

2025-2026

Annual Report

Executive Council





MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

As Premier and Minister for the Office of the Executive Council, I am pleased to present the 2025-26 Annual Report of the Office of the Executive Council. The Office of the Executive Council is a category 3 entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. This report outlines the progress made toward achieving the objectives set out in the third year of our 2023-26 Activity Plan and highlights the work undertaken to support effective government decision-making, strategic leadership, and public service excellence.

During fiscal year 2025-26, our Government focused on delivering results for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians by advancing key priorities that strengthen our province and improve quality of life. Through investments in health care, measures to support safer communities, and initiatives that help families and businesses manage the cost of living, we continued to build opportunities for people throughout the province.

The Office of the Executive Council played a central role in supporting these efforts by providing strategic advice, coordinating cross-government initiatives, and supporting the Cabinet decision-making process. Through collaboration across departments and agencies, the Office helped ensure Government remained focused on meeting the needs of residents while responding to emerging challenges and opportunities.

From advancing opportunities in energy and natural resources, to strengthening public services and promoting the rich culture and heritage that define our province, Government worked to create the conditions for long-term prosperity and sustainable growth. These efforts reflect our commitment to a stronger economy, healthier communities, and a brighter future for all of us.

This report was prepared under my direction in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, and I am accountable for the results reported herein.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Wakeham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tony" and last name "Wakeham" clearly legible.

Hon. Tony Wakeham
Premier

Table of Contents

Departmental Overview	3
Organizational Structure	3
Staff and Budget	4
Highlights and Partnerships	5
Cabinet Secretariat	5
The Provincial Protocol Office 2025-2026.....	5
Lieutenant Governor's Establishment	7
Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (ATIPP) Office	9
Communications Branch	10
Report on Performance	11
Issue One – Providing Support to Cabinet and Committees of Cabinet.....	11
Issue Two – Providing Support to the Premier	12
Issue Three – Providing Support to the Clerk of the Executive Council as Head of the Public Service	12
Issue Four – Provision of Government-Wide Communications Functions	14
Issue Five – Provision of Support to Public Bodies on Access to Information and Protection of Privacy	15
Opportunities and Challenges	16
Financial Information	17

Departmental Overview

Organizational Structure

The Office of the Executive Council is the department of the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Office of the Executive Council supports the general operations of the Provincial Government, including those of Cabinet and the broader public service, through the provision of leadership, coordination, and advice to the Premier, Cabinet, committees of Cabinet, and departments and agencies.

For planning and reporting purposes under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, the Office of the Executive Council is a category 3 entity and includes the following:

- Office of the Clerk of the Executive Council, including Cabinet Secretariat and the Provincial Protocol Office;
- Lieutenant-Governor's Establishment;
- Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Office;
- Communications Branch; and
- Financial Administration Division.

There are entities within the Office of the Executive Council that, in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, prepare separate multi-year plans and annual reports. These are Treasury Board Secretariat; the Office of the Chief Information Officer; the Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat; the Office of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation; and the Office of Women and Gender Equality. Furthermore, while they fall under the responsibility of the Office of the Executive Council, the Premier's Youth Council¹, the Newfoundland and Labrador Bravery Award Review Panel, and the Order

¹ All existing appointments have expired. The process to make appointments to the entity is underway and reports will be prepared for future reporting periods in accordance with the requirements of the **Transparency and Accountability Act**.

of Newfoundland and Labrador Advisory Council are also independent in terms of planning and reporting.² For more information, please consult their respective multi-year plans and annual reports.

Staff and Budget

Division	# of Employees	Budget
Office of the Clerk of the Executive Council, including Cabinet Secretariat and the Provincial Protocol Office	23	\$3,116,600
Lieutenant-Governor's Establishment	10	\$707,100
Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Office	49	\$5,425,400
Communications	15	\$2,046,800
Financial Administration Division	8	\$807,000

For more information on the Office of the Executive Council, please see: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/exec/>. More information on the Lieutenant-Governor's Establishment can be found at <https://www.govhouse.nl.ca/>.

² However, this report identifies some activities related to the latter two entities given the role of Cabinet Secretariat and the Provincial Protocol Office in their achievement.

