

Advanced Education, Skills and Labour

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2017-20



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ISBN: 978-1-55146-634-7

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Available in alternate formats, upon request.



## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

In accordance with my responsibilities under the Transparency and Accountability Act, I present a strategic plan for the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour covering the period April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2020. The department is a Category 1 public body. This strategic plan was prepared in consideration of the strategic directions of the Provincial Government including those outlined in The Way Forward, and in accordance with the applicable guidelines.

In August 2016, the integration of the Labour Relations Agency resulted in the creation of the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour. Incorporating labour services into the department ensures that programs and services for employers and individuals participating in the workforce are better aligned. The department also focuses on post-secondary education; supporting individuals and employers in building a strong workforce; providing income support and basic benefits; and working with employers, employees and unions to create positive employment relations, which contributes to ongoing economic growth.

This new strategic plan provides a framework for that alignment to occur as we work to strengthen our labour supply to take advantage of the many opportunities in our changing economy. A skilled labour supply that is aligned with demand helps to strengthen our economic foundation and improve employment outcomes for residents of the province, which is consistent with The Way Forward objective of achieving better outcomes.

I look forward to working with employees of the department, along with other partners in the province, to implement our strategic plan. My signature below attests to my accountability for the preparation of this plan and achievement of the specific goals and objectives identified within.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'G' followed by a long horizontal line that loops back under the 'G'.

Honourable Gerry Byrne  
Minister, Advanced Education, Skills and Labour

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# INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the Transparency and Accountability Act, the strategic plan for the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour identifies two key priority areas, also described as strategic issues, which will be addressed over the next three years to help meet the social and economic needs of the province.

Progress on these two issues will strengthen the provincial workforce and contribute to a stronger economic foundation and labour environment. To address these strategic issues, three-year goals, along with corresponding annual objectives have been developed. These goals aim to:

- Provide mechanisms to develop a highly educated and skilled workforce; and
- Implement initiatives to support a strong labour supply to meet evolving labour market demands.

A skilled labour supply that is aligned with demand, helps to strengthen our economic foundation and improve employment outcomes for residents of the province. This is consistent with The Way Forward objective of achieving better outcomes.

Using specified indicators, an Annual Report will be tabled in the House of Assembly each year. This performance report will provide a summary of our progress in achieving the goals and objectives set out in this plan, and will outline performance indicators for the year ahead.

# PLAN AT A GLANCE



## GOAL 1

By March 31, 2020, the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour will have provided mechanisms to develop a highly educated and skilled workforce.



## GOAL 2

By March 31, 2020, the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour will have contributed to a strong labour supply that meets evolving labour market demands.

The department's role in building resilient communities will be attained by strengthening the workforce through education and training to achieve better outcomes, as well as supporting a stronger economic foundation and labour environment.

# OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT

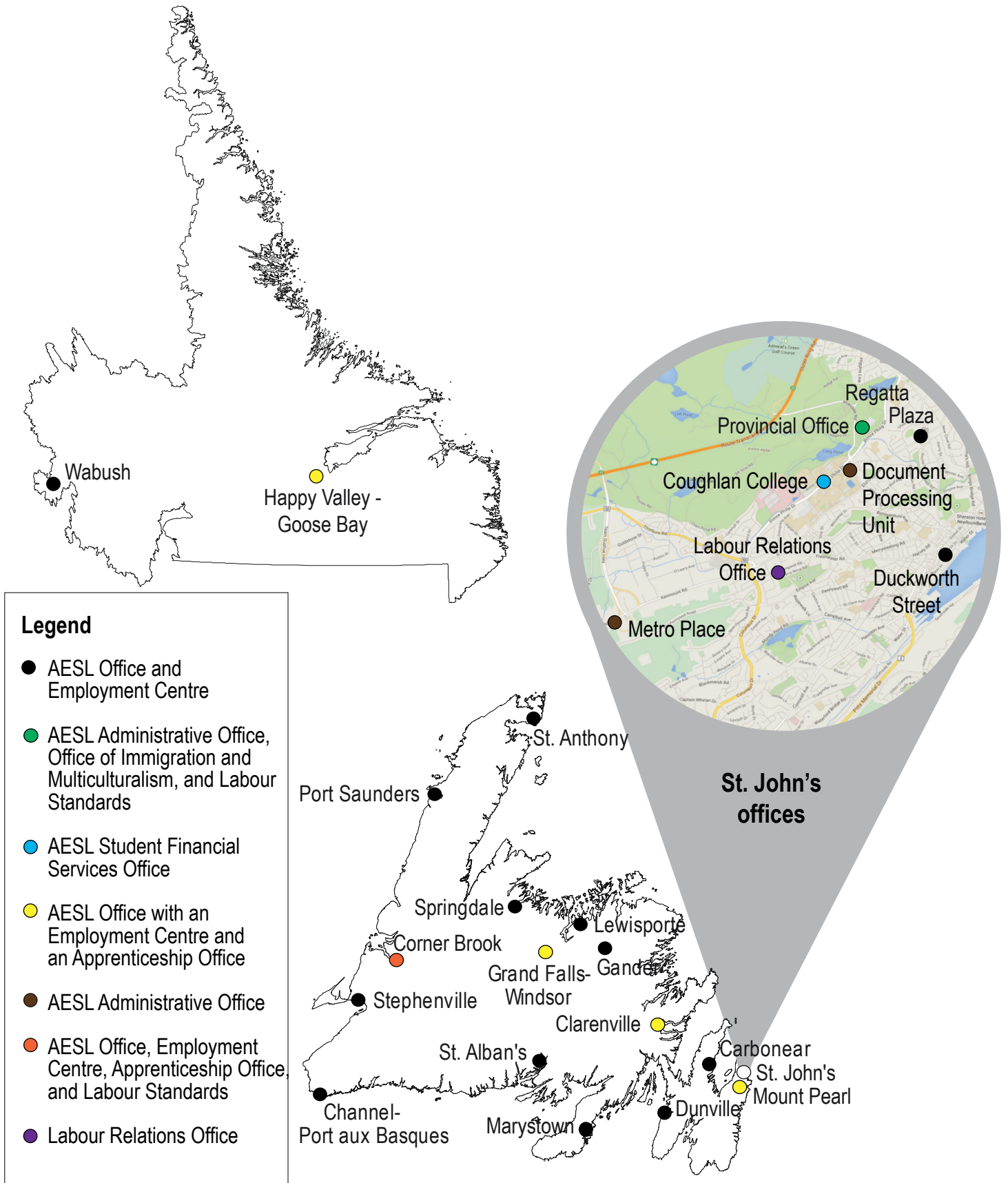
The Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour works to ensure the province has a highly educated and skilled workforce to meet evolving labour market demands. This includes creating a climate which is conducive to economic growth, competitiveness, and prosperity. This is achieved through a range of services and supports including:

- helping employers with accessing and keeping skilled workers;
- working with employers, employees, and unions to foster a positive employment relations climate;
- providing programs and supports for apprenticeship and trades certification;
- increasing the recruitment and retention of immigrants;
- promoting diversity and multiculturalism;
- supporting the delivery of post-secondary education through Memorial University of Newfoundland, College of the North Atlantic and private training institutions;
- administering the student financial assistance program;
- offering career development and planning services as well as employment and training supports, and information about the labour market;
- providing programs and services for Adult Literacy; and
- delivering income support and other financial supports.

The department's staff complement consists of 649 positions, of which 531 are permanent and 118 are temporary. Seventy-five per cent of the staff complement are females and 25 per cent are males.

