

2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Children, Seniors and Social Development



MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As Minister of the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development (CSSD), I am pleased to present the Department's Annual Report for 2020-21.

Together with our community partners, stakeholders and other government departments, CSSD is committed to ensuring an inclusive, accessible and socially advanced province that values its children, youth, families, seniors and all individuals across the life span. The 2020-23 CSSD Strategic Plan signals a move toward improving prevention and intervention services for families in an effort to improve outcomes for children and youth in the province. This plan also highlights the need for consultation, research and policy development towards the development and implementation of accessibility legislation, an advocate for persons with disabilities, a renewed poverty reduction strategy, and support for seniors and healthy aging. The Annual Report for 2020-21 demonstrates CSSD's progress on preliminary objectives set out in year one of the Strategic Plan to achieve these goals.

CSSD is considered a Category 1 entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, and the CSSD 2020-21 Annual Report satisfies the reporting requirements therein by demonstrating how the Department met its planned actions in 2020-21. As Minister, my signature below demonstrates my accountability for the results reported.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John G. Abbott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Hon. John G. Abbott
Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development

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Department Overview

Organizational Structure

The Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development brings together a wide range of professionals and policy practitioners to focus on improving the health, safety, well-being, inclusion and social development of individuals, families and communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. The Department fulfills this mandate through its lines of business¹:

- Adoptions
- Adult Protection
- Child Protection and In-care
- Community Youth Corrections
- Disability Policy
- Poverty Reduction
- Seniors and Aging
- Youth Services

Vision

A socially advanced province, where all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians live fulfilling lives of purpose, balance and meaning for them. CSSD collaborates with partners and stakeholders and provides leadership in government to ensure that policies, practices, and services respect diversity, increase equity, and reduce barriers, while emphasizing prevention, early intervention, protection, and self-determination.

¹ - In April, 2021 the divisions of Income and Employment Support and Community Sector were added to CSSD's lines of business.

More information about the Department can be found on CSSD's website:

<http://www.cssd.gov.nl.ca/>

Staff and Budget

As of March 31, 2021, CSSD had a total of 730 employees – 689 permanent, 35 temporary and six contractual positions. The Provincial Office has 112 positions which carry out work in all of the identified lines of business. The Child and Youth Services Branch is structured in three regions as follows:

- Central-West Region – 277 positions (with offices located in: Baie Verte, Bay Roberts, Bonavista, Botwood, Channel-Port aux Basques, Clarenville, Conception Bay South, Conne River, Corner Brook, Deer Lake, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, Harbour Breton, Harbour Grace, Holyrood, Lewisporte, Marystown, Musgrave Harbour, Placentia, Roddickton, Springdale, St. Alban's, St. Anthony, Stephenville, Summerford, Whitbourne, and Woody Point).
- Labrador Region – 118 positions (with offices located in: Cartwright, Forteau, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Hopedale, Labrador City, Makkovik, Nain, Natuashish, Rigolet and Sheshatshiu).
- Metro Region – 223 positions (with offices located in Bell Island, Ferryland and St. John's).

On March 31, 2021, CSSD had total expenditures of \$138,959,621 for the 2020-21 fiscal year. Additional financial information is included in the Financial Information section, page 24.

Highlights and Partnerships

Throughout 2020-21, CSSD continued to deliver on its commitment to enhance the lives of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians by strengthening the social advancement of this province. Much of the work CSSD does is in conjunction with internal and external partners, giving rise to significant achievements that are beyond the scope of the established goals and objectives for the Department as outlined in CSSD's Strategic Plan 2020-23. Toward this end, CSSD has many initiatives and partnerships to highlight this year which include:

Children, Youth and Families

- **Statutory Review:** A review of the **Adoption Act, 2013** commenced in fiscal year 2019-20 and continued in 2020-21. The review included consultations with internal and external stakeholders. Through this effort, a number of areas have been identified as requiring improvement to provide clarity, fill legislative gaps, address administrative issues and strengthen practice. CSSD anticipates continuing work in this area in 2021-22.
- **Foster Parent Adoptions:** The Adoption Policy and Procedures Manual was updated to reflect new policies to better support foster parent and significant other adoptions. The policy approach was updated to reflect both best practice and feedback CSSD heard during the consultations for the legislative review of the **Adoption Act, 2013**. This new approach allows for a more streamlined process of adoption for foster parents without compromising the necessary assessment process.
- **PRIDE Training:** In March 2021, CSSD implemented PRIDEOnline training. PRIDE (Parent Resource for Information, Development and Education) is a competency-based training module required for foster and adoptive applicants. It assists foster and adoptive applicants in understanding the

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expectations, roles and responsibilities of fostering and adoption, as well as the needs of children and youth in care, and their families. This training enables foster and adoptive applicants to complete the required PRIDE pre-service training online. This approach provides flexibility for applicants as they can complete the training at their own pace. Foster and adoptive applicants completing training online must still complete a thorough home assessment prior to being approved by the Department.

- **Cultural Competency Training:** CSSD and Indigenous partners continued to work together to develop a plan for training for those working directly with Indigenous communities. Through the Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador (MUN) School of Social Work **Advancing the Practice Together (APT)** program, CSSD delivers various education sessions each year through webinar and recording of sessions. APT educational sessions are provided on topics such as: Cultural Competence in Child Welfare Practice for Indigenous Communities; Trauma-Informed Practice with Vulnerable Children and Families; Jordan's Principle; and Federal Legislation Training Part 1 and Part 2.
- **Review of Child Protection Services to Inuit Children:** To continue to develop and deliver services to support Indigenous children, CSSD collaborated with the Nunatsiavut Government on specific recommendations from the Independent Review of Child Protection Services to Inuit Children in Newfoundland and Labrador in 2020-21. This process included the development of a new plan to address all recommendations to improve outcomes for Inuit children, youth and their families. As per recommendation 33 of the Review, a report was completed for the House of Assembly by March 31, 2021.
- **CSSD collaboration with Indigenous Governments and Organizations:** CSSD also worked on a revised protocol with the Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation and the Mushuau Innu First Nation to strengthen information sharing and coordination of services and engaged in policy discussions with the Nunatsiavut Government to support their planning and program development.

- **CSSD Collaboration on Federal Indigenous Child Welfare Legislation:** CSSD continued to focus on implementing **An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis children, youth and families**. CSSD collaborated with each Indigenous partner on a variety of policy and service delivery issues with the goal of reducing the number of Indigenous children and youth in care, to ensure children and youth remain connected to their culture and to decrease placements outside home communities. CSSD worked with Indigenous partners on a framework to improve data reporting and the monitoring of key indicators regarding Indigenous children, youth and families.

Aging and Seniors:

- **Age-Friendly Communities Grants:** CSSD continued to support this program, as it encourages the establishment of policies, services and structures that promote healthy aging. In 2020-21, CSSD administered over \$44,000 to incorporated municipalities, regions and Indigenous governments whose applications were accepted through the Age-Friendly Community Grants program. Recipients included:
 - Placentia Area Chamber of Commerce - Age-Friendly Placentia - Bridging Generations: Health & Wellness Programs 2021 (\$10,000).
 - Town of Point Lance - Craft and exercise club for seniors (\$6,500).
 - Town of Springdale - Support and expand digital literacy for seniors through the provision of iPads with education support through the Community Sector Council's TechKNOWtutors program (\$10,000).
 - Town of Summerford/Summerford Recreation - Continuation of exercise program Active for Life aimed at helping seniors with balance and strengthening to reduce risk of falls (\$8,950).
 - Flat Bay Band Inc. - Expansion of Living Circle Social Club formed in 2019-2020 (\$10,000).

