

2023-2026

STRATEGIC PLAN

**Children, Seniors and
Social Development**



MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As Minister responsible for the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development (CSSD), I am pleased to present the Department's Strategic Plan for the period April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2026. This plan builds upon the strategic directions, commitments and investments of our government and identifies the Department's key goals and objectives to be accomplished throughout the 2023-26 planning period.

CSSD focuses on ensuring that policies, practices and services respect diversity, increase equity and reduce barriers to self-determination while emphasizing prevention, early intervention and protection to ensure that all individuals in the province are supported to thrive. Together with our community partners, 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.

This three-year plan is submitted in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. As Minister, I am accountable for the preparation of this plan, and the achievement of the specific goals and objectives contained herein.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul A. Pike". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Hon. Paul A. Pike

Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development

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Overview

Mandate

The Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development (CSSD) supports individuals, families and communities in Newfoundland and Labrador in achieving improved social well-being and reduced poverty and delivers programs and services to support children, youth and adults who have experienced abuse or neglect. The department collaborates with the community sector to foster their role in social and economic development. Further, it promotes the values of inclusion and diversity and leads the development of policies, programs and partnerships to improve services and overall social development across the lifespan of residents within the province.

The mandate for the department is primarily established under the following legislation:

- **Accessibility Act**
- **Adoption Act, 2013**
- **Adult Protection Act, 2021**
- **Children, Youth and Families Act**
- **Income and Employment Support Act**
- **Young Persons Offences Act**

Lines of Business

The department fulfils this mandate through the following lines of business:

- Adoptions - finds permanent homes for children available for adoption.
- Adult Protection - protects adults who do not understand or appreciate the risk of abuse and neglect.
- Child Protection and In-Care - helps ensure the safety and well-being of children and youth in need of protective intervention.
- Community Sector - collaborates with the community sector to foster their role in the social and economic development in the province.

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- Community Youth Corrections - provides services to youth who come into conflict with the law between their 12th and 18th birthdays.
- Disability Policy - removes barriers and enhances the inclusion of persons with disabilities through government policies and programs.
- Income Assistance and Basic Benefits - provides monthly benefits, earning supplements and one-time benefits to qualifying people age 18 to 64.
- Increasing Income Security - prevents, reduces and alleviates poverty, and fosters opportunities through policy development for all individuals and families to share fully in our society and economy.
- Seniors and Aging - promotes healthy aging across the lifespan and fosters a healthy society that honours, listens to and includes seniors in building stronger, more dynamic communities.
- Youth Services - assists youth in need of protective intervention during their transition to early adulthood.

Additional information about the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development can be found on the department’s website: www.gov.nl.ca/cssd

Staff and Budget

Branch	# of Employees	Budget
Minister’s Office and Executive Support	19	\$1,450,400
Corporate Services and Performance Improvement	104	\$7,467,400
Child and Youth Services	627	\$171,804,900
Policy and Programs	29	\$4,439,500

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Prevention and Early Intervention	224	\$231,329,400
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As of April 1, 2023, CSSD had 1003 positions - 907 permanent, 81 temporary and 15 contractual.

The Child and Youth Services Branch is structured into Central-West Region, Labrador Region and Metro Region, as follows:

- Central-West: 284 positions, with offices located in Baie Verte, Bonavista, Botwood, Channel-Port-aux-Basques, Clarenville, Conne River, Corner Brook, Deer Lake, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, Harbour Breton, Holyrood, Lewisporte, Marystown, Musgrave Harbour, Placentia, Roddickton, Springdale, St. Alban's, St. Anthony, Stephenville, Summerford and Whitbourne;
- Labrador: 120 positions, with offices located in Cartwright, Forteau, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Hopedale, Labrador City, Makkovik, Nain, Natuashish, Rigolet and Sheshatshiu; and
- Metro: 223 positions, with offices located in Bay Roberts, Bell Island, Conception Bay South, Ferryland, Harbour Grace and St. John's.

The Income Support Service Delivery Division, within the Prevention and Early Intervention Branch, has 211 positions with offices located in St. John's, Mount Pearl, Carbonear, Marystown, Clarenville, Gander, Lewisporte, Grand Falls-Windsor, St. Albans, Springdale, Stephenville, Corner Brook, Channel-Port- aux-Basques and Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

The department's 2023-24 gross budget is \$416,491,600.

Primary Clients

The primary clients of CSSD are individuals, families and communities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Vision

A socially advanced province, where all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians live fulfilling lives of purpose, balance and meaning for them.

CSSD collaborates with a broad array of partners and community 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, self-determination and self-reliance.