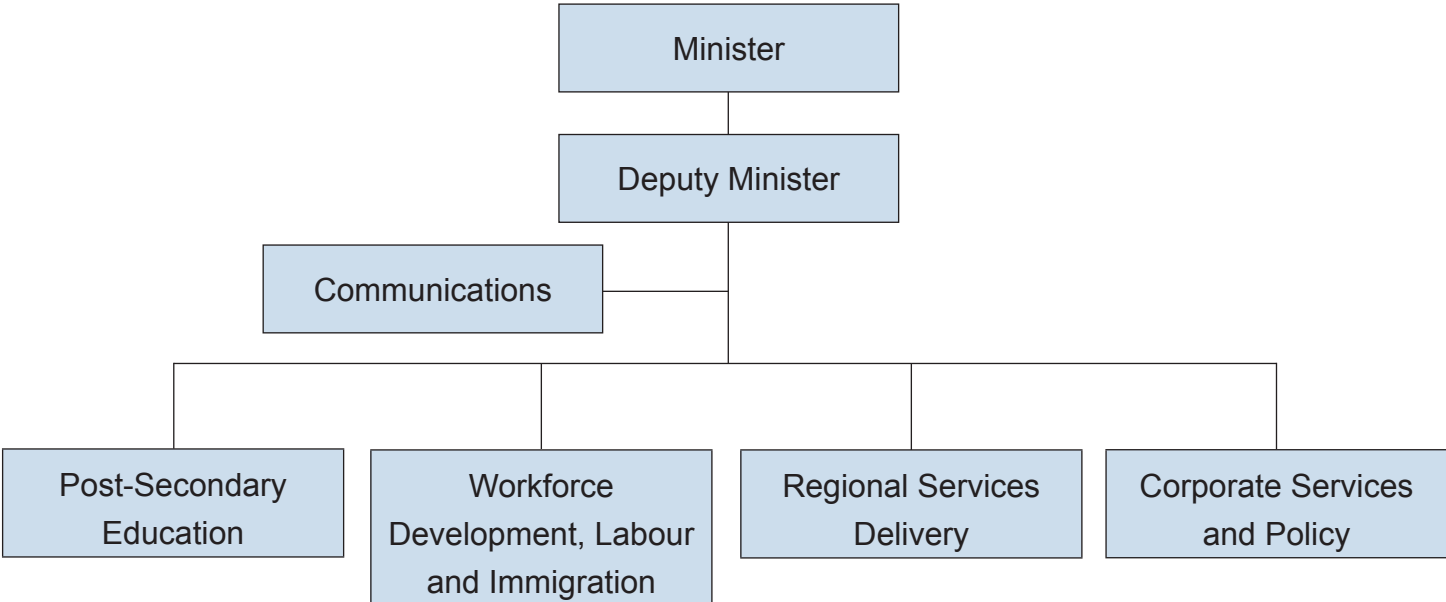
Approximately 49 per cent of our employees are located at seven sites in the St. John's Census Metropolitan Area (CMA). The remaining 51 per cent of staff deliver services in offices located throughout the province.

**Figure 1: Map of Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour Offices**





**Figure 2: Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour Organizational Structure**



The Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour is composed of four branches:

**Post-Secondary Education**

The role of this branch is to support the delivery of post-secondary education in the province through Memorial University (MUN), College of the North Atlantic (CNA), and private training institutions. The branch is responsible for adult learning and literacy, the provision of financial assistance to post-secondary education students, as well as programs and supports for apprenticeship and trades certification. The branch has responsibility for the Student Loan Corporation of Newfoundland and Labrador which provides financial administration for the Newfoundland and Labrador Student Financial Assistance Program.

**Workforce Development, Labour and Immigration**

The branch ensures that workforce and immigration-related policies, programs, services and initiatives are strategically aligned to develop and deploy a highly trained and skilled workforce to meet evolving labour market demands in the province. The branch administers the Provincial Nominee Program to support immigration. The branch also provides labour policy support to promote positive employment relationships in the province. This includes administering minimum terms and conditions of employment, and providing workplace dispute resolution services.