Highlights and Partnerships

Cabinet Secretariat

Cabinet Secretariat provides administrative, logistical, and strategic support, as well as impartial advice, to the Premier and the Cabinet. In fiscal year 2025-26, Cabinet Secretariat processed, analyzed, and advanced 159 submissions and other documents for Cabinet's consideration, and recorded Minutes of Council to document the decisions taken. Depending on their nature or the direction provided, some Minutes of Council require that Orders in Council be drafted for the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor. In 2025-26, 366 Orders in Council were prepared.

Cabinet Secretariat is also responsible for providing operational and administrative support to the Economic Policy Committee and the Social Policy Committee of Cabinet, which met 26 and 17 times in 2025-26, respectively. As part of this work, Cabinet Secretariat provides impartial advice and performs supplementary analysis of the items advanced for the Committees' consideration. The Secretariat also supports meetings of other Cabinet Committees, which in 2025-26 included the Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure, the Cabinet Committee on Seniors, the Cabinet Committee on Routine Matters and Appointments, and the Cabinet Committee on Conception Bay North Response and Recovery.

Finally, as part of its role to support the operations of the Office of the Premier, Cabinet Secretariat analyzed, processed, and advanced 163 briefing notes from various departments and agencies on matters related to Government operations, public policy, or any matter of the day.

The Provincial Protocol Office

In 2025–26, the Protocol Office received several requests for diplomatic and consular visits. The visits that took place during the reporting period included:

- His Excellency Joseph E. Sokoine, High Commissioner of the United Republic of Tanzania to Canada.
- His Excellency António Leão Rocha, Ambassador of Portugal to Canada.
- His Excellency Michel Miraillet, Ambassador of France to Canada.
- His Excellency Robert Tinline, High Commissioner of the United Kingdom to Canada.
- His Excellency Dinesh Patnaik, High Commissioner of India to Canada and Mr. Kapidhwaja Pratap Singh, Acting Consul General.
- His Excellency Alessandro Cattaneo, Ambassador of Italy to Canada and Mr. Enrico Pavone, Consul General.

Further activities and responsibilities of the Protocol Office during the period include:

- Administration of the 18th Investiture of Recipients into the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador, and subsequent call for nominations for the 19th Investiture into the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Administration of applications for the Newfoundland Second World War Volunteer War Service Medals and the issuance of 21 medals.
- Administration of nominations for the Newfoundland and Labrador Bravery Award.
- Administration of the Public Service Award of Excellence.
- Administration of applications for lighting of the Confederation Building.
- Administration of applications for use of the courtesy pole at the Confederation Building.
- Administration of Half-Masting notifications for provincial government buildings.
- Administration of swearing in ceremonies for the Premier and Cabinet Ministers. Administration of the swearing-in ceremony for Parliamentary Assistant to the Premier and Parliamentary Secretaries.
- Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon, Governor General of Canada

Lieutenant-Governor's Establishment

The Honourable Joan Marie Aylward serves as the 15th Lieutenant-Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Lieutenant Governor serves as viceregal representative of His Majesty, King Charles III in Newfoundland and Labrador and this non-partisan and apolitical position carries important constitutional responsibilities within our democratic system of government.

On October 14, 2025, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador participated in a General Election and as a part of her constitutional duties, Her Honour presided over the swearing in of a new Premier and Government on October 29, 2025. This was followed by Her Honour reading the Speech from the Throne on March 2, 2026, which opened the First Session of the Fifty-First General Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. During the reporting period, the Lieutenant-Governor also gave Royal Assent to six bills of the House of Assembly.

In addition to constitutional duties, Her Honour also attends and presides over many ceremonies, investitures, and presentations throughout the year. As Chancellor of the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador (ONL), the Lieutenant-Governor installed eight new members into the Order in a ceremony on January 27, 2026. The ONL is the highest honour of the Province and this year's recipients included: Elaine Kirkland Huxter, Dr. John Mannion, Maura Mannion, Philip Pratt, Major (Retired) Michael James Pretty, CD, Mary M. Reid, Margaret Tibbo and Mary Winters.

Overall, Her Honour presided over 45 award ceremonies and events in 2025-26, recognizing 179 individuals to mark their achievements and exemplary service in the spheres of policing, the coast guard, volunteerism, and other uniformed emergency, protection and community services. The Lieutenant-Governor also presided over a Citizenship Ceremony that officially welcomed 19 new Canadians to Newfoundland and Labrador in August 2025.