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- **Newfoundland and Labrador Community Transportation Program:** CSSD continues to support this program, which provides up to \$100,000 funding towards alternative transportation services for individuals living with mobility challenges who experience barriers to accessible, affordable transportation. During the 2020-21 fiscal year, CSSD funded four new projects. There are 14 projects being funded throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.
- **Support to SeniorsNL:** CSSD continues to support SeniorsNL with \$300,000 per year for information and referral services. The Director of Aging and Seniors serves on the board in an ex-officio capacity. CSSD is also on the oversight committee for SeniorsNL's multi-year, collective impact project, funded through the national New Horizons for Seniors program. It provides funding for projects that make a difference in the lives of seniors and in their communities.
- **Federal, Provincial and Territorial Collaboration:** CSSD represents Newfoundland and Labrador on the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Seniors Forum, which is part of the Ministers of Social Services Forum. CSSD actively participates in the Seniors Forum's working groups including, the Socioeconomic Impacts of Ageism and the Labour Force Participation of Older Adults. As the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's representative, CSSD co-chairs the Aging in Community working group, together with representation from the Federal Government.
- **Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors:** CSSD Aging and Seniors Division provides secretariat support to the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors (PACAS). The advisory council's role is to identify and monitor the issues facing seniors in the province, and advise the CSSD Minister on potential policy solutions. PACAS tabled its 2020-23 Activity Plan in the House of Assembly this year, and continued to meet virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Aging Research Centre (ARC-NL):** CSSD continued its annual support of \$100,000 to the Aging Research Centre at MUN, housed primarily at Grenfell Campus. CSSD participates in ARC-NL's Management Board and Advisory Council. The chairperson of PACAS is a community representative on the ARC-NL's Advisory Council.
- **Seniors of Distinction Awards:** As part of the Provincial Government's celebration of October 1 as National Seniors Day, CSSD hosted the 12th Annual Seniors of Distinction Awards on October 1, 2020. The Seniors of Distinction Awards celebrate the contributions, achievements and diversity of older persons throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. Five seniors representing all areas of the province were recognized for their outstanding achievements. This program was offered in person in 2020. Public health guidelines were followed, and for the first time, the event was live-streamed and available online following the event.
- **Seniors Social Inclusion Initiative (SSII):** The SSII grant program supports the delivery of programs, and participation in community events, that promote social inclusion of seniors including healthy aging, mental wellness and overall well-being activities. SSII provided grants up to \$2,000 for incorporated clubs and up to \$1,000 for unincorporated clubs to support their activities toward social inclusion for seniors in the past year. In 2020-21, CSSD committed a total of \$164,000 awarded to 94 clubs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many organizations found creative ways to engage seniors, including provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) and healthy food baskets for isolated seniors.

Disability Policy Office

- **Individualized Funding (IF):** The Individualized Funding (IF) model for supportive social programs and services to individuals is based on the premise that all individuals are equal, are full citizens and have the right to determine how they receive services based on individualized planning. IF was developed by the Disability Policy Office (DPO) with the Poverty Reduction and Aging and Seniors

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divisions of CSSD, as well as other government departments, community organizations and individuals who avail of Community Supports (CS) through the Department of Health and Community Services (HCS). HCS is using this model to develop and implement an IF demonstration project and CSSD has requested the ongoing support of all relevant departments as the government works toward its implementation.

- **Disability Policy Office Grant Programs:** CSSD awards various grant programs administered through the Disability Policy Office to support accessibility and inclusion, including \$350,000 for the Accessible Vehicle Program, \$50,000 for the Accessible Taxi Program, \$250,000 for Capacity Building Grants, \$75,000 for Inclusion Grant Program and \$94,500 for Para-Transit.
- **Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities:** The Disability Policy Office is the Secretariat for the Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (Council). The Council historically meets face to face a maximum of four times a year; however, the Council met virtually nine times this year due to COVID-19 pandemic, public health measures and use of digital technology. The Council is mandated to advise and inform the Provincial Government, through the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities, on matters concerning persons with disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador. In 2020-21, Council provided advice to the Provincial Government on the inclusion of persons with disabilities including accessibility legislation, disability-related supports, supports to live in the community, built environment and supported decision-making.
- **Support/guidance provided during COVID-19 pandemic:** The Disability Policy Office (DPO) provided support to the Department of Health and Community Services (HCS) with accessible documents and communications throughout the COVID-19 pandemic response and advised on the development of the 811