## Regional Services Delivery

The role of this branch is to administer and deliver client-focused, labour market-related programs designed to assist people in securing training and finding sustainable employment, and in helping employers meet labour supply challenges. The branch works with a large and varied client base, including individuals who may need employment and income supports. The primary mechanisms for receiving services include telephone and in-person, at one of the 19 Employment Centres across the province. The branch also has responsibility for program and policy development as it relates to employment and income supports.

## Corporate Services and Policy

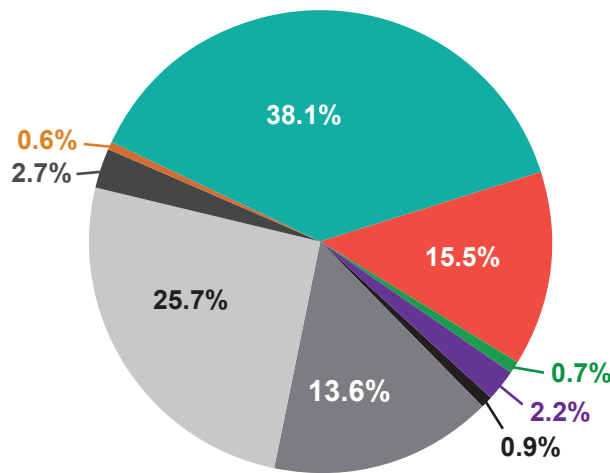
This branch is responsible for the department's financial, information and human resource management. The branch coordinates all corporate policy requirements including legislative reviews, planning and accountability functions, as well as quality assurance and evaluation. The branch also provides advice on privacy matters and leads access to information requests.



### Figure 3: Expenditures Chart

For 2017-18, the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour has projected gross expenditures of \$870.7 million.

At \$478.6 million, the greatest expenditure in the department is in support of Post-Secondary Education including \$118.2 million for CNA, \$331.7 million for MUN, \$4.9 million for Apprenticeship, and \$23.8 million for other post-secondary education initiatives. Income and Social Development accounts for \$358.6 million, with \$223.8 million providing social and financial supports for individuals and families in our province, and \$134.8 million providing for employment and training benefits, as well as other employment development and training programs. Workforce Development, Labour and Immigration accounts for approximately \$6.4 million, with Regional Service Delivery at \$19.4 million. The remaining \$7.7 million is for Executive and Support Services. The following diagram shows the major expenditure categories:



● Regional Service Delivery	\$19.4M	● Other Post-Secondary Initiatives	\$23.8M
● Executive & Support Services	\$7.7M	● Social & Financial Support for Individuals and Families	\$223.8M
● CNA	\$118.2M	● Employment & Training Benefits	\$134.8M
● MUN	\$331.7M	● Workforce Development, Labour & Immigration	\$6.4M
● Apprenticeship	\$4.9M		

# STRATEGIC ISSUES, GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND INDICATORS

Strategic issues represent the most significant internal or external changes that a department must realize to achieve its mandate and vision. The goals identified for each issue reflect the results expected in a three-year time frame (2017-18 to 2019-20). The objectives provide an annual focus. Performance indicators are provided for both the three-year goals and the first year's objectives (2017-18). All of these elements assist both the department and the public in monitoring and evaluating progress.

After considering the mandate, financial resources and key priorities of the Minister, the following two issues have been identified as strategic for the department over the next three years:

1. Strengthening the Workforce through Education and Training to Achieve Better Outcomes.
2. Contributing to a Stronger Economic Foundation and Labour Environment.





## **Strategic Issue 1: Strengthening the Workforce through Education and Training to Achieve Better Outcomes**

A well-educated and trained workforce raises productivity, both of workers and businesses; contributes to boosting future innovation and development; and when broadly accessible, expands labour market opportunities and reduces social inequalities. Higher levels of education are generally linked to improved employment prospects. For example, in 2016 in this province, 52 per cent of working-age individuals with a high school diploma, were employed. This rose to 62 per cent when a post-secondary certificate or diploma was completed, and reached 74 per cent when a post-secondary degree was obtained (Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Table 282-0004).