Throughout 2025-26, the Lieutenant-Governor participated in several community and special events celebrating the rich culture, heritage of the province and the vibrancy of its people – past and present. Some highlights include events marking the 100th anniversary of women’s right to vote and hold public office in Newfoundland on April 3, 2025, participating in the unveiling of a commemorative statue of suffragette Armine Nutting Gosling in Bannerman Park, as well as a series of speaking events, musical performances, and historical conversations profiling this milestone.

Engaging with the people of the province remains a fundamental part of the role of Lieutenant-Governor and during the reporting year, Her Honour engaged with Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in St. John’s, as well as on visits to Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Gander, Gambo, Botwood, Bishop’s Falls and Grand Falls-Windsor.

Highlighted events include:

- a ceremony on April 15, 2025, in Gander in collaboration with the Community Sector Council NL in advance of National Volunteer Week to celebrate the incredible work of volunteers who give so much to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador;
- a visit to Gambo on April 17, 2025, to meet with the students of Smallwood Academy and representatives of the Mi’kmaw Cultural Foundation to learn about the Patty Boy’s student art exhibit which was inspired by the life of Mi’kmaw Police Officer Patrick Gehue and the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.
- visits to 9 Wing Gander, 5 Wing Goose Bay, 5 CDSG Garrison St John’s, HMCS Cabot, and onboard the HMCS St. John’s to recognize the contributions of Canada’s military and uniformed services and learn more about the work of the military and civilian personnel who protect our country and its freedoms;
- a July visit to Grand Falls-Windsor to meet with community representatives, veterans and to mark the life and career of iconic Newfoundland and Labrador actor Gordon Pinsent with the unveiling of a statue in his hometown;
- participation in the opening ceremonies of the Canada Summer Games in St. John’s in August;

- engagements with newcomer communities, representatives and students affiliated with Sharing our Cultures and the Civic Roots Foundation, celebrations with the Igbo Cultural Association of NL marking their cultural day, and a reception in partnership with Senator Mohamed Ravalia to mark Black History Month;
- a March visit to Happy Valley-Goose Bay to officially open the Labrador Winter Games, to meet with community-based organizations like the Mokami Status of Women Council, and to share time with respected Innu Elder Elizabeth Penashue; and,
- celebrations of the rich culture and heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador, including with CALOS Youth Orchestra, the Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra, the Singing Legionnaires, Shallaway Youth Choir, Sheila Williams, **Our Divas Do Christmas**, the Newfoundland and Labrador Historical Society and more.

Last year, Their Honours hosted three major events: the Annual New Year's Day Levee on January 1, the Lieutenant-Governor's Garden Party in St. John's on July 23 commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Canadian flag, and a September 26 ceremony in the Heart Garden at Government House marking the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30).

Government House hosted four courtesy visits from various ambassadors and diplomatic representatives, including those of Portugal, India, Italy and the United Kingdom.

Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (ATIPP) Office

The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (ATIPP) Office oversees the implementation and coordination of the **Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015**. The Office supports more than 450 public bodies subject to the Act, including government departments, agencies, boards, commissions, educational bodies, health-care bodies, and municipalities.

The ATIPP Office provides leadership, expertise, advice, and guidance to public bodies in meeting their access to information and privacy obligations. This includes developing and delivering training, establishing policies and procedures, producing guidance materials and educational resources, and providing privacy-related support to help ensure the protection of personal information.

In 2025-26, the ATIPP Office continued to strengthen service delivery under its centralized operating model. The Office delivered training and outreach initiatives to support public bodies across the province and responded to a high volume of enquiries related to access and privacy. In addition to the performance indicators reported below, the Office continued to provide advice and guidance, review privacy assessments, and develop resources to support consistent application of the Act.

Communications Branch

The Communications Branch leads the Provincial Government's communications and marketing activities and provides strategic counsel on communication and consultation issues to the Office of the Premier, Cabinet, departments, and agencies.