application, in consultation with the Deaf and hard of hearing community and persons with communication disabilities. DPO actively participated on the Network of Disability Organizations' weekly and bi-weekly meetings and within the Vulnerable Populations Task Force (VPTF) meetings and subcommittee meetings. DPO also encouraged participation of the community of and for persons with disabilities to participate in the VPTF meetings and subcommittee meetings to help ensure accessibility and inclusion implications were considered in the COVID-19 pandemic response.

- **Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Collaboration:** The Persons with Disability Advisory Committee (PwDAC) is part of the Ministers Responsible for Social Services (MRSS) Forum. PwDAC includes officials from PT social service ministries responsible for providing supports for persons with disabilities. This committee identifies and focuses on areas where PT collaboration can help to advance priority issues. DPO is an active participant on PwDAC, as well as representatives from the Departments of HCS and Immigration, Population Growth and Skills.

Poverty Reduction

- **Vulnerable Populations Task Force:** CSSD participated in the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Vulnerable Populations Task Force, a multi-agency task force established to ensure people in vulnerable circumstances were not disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and economic shutdowns. This included working with stakeholders and community partners on issues related to rural and remote housing and homelessness, and food security.
- **Food Security Working Group:** The Poverty Reduction Division of CSSD sits on the Vulnerable Populations Task Force Food Security Working Group, co-chaired by HCS and Food First NL. Representatives from the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture, and community stakeholders also sit on the group to formulate a plan towards provincial food self-sufficiency.

- **Partnership with Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador:** CSSD worked with MUN Contextualized Health Research Synthesis Program (CHRSP) in researching prevention and early intervention best practices for children and their families. CHRSP is an innovative program designed to increase the use of scientific evidence in healthcare decision-making.
- **Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) Poverty Advisory Committee:** CSSD is the Provincial Co-Chair of the FPT Poverty Advisory Committee (PAC), together with representation from the Federal Government. This year, PAC completed a jurisdictional scan of governmental poverty reduction actions and initiatives across Canada. CSSD collaborated with the Federal Government on **Opportunity For All: Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy**, to support reducing poverty across Canada.

Report on Performance

In 2020, the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development tabled a three-year Strategic Plan in the House of Assembly. This is the first annual report based upon the 2020-23 CSSD Strategic Plan, and reflects upon the objectives and indicators for fiscal year 2020-21.

Strategic Issue 1: Prevention and Intervention

Throughout 2020-21, CSSD worked diligently to review existing actions required to enhance prevention and early intervention for all children and youth. There were significant achievements during the 2020-21 reporting period which have positioned CSSD well in its work to develop a child-centered, family-centered and community centered approach to identifying and reducing systemic barriers for children and youth, engaging community partners and coordinating government efforts to ensure children and youth are supported by policies, programs and services.

Three Year Goal Statement: By March 31, 2023, CSSD, in collaboration with community and government departments, will have developed and implemented a horizontal Action Plan on prevention and early intervention for families.

2020-21 Objective:

By March 31, 2021, CSSD will have reviewed existing actions required to enhance prevention and early intervention for all children and youth.