Strengthening the workforce requires an ability to provide innovative and cost effective approaches to post-secondary education and training, including access to life-long learning opportunities, all of which contribute to meeting labour market demands. To help address this challenge, modernization efforts in several areas are required. Newfoundland and Labrador has a world-class post-secondary education system; however, it is recognized that some of the facilities at campuses throughout the province are aging and in need of renewal. Continued collaboration with the Government of Canada is required to help secure resources to refurbish facilities at Memorial University and College of the North Atlantic. In addition, ongoing work is needed to ensure that programs are responsive and contribute to the province's forecasted labour needs.

Increased coordination and collaboration, between post-secondary institutions and other stakeholders, aids in the development of more responsive approaches to a changing workforce. An example of this is the Council on Higher Education, an entity established to increase collaboration between the department, Memorial University, and College of the North Atlantic.

Areas such as legislation, policy, programs, and services for apprenticeship, trade certification and student financial assistance should be reviewed with the view of improving on or developing new responsive approaches and supporting workers in an evolving economy, with the department leading the charge in these areas. These partnerships will help to improve the collective response to enhancing skills along with improving access to post-secondary learning and training. Ultimately, equipping our workforce with the skills required for the jobs of today and those of tomorrow is fundamental to the economic and social well-being of our province.

The following goal and objectives identify the desired results the department plans to achieve over the next three years, to strengthen our workforce through education and training to achieve better outcomes.

## Issue 1

Strengthening the Workforce through Education and Training to Achieve Better Outcomes

**GOAL 1:** By March 31, 2020, the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour will have provided mechanisms to develop a highly educated and skilled workforce.

Three-Year Performance Indicators:

1. Supported increased collaboration among the Provincial Government, Memorial University, and College of the North Atlantic.
2. Supported infrastructure improvements at publically funded post-secondary education facilities.
3. Supported revitalization of College of the North Atlantic.
4. Developed a new approach to adult literacy.
5. Improved the delivery of programs/services through new systems and program redesign.
6. Renewed Labour Market Transfer Agreements to support the enhancement of skills.

### **Objective 1 (2017-18)**

By March 31, 2018, the department will have initiated mechanisms to develop a highly educated and skilled workforce.

**Annual Performance Indicators:**

1. Supported the Council on Higher Education.
2. Supported post-secondary infrastructure improvements.
3. Obtained input for developing an Adult Literacy Strategy.
4. Assessed and implemented options for education and training improvements.
5. Negotiated new Labour Market Transfer Agreements with the Government of Canada.

### **Objective 2 (2018-19)**

By March 31, 2019, the department will have continued mechanisms to develop a highly educated and skilled workforce.

### **Objective 3 (2019-20)**

By March 31, 2020, the department will have furthered mechanisms to develop a highly educated and skilled workforce.

Annual performance indicators for Objective 2 and Objective 3 will be brought forward publicly in subsequent annual reports.

## **Strategic Issue 2: Contributing to a Stronger Economic Foundation and Labour Environment**

A strong economy requires a strong labour supply. Canada, like many countries around the world, is facing significant demographic and economic challenges due to an aging population, declining fertility rates, and a limited labour supply. With the oldest working age population in Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador is also experiencing many of these challenges. Demographic changes will result in a smaller workforce in Newfoundland and Labrador. Current provincial projections suggest that by 2025, the province will experience a 10 per cent decline in working-age residents, meaning nearly 35,000 fewer people in our provincial labour market. Immigration will be an important part of the solution to growing and meeting the needs of our province's workforce. Furthermore, immigration represents an opportunity to further foster a diversity of cultures and views, and to encourage innovation. Attracting and retaining newcomers as well as encouraging expatriate Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to return home requires a coordinated and collaborative approach among employers, institutions, communities and the Provincial and Federal Governments. This will be prioritized in the coming three years as The Way Forward on Immigration is implemented.