The Branch's communications responsibilities are wide-ranging and include developing communications policies and procedures; advising on communications planning; distributing news releases, media advisories, and public advisories; media monitoring; providing video and photography support; managing marketing activities; providing multimedia support; delivering customized media training for ministers and senior public service employees, as well as customized professional development sessions for departmental communications staff; and managing Government's social media presence. Moreover, the Branch oversees, coordinates, and supports the communications activities of all communications staff in departments; engages in long-term strategic planning to achieve Government's communications goals; and provides strategic guidance to departments to navigate issues as they arise.

The Marketing and Brand Management Division within the Branch is the Provincial Government's core creative services group. It also partners with agencies, boards and commissions, offering brand guidance and marketing consultation services. As a centralized marketing group, it ensures Government's visual identity is managed effectively and consistently across all departments, to help position the province to a variety of audiences. These strategic campaigns are targeted at residents of the province, ensuring that the important messages they deliver are received in a timely, effective, and efficient way. The Branch also provides guidance and marketing advice to larger ongoing initiatives such as health care recruitment, well-being activities, emergency preparedness, population growth, and business investment.

Report on Performance

Issue One – Providing Support to Cabinet and Committees of Cabinet

One of the primary roles of the Office of the Executive Council is to support the decision-making processes of the executive branch of Government by providing non-partisan advice and support to Cabinet and committees of Cabinet. Cabinet meets regularly to consider policy, program, regulatory, and financial issues as prepared by departments and advanced by ministers of the Crown. The Office of the Executive Council plays a critical role in supporting the Cabinet process, ensuring the effective operation of Cabinet and its committees, liaising with departments and agencies to ensure that necessary actions are taken further to the direction of Cabinet, and facilitating the coordination of initiatives that involve all or multiple departments and agencies.

2025-26 Objective

By March 31, 2026, the Office of the Executive Council will have supported the operations of Cabinet and committees of Cabinet.

Indicator	Result
Number of Cabinet committee meetings held	55
Number of Orders in Council issued	366

Issue Two – Providing Support to the Premier

The Office of the Executive Council is the branch of the Provincial Government that provides direct, impartial support to the Premier's role in setting overall Government policy, coordinating initiatives brought forward by ministers, and developing responses to Government-level issues. The Office of the Executive Council provides briefings to the Premier on matters that will be considered by Cabinet, provides briefing notes to the Premier submitted by departments and agencies on the emergence or status of major issues or those that are likely to attract considerable public attention, and meets regularly with the Premier and senior staff to ensure that appropriate responses are developed for Government-wide issues and those that are a priority for the Premier.

2025-26 Objective

By March 31, 2026, the Office of the Executive Council will have supported the Premier as head of the executive branch of government.

Indicator	Result
Number of briefing notes provided to the Premier's Office	163

Issue Three – Providing Support to the Clerk of the Executive Council as Head of the Public Service

The Clerk of the Executive Council is the most senior official in the public service and is responsible to the Premier for the overall effectiveness of the public service. In this role, the Clerk of the Executive Council oversees recruitment and training for senior executives; communicates regularly with deputy ministers through group meetings to

share information and discuss matters that affect the public service and residents of the province; oversees the annual Public Service Award of Excellence to recognize leadership and excellence in the public service; and works with the Provincial Protocol Office and the Lieutenant-Governor's establishment respecting various ceremonial events, including the bestowal of the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Newfoundland and Labrador Bravery Award, and the Newfoundland Second World War Volunteer Service Medal.

2025-26 Objective

By March 31, 2026, the Office of the Executive Council will have undertaken initiatives that support the Clerk of the Executive Council as head of the public service.

Indicator	Result
Number of executive development training sessions offered and number of executives participating in those sessions	Eight Assistant Deputy Minister forums • April 2025 – 43 participants • June 2025 – 60 participants • September 2025 – 54 participants • November 2025 – 58 participants • December 2025 – 48 participants • January 2026 – 47 participants • February 2026 – 49 participants • March 2026 – 49 participants Three Executive Onboarding sessions • April 2025 – 5 participants • September 2025 – 11 participants • February 2026 – 9 participants
Number of deputy minister group meetings held	40
Number of inductees to the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador	8

Number of Public Service Awards of Excellence bestowed	24
Number of recipients of the Newfoundland and Labrador Bravery Award	6
Number of recipients of the Newfoundland Second World War Volunteer Service Medal	21

Issue Four – Provision of Government-Wide Communications Functions

The Communications Branch leads the Provincial Government's communications and marketing activities and provides strategic counsel on communication and consultation issues to the Office of the Premier, Cabinet, departments, and agencies.