Indicator	Report on Performance
Established an interdepartmental committee to oversee the development of an	Complete. Given synergies between poverty reduction and prevention and early intervention policy, the Poverty Reduction Interdepartmental Working group has expanded its mandate to include development considerations for

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<p>early intervention and prevention Action Plan</p>	<p>enhancing prevention and early intervention actions and strategies.</p>
<p>Created an inventory of what government departments are already doing to promote early intervention and prevention for all children and youth.</p>	<p>Complete. An inventory of departmental initiatives for children, youth and families has been updated.</p> <p>CSSD also participated in committees and worked closely with the Departments of Health and Community Services and Education on initiatives related to prevention and early intervention stemming from Towards Recovery: The Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador and the Education Action Plan</p>
<p>Performed an environmental scan including a literature review on best practices in early intervention and prevention as well as a jurisdictional scan of what other Provinces and Territories are doing to lead early intervention and prevention activities for children and youth, and leading edge work in other countries.</p>	<p>Complete. CSSD worked with MUN Contextualized Research Synthesis Program, (CHRSP) to complete a preliminary review on prevention and early intervening best practices for children and families from across Canada and internationally. CHRSP is an innovative program designed to increase the use of scientific evidence in healthcare decision-making. CSSD has received a preliminary report from The Contextualized Health Research Synthesis Program (CHRSP) on best and promising models for prevention and early intervention. Based on this preliminary report, CHRSP will complete a focused and in-depth report on six models from Canadian and International jurisdictions to help inform this work.</p>

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Created a consultation plan to engage with community stakeholders.	Incomplete. Work on the consultation plan was put on hold due to the pandemic. This work will be completed in 2021-22.
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Summary:

The objective, “By March 31, 2021, CSSD will have reviewed existing actions required to enhance prevention and early intervention for all children and youth”, has been met. CSSD focused its efforts on synergizing existing partnerships around intervention and prevention for children and youth, and reviewing best and promising practices within the Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada and internationally.

2021-22 Objective:

By March 31, 2022, CSSD, in collaboration with other government departments, will have developed a horizontal Action Plan to address the issue of enhanced prevention and early intervention for all children and youth.

2021-22 Indicators:

- Consult with community stakeholders to identify specific opportunities to improve prevention and early intervention services to vulnerable families in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Consult with research partners to formulate a better understanding of best practices in prevention and early intervention that could apply to vulnerable families in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Develop a draft horizontal action plan in conjunction with the interdepartmental committee.

Strategic Issue 2: Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion

CSSD is committed to carrying out the strategic directions pertinent to the department as identified by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador for 2020-23, including Healthier People and A Bright Future. Over the next three years, CSSD will focus on strengthening social advancement of individuals in the province through policies and actions to reduce poverty and increase social inclusion.

Goal: By March 31, 2023, CSSD will have strengthened the social advancement of the province by engaging with stakeholders and communities to formulate actions to reduce poverty, support healthy aging across the lifespan and encourage inclusive, accessible communities.

2020-21 Objective: By March 31, 2021, CSSD will have begun to strengthen social advancement of the province by engaging with relevant government departments, stakeholders and communities to formulate policies and actions to reduce poverty, support healthy aging and encourage inclusive, accessible communities.

Indicator	Report on Performance
Reviewed existing actions related to poverty reduction across all levels of government (federal, provincial and municipal) with the assistance of the Poverty Reduction Interdepartmental Working Group.	Complete. The Poverty Reduction Interdepartmental Working Group completed a review of existing poverty reduction actions. The Poverty Advisory Committee completed a jurisdictional scan of poverty reduction actions across Canada.

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<p>Commenced discussions with community partners and stakeholders on priorities to inform the development of a renewed Poverty Reduction Strategy.</p>	<p>Complete. The Poverty Reduction (PR) division met with many community organizations and continues ongoing discussions with stakeholders which will inform a renewed poverty reduction strategy.</p>
<p>Researched best practices and current knowledge on poverty to support the development of a renewed Poverty Reduction Strategy.</p>	<p>Complete. In preparation for a renewed poverty reduction strategy, the PR Division led a review of approximately 100 Poverty Reduction Initiatives, collaborating with member departments and agencies of the Poverty Reduction Interdepartmental Working Group.</p> <p>With the Provincial-Territorial Poverty Advisory Committee, the Division helped complete a jurisdictional scan of current poverty reduction initiatives and best practices across Canada.</p>
<p>Worked with research and community partners to identify barriers and limitations to social inclusion, healthy aging and improved accessibility.</p>	<p>Complete. Aging and Seniors Division collaborated with stakeholders to review and revise grant program documents for 2021-22, encouraging wider access to these programs. Programs include the Age-Friendly Newfoundland and Labrador Communities Program; the Newfoundland and Labrador Community Transportation Program; and the Seniors' Social Inclusion Initiative.</p> <p>CSSD participated in the review of research funding applications with ARC-NL (Aging Research Centre of Newfoundland and Labrador).</p>

