout the province to advance the status of women and gender diverse individuals. In 2022-23, WGE provided grants and core operational funding of approximately \$3.3 million to key partners including: the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women; Status of Women Councils; Violence Prevention NL organizations; Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador; Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network; End Sexual Violence NL; Safe Harbour Outreach Project (a project of the St. John's Status of Women Council); and Coalition Against the Sexual Exploitation of Youth (a project of Thrive).

WGE works collaboratively with federal, provincial, and territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women on initiatives to advance the status of women and gender diverse individuals in Newfoundland and Labrador and throughout the country.

## **Vision**

The Vision of WGE is true social, economic, cultural, and legal equality for women and gender diverse individuals in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

## **Strategic Issue 1 – Economic and Social Wellbeing**

Women and gender diverse individuals continue to face systemic barriers to accessing key resources and opportunities in all economic and social spheres. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador recognizes that economic and social inequalities in the areas of health, housing, food security, safety, cultural and political participation, race, ability, education, employment, income and social relationships and support, negatively impact the well-being of women and gender diverse individuals within the province.

To help address such inequalities, WGE works collaboratively with Provincial Government departments and agencies on initiatives including, but not limited to, the following:

- Ensuring a GBA+ lens is applied consistently throughout the policy, program, services, and legislation development process;
- Development and implementation of Gender Equity and Diversity Plans for large-scale resource development projects and Women’s Employment Plans for medium-size commercial developments; and
- Supporting the development of legislation and drafting of regulations in relation to pay equity and pay transparency.

WGE continues to work in partnership with community organizations (i.e., Equal Voice NL) to encourage, promote, support and retain women and gender diverse people in leadership roles. These efforts support opportunities to grow the proportion of women and gender diverse individuals in leadership roles in Newfoundland and Labrador, amplifying the valuable insights, talents, and expertise, rooted in the knowledge and experience of such groups.

## Goal

By March 31, 2026, WGE will have strengthened an “all of government” approach to address systemic barriers faced by women and gender diverse individuals that impact economic and social well-being.

## Goal Indicators

- Increased interaction with government departments and agencies regarding the economic and social wellbeing of women and gender diverse people (i.e. participation on cross-government committees) to ensure that potential impacts of policies and/or programs on gender equity are considered and implemented.
- Increased community engagement with stakeholders, including Indigenous Governments and Organizations, to address issues such as socio-economic wellbeing and the advancement of women and gender diverse individuals in leadership roles.

## Objective 2023-24

By March 31, 2024, WGE will have worked with the Department of Environment and Climate Change, Treasury Board Secretariat, and the Department of Justice and Public Safety to draft the regulations of the **Pay Equity and Pay Transparency Act** (the **Act**).

### Objective Indicators

- Completed consultations with targeted stakeholders and sought feedback from the general public to inform the drafting of **Act** regulations.
- Worked with the Department of Environment and Climate Change, Treasury Board Secretariat, and the Department of Justice and Public Safety to draft **Act** regulations.

### Objective 2024-25

By March 31, 2025, WGE will have undertaken initiatives to encourage, promote, support and retain women and gender diverse people in leadership roles, including running for elected office.

### Objective 2025-26

By March 31, 2026, WGE will have worked with colleagues across government to support equitable access to programs and services that enhance individuals' social and economic wellbeing.

## Strategic Issue 2 – Gender-Based Violence

Gender Based-Violence (GBV) is one of the most pervasive, deadly and deeply-rooted human rights violations of our time. GBV is rooted in gender inequality and is further intensified by systemic inequalities, such as sexism, discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, colonialism, racism, ableism, ageism, classism, poverty, and a collective history of trauma. GBV can have long-lasting negative health, social, and economic consequences, often leading to intergenerational cycles of violence and abuse.

GBV disproportionately affects women and girls. Certain intersectional populations also experience high levels of violence or are underserved when experiencing this type of violence, such as Indigenous women and girls; Black and racialized women; immigrant and refugee women; 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals; people with disabilities; older persons; and women living in Northern, rural, and remote communities. Implementing long-term systemic solutions to address the varying types of inequality that exist within our society is essential to creating an environment where women, girls, and gender diverse individuals live free from the threat of violence and have an opportunity to reach their full potential.

The National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence (GBV NAP) can help guide work and advance collective efforts to prevent GBV across the country. The GBV NAP is a strategic framework for action, with a common vision, goals, and pillars, within and across jurisdictions, to support victims, survivors and their families. Preventing and addressing GBV in Newfoundland and Labrador, and across Canada, requires a coordinated approach, with federal, provincial, and territorial governments working in close partnership with survivors, Indigenous partners, direct service providers, experts, advocates, municipalities, the private sector, and researchers.