The Branch coordinates communications activities of all Government communications staff and of all departments; provides long-term planning to achieve Government's communication goals; provides media monitoring; provides advice to navigate issues as they arise; and advances practices strategic planning, and annual reporting.

2025-26 Objective

By March 31, 2026, the Office of the Executive Council will have undertaken initiatives to ensure effective communication from the Provincial Government and effective public engagement with residents of the Province.

Indicator	Result
Number of communications plans reviewed	160
Number of news releases distributed	1,165
Number of news conferences held	119

Issue Five – Provision of Support to Public Bodies on Access to Information and Protection of Privacy

The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (ATIPP) Office supports public bodies in fulfilling their obligations under the **Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015**. Through a centralized service delivery model, the Office provides coordinated access to information, privacy, and policy support to government departments and other public bodies.

The Office assists public bodies through training, advice, guidance, privacy review services, and the development of policies, procedures, tools, and educational resources. These activities help promote consistent decision-making, strengthen privacy protection practices, and support compliance with legislative requirements.

2025-26 Objective

By March 31, 2026, the Office of the Executive Council will have continued initiatives to support public bodies in meeting their obligations related to access to information and protection of privacy.

Indicator	Result
Number of training sessions conducted	99
Number of privacy assessments reviewed	104

In 2025-26, the ATIPP Office delivered 99 training sessions to employees of public bodies across the province. These sessions supported improved understanding of access to information and privacy requirements and helped build capacity across the public sector.

The Office also reviewed 104 privacy assessments, providing advice and recommendations to help public bodies identify and address privacy risks, strengthen privacy protections, and ensure compliance with legislative obligations. Through these

activities, the Office continued to promote transparency, accountability, and the responsible management of personal information across government and the broader public sector.

Opportunities and Challenges

Fiscal year 2025-26 presented both opportunities and challenges for Newfoundland and Labrador. Economic uncertainty, global market volatility, and evolving trade pressures continued to affect jurisdictions across Canada and around the world. Despite these challenges, Newfoundland and Labrador remained well positioned to build on its strengths and capitalize on opportunities that support long-term growth and prosperity.

Delivering on government's commitments to better health care, lower taxes, and safer communities remained a central focus throughout the year. Government continued to support individuals, families, and communities while addressing affordability pressures, strengthening public services, and fostering economic growth. Through strategic investments and collaborative action, government worked to improve quality of life and create opportunities for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in every region of the province.

Significant opportunities also emerged to strengthen the province's economy and position Newfoundland and Labrador for future success. Government continued to advance investments that support growth, create jobs, attract investment, and generate long-term benefits for residents. Opportunities in energy development, including hydroelectric and offshore energy, together with continued growth in natural resources, critical minerals, infrastructure, and industrial development, have the potential to strengthen the province's economy, support a more diversified and resilient economic future, and enhance Newfoundland and Labrador's contribution to a secure and sustainable Canadian economy.

As government pursues its vision of creating opportunity for all, success will depend on thoughtful decision-making, effective coordination, and responsible stewardship of public resources. The Office of the Executive Council will continue to provide strategic leadership in support of Cabinet and government-wide priorities, helping to ensure that policies, programs and services remain aligned with the needs of residents and the long-term interests of Newfoundland and Labrador. Through collaboration across departments and agencies, government will continue working to build stronger communities, grow the economy, and create opportunities for current and future generations.

Financial Information

The expenditure and revenue information below is based on public information found in the Report on the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 2026 (unaudited).

Area	Actual	Revised	Original
Cabinet Secretariat and the Provincial Protocol Office	\$4,230,964	\$4,373,300	\$3,116,600
Lieutenant Governor's Establishment	\$815,464	\$821,900	\$707,100
Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Office	\$3,659,293	\$4,487,000	\$5,425,400
Communications	\$1,706,521	\$2,046,800	\$2,046,800
Financial Administration Division	\$741,317	\$767,100	\$807,000
Total	\$11,153,559	\$12,496,100	\$12,102,900