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	<p>The Disability Policy Office of CSSD, in active collaboration and consultation with the disability community and stakeholders, worked to identify, prevent and remove barriers.</p>
<p>Established an Interdepartmental Working Group to address the issues of demographic change and explore policies and programs to address the recommendations of the Seniors' Advocate and Office of the Auditor General.</p>	<p>Complete. The Interdepartmental Working Group on Changing Demographics was established in 2020 and meets monthly. CSSD co-chairs this working group with HCS. The working group addresses and monitors the recommendations of the Senior's Advocate 2019 report, Long May Your Big Jib Draw: Setting Sail as well as the recommendations of the Office of the Auditor General.</p>
<p>Began a review of the Adult Protection Act.</p>	<p>Complete. The 5-year review was concluded in 2020-21 and amendments to the Act are being drafted.</p>
<p>Consulted persons with disabilities, community and business stakeholders to inform the drafting of the accessibility legislation.</p>	<p>Complete. In 2020-21, more than 25 collaborations and consultations occurred to inform the development of "made in Newfoundland and Labrador" Accessibility legislation. These intergovernmental, community and stakeholder consultations built on the What We Heard document in which stakeholders provided the groundwork for fulsome and inclusive enabling legislation.</p>

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<p>Consulted with the Provincial Advisory Council on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities on the roles and responsibilities of a Disability Advocate.</p>	<p>Complete. During 2020-21 the Provincial Advisory Council on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities met virtually nine times. This was an unprecedented year and with secretariat support from Disability Policy Office the option of a Disability Advocate was explored.</p>
<p>Reviewed advice from the Provincial Advisory Council on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in establishing the development of a standards process for the accessibility legislation.</p>	<p>Complete. The Mandate for the Provincial Advisory Council for 2020-21 was to provide advice to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities on the development of accessibility legislation in Newfoundland and Labrador. In December 2020, the Provincial Advisory Council met with the Minister Responsible and advised on the standards development process.</p>

Summary

The objective, “By March 31, 2021, CSSD will have begun to strengthen social advancement of the province by engaging with relevant government departments, stakeholders and communities to formulate policies and actions to reduce poverty, support healthy aging and encourage inclusive, accessible communities”, has been met. CSSD focused efforts on laying the groundwork for policy and program actions which will be informed by stakeholders including interdepartmental, intergovernmental, community advisory council and academic research partners.

2021-22 Objective:

By March 31, 2022, CSSD will have strengthened the social advancement of the province by developing and implementing policies and actions that reduce poverty, support healthy aging across the lifespan and encourage inclusive, accessible communities.

2021-22 Indicators:

- Develop a poverty reduction strategy and began implementation of policies and actions to reduce poverty.
- Draft amendments to the **Adult Protection Act**.
- Develop draft action plan, informed by the recommendations of the Seniors' Advocate, to create an environment that fosters healthy aging, social inclusion, and age-friendly communities.
- Complete a jurisdictional scan to help inform the establishment of an Advocate for Persons with Disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Consult with key stakeholders to ensure persons with disabilities, and community-based organizations representing persons with disabilities, have the opportunity to inform the development of the Advocate position.