Strategic Issues

Issue One: Improved Delivery of Services to Children and Youth

Over the next three years, CSSD will focus on improving the delivery of services to children and youth. The recruitment and retention of frontline Child and Youth Services social workers has been a long standing concern. These social workers face ongoing workload challenges including safety, stress and high caseloads, and often experience vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue due to the nature of the work. External reviews have been completed to identify and explore measures to help mitigate workload pressures to better support these social workers as they play such a critical role in protecting and supporting the health and well-being of children and youth in the province.

CSSD is committed to creating and implementing policies and procedures that will focus on recruitment and retention of child welfare social workers, and to providing a wide array of supportive services to address the increasing complexity of social and health-related issues facing children, youth and their families.

GOAL:

By March 31, 2026, CSSD will have improved delivery of services to children and youth.

Indicators:

- Implemented a recruitment and retention strategy for social workers.
- Implemented technology improvements for case management.
- Implemented priority recommendations from external reviews.

Objective 1: 2023-24

By March 31, 2024, CSSD will have implemented initiatives to improve the delivery of services for children and youth.

Indicators:

- Hired a HR strategist to develop a recruitment and retention plan for social workers.
- Implemented a signing and retention bonus for frontline Child and Youth social workers.
- Commenced implementation of priority recommendations from Continuum of Care Review.
- Commenced implementation of priority recommendations from the Child Welfare Service Delivery Model and Workload Review.

Objective 2: 2024-25

By March 31, 2025, CSSD will have implemented additional initiatives to improve the delivery of services for children and youth.

Objective 3: 2025-26

By March 31, 2026, CSSD will have continued implementation of initiatives to improve the delivery of services for children and youth.

Issue Two: Social Well-Being

Over the next three years, CSSD will focus on creating and implementing a Government-wide Social Well-Being Plan, which will focus on increasing incomes for people in low income, prevention and early intervention, and the social determinants of health. This holistic and integrated Social Well-Being Plan will be a key component to supporting the vision of Health Accord NL and will involve multiple departments across Government in its development and implementation. CSSD will engage with community organizations, Governments and experts, including and most importantly, people with lived experience, to help inform the development of the Social Well-Being Plan.

GOAL:

By March 31, 2026, CSSD will have led the development and implementation of a four-year Government-wide Social Well-Being Plan.

Indicators:

- Developed a Social Well-Being Plan.
- Implemented CSSD actions from the Social Well-Being Plan.
- Provided support to Government departments in implementation of actions from the Social Well-Being Plan.

Objective 1: 2023-24

By March 31, 2024, CSSD will have released a Government-wide Social Well-Being Plan.

Indicators:

- Gathered key stakeholder input.

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- Collaborated with other Government departments in developing priorities and actions.
- Developed a Government-wide Social Well-Being Plan.

Objective 2: 2024-25

By March 31, 2025, CSSD will have implemented approved Year 1 CSSD actions and supported other departments with approved Year 1 actions.

Objective 3: 2025-26

By March 31, 2026, CSSD will have implemented approved Year 2 CSSD actions and supported other departments with approved Year 2 actions.

Annex A: Active Entities

The Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development (CSSD) is also responsible for three entities, which carry out their own strategic planning and performance reporting in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. These include:

Accessibility Standards Advisory Board

The Accessibility Standards Advisory Board is responsible for advising and making recommendations to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities, regarding the establishment and content of accessibility standards and the time periods for implementation. The Board consists of eight members, including a Chairperson. Members are eligible to be reappointed but shall not serve for longer than two consecutive terms.

Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors

The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors advises Government in preparing for an aging population by ensuring that a seniors' perspective is reflected in policy development, and in planning for future service delivery. The mandate of the Council is to advise and inform Government on issues, concerns and needs of seniors. The Council consists of 13 members, including a Chairperson. Members serve up to a three-year term.

Income and Employment Support Appeal Board

The Income and Employment Support Appeal Board (the Board) is an independent, arm's-length body authorized to hear appeals on decisions regarding Income Support, as well as eligibility for employment supports funded by the Provincial Government. The Board is primarily governed by the **Income and Employment Support Act**; however, it is also responsible for appeals with respect to eligibility for benefits under the

Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program (NLPDP), under section 40 of the **Pharmaceutical Services Act**, and section 4.2 of the **Health and Community Services Act** – Employability Assistance Agreement for Persons with Disabilities.

The Board is comprised of a Chair, a Vice-Chair and a Member, one of whom must be a current or former recipient of income or employment supports. Three alternate members are also appointed, one of whom must also a current or former recipient of income or employment supports.