Relevant and timely labour market information is also needed to inform individual, institutional and governmental decisions on where efforts should be focused to match labour supply with labour demand. This will be supported with the development of a comprehensive human resource plan as identified in The Way Forward. Unemployed and underemployed individuals from under-represented groups also play an increasingly important role in helping to meet future labour supply needs. Many of these groups, (which include women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous groups, youth, and mature workers), continue to face employment challenges and barriers. New approaches are needed to reduce these barriers to employment.

It is also important that the province's employment relations regulatory framework remains relevant to ensure the protection of labour rights and to enable employees and employers to appropriately plan in response to the changing economic environment. In keeping with that priority, the department actively reviews approaches in other jurisdictions, on issues such as the minimum wage and compassionate leave, to ensure a responsive provincial labour policy and legislative environment.

The department is committed to collaborating with its partners to collectively strengthen the labour supply and work to enhance the economic well-being of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, as there are new opportunities for innovation and change. The following goal and objectives identify the desired results the department plans to achieve over the next three years, to contribute to a stronger economic foundation and labour environment.

## Issue 2

### Contributing to a Stronger Economic Foundation and Labour Environment

**GOAL 2:** By March 31, 2020, the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour will have contributed to a strong labour supply that meets evolving labour market demands.

**Three-Year Performance Indicators:**

1. Increased immigration.
2. Enhanced settlement supports for newcomers.
3. Developed a comprehensive human resource plan.
4. Maintained a responsive labour policy framework.
5. Developed new approaches to support transition into employment.

**Objective 1 (2017-18)**

By March 31, 2018, the department will have commenced initiatives to support a strong labour supply.

**Annual Performance Indicators:**

1. Initiated implementation of The Way Forward on Immigration.
2. Established a framework for the development of a comprehensive human resource plan.
3. Engaged with key sectors to assess labour market needs.
4. Assessed the minimum wage review mechanism.
5. Reviewed national labour policy directions.
6. Assessed current delivery models for income and employment support programs and services.
7. Launched the Newfoundland and Labrador Research and Innovation (NLRI) program.

**Objective 2 (2018-19)**

By March 31, 2019, the department will have continued initiatives to support a strong labour supply.

**Objective 3 (2019-20)**

By March 31, 2020, the department will have furthered initiatives to support a strong labour supply.

Annual performance indicators for Objective 2 and Objective 3 will be brought forward publicly in subsequent annual reports.



# Annex A: Strategic Directions

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1

**Title:** Supporting Workforce Stability

**Outcome:** A skilled and stable workforce that strengthens the social, cultural, and economic foundation of the province.

**Focus Areas:**

- Immigration and Multiculturalism, including Promotion, Attraction, Integration and Retention
- Income and Employment Supports, including Policy and Programming
- Labour Market Analysis, Policy, and Information to Develop the Workforce
- Labour Policy and Support, including Labour Relations and the Enforcement of Labour Standards
- Support for Groups Under-represented in the Workforce

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2

**Title:** Post-Secondary Education and Adult Learning

**Outcome:** A post-secondary education system that contributes to the social, cultural, and economic development of the province.

**Focus Areas:**

- Post-Secondary Education Infrastructure Funding
- Post-Secondary Education Policy and Programs
- Student Financial Assistance Policy and Programs
- Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Policy and Programming
- Adult Literacy Programming and Supports

## Annex B: Public Entities

The following public entities report through the Minister and prepare separate performance-based plans:

- College of the North Atlantic
- Council on Higher Education
- Income and Employment Support Appeal Board
- Labour Relations Board
- Memorial University of Newfoundland
- Memorial University of Newfoundland Pension Plan
- Private Training Corporation
- Provincial Apprenticeship and Certification Board
- Standing Fish Price-Setting Panel
- Student Loan Corporation of Newfoundland and Labrador

The department also provides policy support to WorkplaceNL and the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Review Division.

\* Note - The Student Financial Assistance Appeal Board is currently inactive. In the event of future activity, the entity will be subject to planning and reporting requirements under the Transparency and Accountability Act. Given the recent re-establishment of the Council on Higher Education and its synchronization with the academic year, they will table a plan in November, 2017.