Opportunities and Challenges

In the 2020-23 Strategic Plan, CSSD committed to strengthening the social advancement of the province in order to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion, and focusing on prevention and early intervention for families to improve outcomes for all children and youth. Actions to meet these commitments in 2020-21 presented the following opportunities and challenges:

Opportunities

- Out of necessity, the COVID-19 pandemic throughout 2020-21 gave rise to new and different ways of connecting with stakeholders through remote work, including live text chats and meetings over online platforms such as Skype and Zoom. These virtual work applications provided many unique opportunities for CSSD employees to connect with each other and with stakeholders in innovative ways while under lockdown advisories that prohibited face-to-face contact.
- CSSD participated in the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Vulnerable Populations Task Force, a multi-agency task force established to ensure people in vulnerable circumstances were not disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and economic shut downs. This work provided an opportunity to learn how to mobilize a comprehensive response to persons in vulnerable circumstances during other states of emergency that may occur in the future.
- The Disability Policy Office of CSSD played a pivotal role in ensuring that COVID-19 communication formats were accessible and available to persons with disabilities as well as persons experiencing low income and seniors. Efforts to maintain and enhance service provision during the COVID-19 pandemic provided lessons for future business continuity planning and policy development for the department, and highlighted the importance of accessible communications.

- As provincial co-chair of the Poverty Advisory Committee, in collaboration with the Federal Government, CSSD worked on **Opportunity For All: Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy** to support reducing poverty across Canada. Newfoundland and Labrador is at the forefront of this important work.
- CSSD works closely with the Income Support Program (ISP). The ISP Division and the Department are well aligned to enhance CSSD's social development mandate. Working together creates synergies for many of our lines of business, especially Poverty Reduction.
- Collaboration with community stakeholders and partner departments on a plan to promote the well-being of all children, youth and families through prevention and early intervention, as well as work with Indigenous partners on the implementation of **An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis children, youth and families**, provides opportunities to work towards improved outcomes for all children and youth in the province.

Challenges

- The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted, and in many instances magnified, vulnerabilities that already existed for CSSD stakeholders, including barriers to achieving improved social development and engagement with the community. These barriers, such as lack of access to reliable internet and/or remote meeting applications and social media, limited stakeholders' ability to communicate and increased social isolation during times of lockdown. Toward that end, the Department worked diligently with stakeholders to mitigate these challenging circumstances.
- Due to the emergence and evolving circumstances surrounding COVID 19, significant efforts were undertaken to ensure both the health, safety and well-being of children, youth and families receiving services from the Child and Youth Services

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Branch as well as the regional staff delivering essential services were of utmost concern.

- These CSSD efforts included developing essential service delivery guidelines to assist regional social workers in their work with children and youth in need of protective intervention during times when provincial lock down measures were in place; implementing a new toll-free telephone number during the COVID-19 public health emergency to ensure individuals and community groups could best connect with the department as needed; and ensuring the continuation of supports for vulnerable youth set to age out of programs and services when transition planning was unable to occur.
- CSSD worked closely with all of its partners in the community to ensure essential supports and services continued to be received as needed by individuals experiencing vulnerable circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Financial Information

Revenue and expenditures in this document are based on the information province in the public Report on the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the Fiscal Year ended 31 March 2021.

		Actual	Estimates	
			Amended	Original
1.1.01	Minister's Office	223,263	290,900	290,900
1.2.01	Executive Support	1,331,760	1,344,900	1,386,800
1.2.02	Corporate Services and Performance Improvement	4,025,616	4,051,300	4,320,100
1.2.03	Programs and Policy	1,558,053	1,628,300	1,705,400
2.1.01	Child and Youth Services	152,265,614	154,999,300	154,278,500
	Less Revenue – Federal	(22,270,759)	(27,454,900)	(27,454,900)
	Less Revenue – Provincial	(116,090)	-	-
3.1.01	Seniors and Aging	980,885	998,200	1,098,000
3.1.02	Disability Policy Office	961,279	983,600	1,216,800
Total Department of Children, Seniors, and Social Development		138,959,621	136,841,600	136,841,600