## **Goal**

By March 31, 2026, in collaboration with Federal Government counterparts, WGE will have worked with community partners and Provincial Government departments and agencies to implement an intersectional, research-based, culturally-sensitive approach to the prevention of gender-based violence and corresponding results framework.

## **Goal Indicators**

- Responded to gender-based violence issues and needs on a regional and provincial level.

- Actively participated in various Federal, Provincial and Territorial Task Teams including: Gender-Based Violence and Access to Justice; Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+; and Human Trafficking.
- Worked with the Provincial Indigenous Women’s Reconciliation Council to address recommendations outlined in the report, “Hear Our Voices: MMIWG Policy Recommendations of the First Women of Newfoundland and Labrador”.
- Collaborated with the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community to ensure that the province is a safe, inclusive and accessible place for people of all gender identities and sexual orientations.

### **Objective 2023-24**

By March 31, 2024, WGE will have entered into a bilateral agreement with Women and Gender Equality Canada to implement a five-year, provincially based, regionally focused gender-based violence action plan.

#### **Objective Indicators**

- Through the Provincial Indigenous Women’s Reconciliation Council, collaborated with Indigenous women’s organizations and provincial government departments to address the disproportionate amount of systemic violence experienced by Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.
- Worked with community stakeholders to enhance and support the sustainability of violence prevention crisis hotline services for victims of violence throughout the province.
- Explored opportunities for regional coordination and community leadership in the gender-based violence sector.

### **Objective 2024-25**

By March 31, 2025, WGE will have reported and monitored the provincial gender-based violence action plan.

## **Objective 2025-26**

By March 31, 2026, WGE will have evaluated the impact of the provincial gender-based violence action plan and identified best practices to inform provincial gender-based violence prevention efforts moving forward.

## **Strategic Issue 3 – Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+)**

Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) is an analytical tool often used with the intention of advancing gender equality. The “plus” in the name highlights that GBA+ goes beyond gender, and includes the examination of a range of factors such as age, education, race, language, disability status, geography, culture and income. GBA+ is used to assess the potential impacts of programs, services, policies, legislation, and budgets on diverse groups of citizens, taking into account gender and other intersecting identity factors. GBA+ helps recognize and respond to the different situations and needs of citizens.

The goal of GBA+ is to ensure that gender and other diversity characteristics are properly considered in all government programs and policies that affect citizens. GBA+ can also be used to effectively gather and analyze data to better understand the root causes of circumstances and problems in our province. Understanding root causes for specific audiences allows for the efficient use of limited resources to achieve a greater result. Application of GBA+ early in the program, service, policy, legislation, and budget development process greatly increases options and outcomes, prevents or reduces historical societal inequalities, and leads to better informed government decision-making as well as potential cost saving measures.

The Provincial Government is committed to an “all of government” approach to GBA+. This commitment is reflected in all departmental Ministers’ mandate letters noting a required GBA+ on all policies approach. GBA+ is a primary line of business for WGE,



and ensuring the proper training and application of GBA+, as well as the efficiency and relevancy of this analytical tool, remains a top priority.

## Goal

By March 31, 2026, WGE will have strengthened the capacity of departments and agencies to fully understand, apply, and integrate GBA+ into all departmental accountability mechanisms.

### Goal Indicators

- Offered additional GBA+ training to government departments and agencies.
- Enhanced GBA+ training opportunities through in-person, virtual, and online training options.
- Broadened the awareness, understanding, and intersectional application of GBA+ among all levels of public service employees in order to ensure the needs of diverse populations in Newfoundland and Labrador are met.

## Objective 2023-24

By March 31, 2024, WGE will have expanded GBA+ training to government departments, as well as agencies, boards and commissions.

### Objective Indicators

- Offered frequent GBA+ training opportunities for public service employees through in-person, virtual, and online training options.
- Evaluated the efficacy of GBA+ training and identified alternative GBA+ training delivery mechanisms.
- Worked to ensure the provincial government GBA+ analysis framework extends beyond gender to encompass intersectional analysis and diverse characteristics.

**Objective 2024-25**

By March 31, 2025, WGE will have enhanced GBA+ training to better meet the needs of government departments, agencies, boards and commissions.

**Objective 2025-26**

By March 31, 2026, through enriched GBA+ training of public service employees, WGE will have supported government departments and agencies to strengthen their intersectional scope of GBA+ in programs, services, policies, legislation, and budgets in order to better meet the diverse needs of women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals in the province.

## **Annex A: Strategic Directions**

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has identified the following strategic directions for the 2023-2026 planning cycle. This plan was prepared in consideration of the following strategic directions:

Strategic Direction 1: A Better Economy

Strategic Direction 2: Healthier People

Strategic Direction 3: Better Living

Strategic Direction 4: A Bright Future

Strategic Direction 5: A More Efficient Public Sector

